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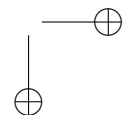
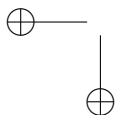
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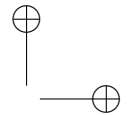
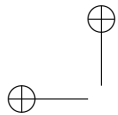
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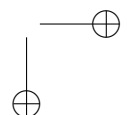
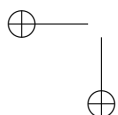
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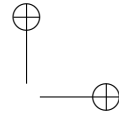
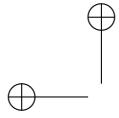
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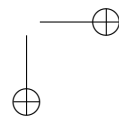
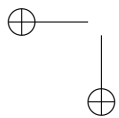


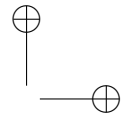
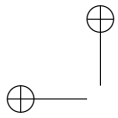


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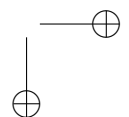
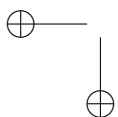


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Tracing the African Origins of Obeah (Obia): Some Conjectures and Inferences from the History of Benin Kingdom

*Uyilawa Usuanlele**

The practice of Obeah divination among people of African descent in the Americas has long been established to originate from West Africa. But the place of origin has remained a subject of speculation. The earliest speculated places of origin were the Akan and the neighbouring Popo. Most recent studies using demographic size and linguistic evidence have concluded that Obeah originated from among the Igbo of the Bight of Biafra in Nigeria. This paper disputes this conclusion and shows that demographic size is least relevant and the linguistic evidence is faulty. It then argues that in spite of the marginal role of Benin Kingdom, Obeah and its early practice are most likely derived from the Edo-speaking people of Benin Kingdom, Nigeria. It substantiates this with historical evidence and etymological inferences from the practice of slavery in the kingdom and its involvement in the Trans-Atlantic trade.

[divination; Obeah (Obia); slave; sorcery; witchcraft]

Introduction

Obeah (also Obea or Obia) can be described as a complex religious belief and practice that combine divination and medicine based on the supernatural and is associated with enslaved Africans and their descendants in some parts of the Americas. A contemporary analysis of Obeah by Jerome S. Handler and Kenneth Bilby in 2001, traces the earliest evidence of the use of the term "Obeah" to 1760 in the British West Indies and explains that the practice was also restricted to the same area.¹ The influence of the practice was so great as to pose a po-

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¹ J. S. HANDLER – K. M. BILBY, "On the Early Use and Origin of the Term 'Obeah' in

litical threat to the social control of slaves by white plantation owners and officials of the West Indian colonies. The West Indian colonial regimes started to investigate the practice of Obeah to understand and control it. This early investigation only established that it was not of ancient Egyptian origin,² and prompted continued investigation of its origin into other parts Africa in a bid to prohibit or restrict further importation of slaves from the region. At the same time, the colonial regimes criminalized its practice in the eighteenth century. Despite its prohibition and criminalization, it continued to thrive and even out-lived colonialism.

Since these early investigations, tracing the specific area of origin and/or the ethnic group from which Obeah originated in Africa, has engaged the minds of scholars and emerged as the subject of much speculation. The contemporary studies and debates on the state of African cultures and ethnicities in the diaspora communities in the Americas have revived interest in the investigation of the African origin of Obeah. The debate on whether African cultures survived intact across the middle passage has since been discarded and African cultures and ethnicities are now being unravelled from the creolized process they underwent during slavery.³ In the light of these recent approaches to the study of the African diaspora, Douglas Chambers, Jerome Handler and Kenneth Bilby revived the investigation of the African origin of Obeah. The trio of Chambers, Handler and Bilby went beyond the earlier approach, which viewed Obeah only in malevolent terms and traced its origin to Asante.⁴ This remained the

Barbados and the Anglophone Caribbean", in: *Slavery and Abolition*, 22, 2, 2001, pp. 88–89.

² J. J. WILLIAMS, *Vodoos and Obeah: Phases of West Indian Witchcraft*, New York 1932, p. 110.

³ P. LOVEJOY, "Identifying Enslaved Africans in the African Diaspora", in: P. LOVEJOY (ed.), *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery*, London – New York 2000, p. 7; G. M. HALL, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Link*, Chapel Hill 2005, Chapter Two.

⁴ Joseph J. Williams review and analysis of 1932 adopted this European view and the large ethno-cultural population criteria, especially since they were close and from the same region and therefore the same. This made Williams to speculate that a Popo woman accused of Obeah practice was probably Asante from the interior of Popo country (p. 115). Mary Kingsley had earlier speculated an Asante origin and associated Obeah with a snake deity. Williams rejects the association of Obeah with a snake deity (p. 139) but agrees that it is of Asante origin based on evidence from Rattray.

dominant view for a very long time.⁵ The works of Chambers on the one hand, and Handler and Bilby, on the other, interpreted it in a broader sense to include its benevolent aspects and sought its origins from words in African languages that closely approximate these benevolent aspects and meanings, as well as from ethnicities that were enslaved and exported in large numbers.

Douglas Chambers, in making a case for this broader definition of Obeah to include its benevolent aspects, justified this approach based on Edward Long's eyewitness account of the practice.⁶ He went further to investigate the population sizes of the ethnicities that survived the creolization process and found that slaves of Igbo origin in Jamaica constituted a very large population and community, and derived the origin of Obeah from its closeness or similarity to the Igbo word "*Dibia*" (which he spells *Ndi Obeah*), a term he claimed to be used for what he called "juju men par excellence". Then he concludes that the etymology of the word "Obeah" is derived from the Igbo word – *Dibia*.⁷ He found Igbo parallels not only in Obeah, but also in the Jonkonu masquerades, which also had formerly been speculated to be of Akan derivation.

Chambers conclusions have been supported by Handler and Bilby who substantiated the broader definition of Obeah to include non-malevolent uses. They initially also accepted the Igbo origin thesis.⁸ However, they went further than Chambers to investigate other ethnolinguistic and cultural groups irrespective of their population sizes before concluding that the word was of Igbo origin. Handler and Bilby's efforts, however, are limited by the restriction of their search to only the word or words close to the term Obeah in spelling or pronounci-

He asserted that Obeah was unquestionably derived from Obayifo, the Asante for wizard or witch and substantiated this claim with the evidence of Koromanti slaves using the word Obayi (short for Obayifo) for "witch" in Jamaica (p. 120). Based on closeness or similarity of the word to Obeah and the malevolent nature of Obayi, he concluded that Obayi was the etymology of Obeah and such was of Asante origin. See WILLIAMS; <http://www.sacred-texts.com/afro/vao/vao00.htm>, p. 78.

⁵ D. B. CHAMBERS, "'My Own Nation': Igbo Exiles in the Diaspora", in: *Slavery and Abolition*, 18, 1, 1997, p. 96, footnote 63.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 88.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ HANDLER – BILBY, "On the Early Use and Origin...", p. 91.

ation in various languages and which carry a benevolent meaning.⁹ Failing to find one with a malevolent meaning in Igbo language, they accepted Chamber's conclusion of an Igbo origin for Obeah. For unexplained reasons, they later retracted from their earlier position of an Igbo origin by proclaiming in a newer work that: "A number of such terms, phonologically similar to Obeah, exist in Igbo, Ibibio and related languages spoken in the Niger delta-Bight of Biafra region of southeastern Nigeria."¹⁰ Since the new position does not establish any basis for its assertion, it is presumed that they are still working with the earlier criterion of both malevolent and benevolent meanings. This paper argues therefore that if Handler and Bilby had applied this criterion differently by checking the words or names used in describing the phenomenon within its broader definition in all the African languages they investigated, their conclusion may have been different.

Though the term "Dibia" tallies with the definition or description of Obeah as argued by Chambers, it is problematic to conclude that the term is derived from the word "Dibia". This is because it would be difficult to elide or do away with the pronunciation of the heavy consonant letter "D" in pronouncing the word Dibia in order to arrive at "Obeah". It is also doubtful that the compound word "Ndi-obeah" as introduced and or used by Chambers is used in this context in Igbo language. The word is never separated into a compound word and has always been one word "Dibia" or "Dibie", depending on the linguistic area among the various Igbo speaking peoples. Given this situation and the obvious contrast between "Dibia" and "Obeah" as well as the impossibility of eliding the D or ND in pronouncing Obeah, it is difficult to accept Chambers, Handler and Bilby's conclusion on the Igbo origin of Obeah. Even Handler and Bilby's reliance on the word "Obi" found in many Niger delta and Bight of Biafra words (though benevolent and malevolent in their reference to disease, mind etc.) do not approximate the words for healer or diviner in any of the languages in South-eastern Nigeria.

This paper contributes to the ongoing investigation of the origin of Obeah in relation to the Benin Kingdom, in present day Nigeria. It argues that the fluctuating and small number of slaves from Benin King-

⁹ Ibidem, p. 96, footnote 14.

¹⁰ J. S. HANDLER – K. M. BILBY, *Enacting Power: The Criminalization of Obeah in the Anglophone Caribbean, 1760–2011*, Kingston 2011, pp. 5–6.

dom's ports and similarities in cultural and religious practices in West Africa among various African ethno-cultural groups notwithstanding, etymology and historical evidence points to a Benin-Edo origin for the term "Obeah" in the Caribbean. It shows that the word "Obeah" and its meaning are like the Edo word "Obo-Iha" a generic name for diviner/medicine man, and the etymology of Obeah is derived from the small community of slaves of Edo origin who were among the earliest slaves to reach the New World.

Benin Kingdom, the Atlantic Slave Trade and the Origin of Obeah

One ethno-linguistic group and area that has largely been overlooked by scholars and historians in tracing the origin of Obeah are the Edo people who founded and dominated the Kingdom of Benin. Handler and Bilby did consider Edo, but were restricted by their criteria. Their broader definition, which utilized only benevolent aspects of the term, disqualified the only Edo word (which they considered) – "Obi" which means poison in Edo language from acceptance in their assessment.¹¹ Their non-consideration of Edo people and the Benin Kingdom overtime is because of the presence of larger numbers of Akan and Igbo peoples in the British West Indies, where the word "Obeah" was widely used and adopted. The marginality of Benin Kingdom in the Trans-Atlantic slave export trade¹² and the Kingdom's role as a receiver of slaves,¹³ have also contributed to historians ignoring of the Benin Kingdom and Edo people. Another factor that disfavours Benin Kingdom and Edo people for consideration is the view that Benin did not sell its subjects, but rather sold slaves it got from other ethno-linguistic groups of the interior.¹⁴ Benin Kingdom's refusal to sell its subjects does not mean that Edo people were not sold into slavery. The Esan, whom Ryder claimed as one of Benin's source of slaves are Edo speaking. Their language and that of the people of Benin Kingdom's capital (Benin City) are mutually understood by both groups. Even if Benin

¹¹ HANDLER – BILBY, "On the Early Use and Origin...", p. 96, footnote 14.

¹² J. D. GRAHAM, "The Slave Trade, Depopulation and Human Sacrifice in Benin", in: *Cahiers d' etudes Africains*, 5, 18, 1965, p. 319; A. F. C. RYDER, *Benin and the Europeans 1485–1897*, London 1977, pp. 197–198.

¹³ J. E. INIKORI, "The Sources of Supply for the Atlantic Slave Exports from the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Bonny (Biafra), Paper read at the International Colloquium on the Export Slave Trade from Africa, Nantes, France", in: *Mimeo*, 1985, pp. 4–6.

¹⁴ RYDER, pp. 35 (footnote 3), 169.

Kingdom did not sell its subjects, other groups and polities sold Benin Kingdom's subjects along with their own people.

In spite of the marginality and the inconsistent policy of Benin Kingdom in the Atlantic slave trade and the long-held view that Benin sold only foreign slaves, evidence abounds of Edo people of Benin Kingdom among the slaves sold in the Atlantic slave trade. Even before the earliest Portuguese explorers established contact with Benin Kingdom in the late 1480s, the Portuguese had been buying slaves of Edo origin in the 1470s from the coastal Ijaws and Itsekiri, from whom they obtained information about Benin.¹⁵ These slaves of Edo origin would have been obtained not only through trade,¹⁶ but also through kidnapping and raids, as will be subsequently shown. With the establishment of European contact with Benin and the flourishing of trade, the numbers of slaves sold to European traders also increased as the Benin Kingdom sold its slaves directly to Europeans. However, Benin Kingdom regulated the trade, especially in regards to the sex and status of the persons earmarked for the trans-Atlantic trade. The regulation, prohibiting the sale of male slaves was temporary, lasting only through the first half of the sixteenth century to the late seventeenth century when it was lifted.¹⁷ But the latter regulation reported by David Van Nyendael that "*natives cannot be sold for slaves*"¹⁸ was only applicable to law-abiding subjects. Subjects caught on the wrong side of civil wars, which were at times frequent, could be and were sold into slavery. Also among the Edo people, certain crimes were punishable by banishment,¹⁹ which resulted in loss of protection by the state. In some communities among the Esan and Northern Edo groups, certain crimes particularly treason and malevolent sorcery, which harmed members of the community, were punishable by sale into slavery.²⁰ Thus the regulations applied to only law-abiding citizens within the ambit of protection of the state.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 29.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 35.

¹⁷ Ibidem, pp. 44, 148.

¹⁸ H. L. ROTH, *Great Benin: Its Art, Custom and Horrors*, London 1968, p. 103.

¹⁹ J. U. EGHAREVBA, *Benin Laws and Customs*, Neldeln 1971, p. 56.

²⁰ C. G. OKOJIE, *Esan Native Laws and Customs with Ethnographic Studies of the Esan People*, Benin City 1997, pp. 103–104, 242.

The state's regulation on slave trading did not affect pre-existing trade with neighbours and other groups in the interior, over whom the Benin Kingdom exercised little or no control but with whom they enjoyed extensive trade relations. This trade predated the coming of Europeans who further boosted it. Some of their neighbours also traded with the Europeans both directly and indirectly through middlemen, other than Benin Kingdom. Since people in the kingdom were free to do as they pleased with their slaves,²¹ they were within their rights to sell slaves (which might have also included males) to their neighbours in spite of regulations. This was possible, since there is no evidence of restriction of sale of male slaves to neighbours, as obtainable in the case of trade with Europeans.

More importantly, Benin Kingdom was not in an autarky. Despite strict regulations, its markets were open to its neighbours. Olfert Dapper's informants in the seventeenth century observed that: "*In the market held at village of Gotton (Ughoton) people from Great Britain, Arbon and other places in the neighbourhood come to market.*"²² "Arbon", the town cited as the place of origin of some of the traders at Ughoton market, has been shown to be a non-Edo town peopled by Ijaws and Itsekiris and possibly Ijebu Yorubas.²³

There were also movements of traders from the Kingdom to neighbouring communities and polities, some of which were outside the jurisdiction of Benin Kingdom. Three trading associations known as *Ekhen Oria*, which used the Esan to Ozigono and River Niger route, *Ekhen Ikhuen* which went to the Etsako and Northern Edo areas and *Ekhen Egbo* which serviced the Ekiti Yoruba areas have been recorded by Phillip Igbafe as operating in pre-colonial Benin Kingdom.²⁴ Trade to the Igbo-speaking areas is also highlighted by oral traditions in the story of Adesuwa (daughter of the Ezomo in the reign of Oba Akengbuda about 1750) whose murder during a trading expedition to Ubulu Uku provoked the Benin-Ubulu Uku war.²⁵ To the south through Iyekeorhionmwon, Ekhaguosa Aisien has also recorded Be-

²¹ EGHAREVBA, *Benin Laws and Customs*, p. 57.

²² ROTH, p. 132.

²³ RYDER, p. 90.

²⁴ P. A. IGBAFE, *Benin under British Administration: The Impact of Colonial Rule on an African Kingdom, 1897–1938*, London 1979, pp. 31–32.

²⁵ J. U. EGHAREVBA, *A Short History of Benin*, Ibadan 1968, p. 41.

nin trading ventures known as *Eki-Egbamen* to Isoko and Urhobo countries where some made their fortunes.²⁶

Slaves played very important roles in this long-distance trade between Benin and its neighbouring polities. They were used as trade commodities, currency and porters, as well as trading assistants and domestic help in the trading settlements. Jacob Egharevba recorded that his father kept many slaves in his trading post in Akure, some of whom he inherited after his father's death in 1902.²⁷ With this free movement of persons and goods, slaves outside the Kingdom (where the embargo on the sale of male slaves and Edo slaves was not in force) were sold in these markets. Apart from trade, slaves of Edo origin could have also been smuggled out of Benin Kingdom. With the presence of willing buyers represented by European interlopers and others of their type from Sao Tome and Principe, smuggling thrived. Ryder provides evidence of smuggling of red wood out of the Kingdom, which was sold to European merchants, in spite of its prohibition.²⁸ Smuggling of male slaves cannot be ruled out. In these ways and through other outlets, slaves of Edo origin from Benin Kingdom were exported without passing through Ughoton, the main port, and other Benin River ports, and were not recorded in the ship ledgers. Having established the various means through which slaves of Benin and Edo origin entered the Trans-Atlantic export trade, we can now proceed to show how people became enslaved in and outside the kingdom and the high possibilities of such slaves for being practitioners of divination, medicine and other metaphysical practices.

Enslavement Processes of People of Edo Origin in and Outside Benin Kingdom

The dominant literature tends to emphasize only war captives, criminals, tributes, and trade with neighbours as sources of slaves in Benin Kingdom.²⁹ Kidnapping and slave raids are not discussed in these works. But Edo oral traditions allude to kidnappers known as Odo-muomu in times past. Egharevba had earlier described slaves as: *Emwan n' Ikpata muno-en vbe Egbo* – People whom robbers captured in

²⁶ E. AISIEN, *Benin City: The Edo State Capital*, Benin City 1995, p. 44.

²⁷ J. U. EGHAREVBA, *Itan Edagbon Mwen*, Benin City – Ibadan 1972, p. 2.

²⁸ RYDER, p. 138.

²⁹ GRAHAM, p. 318; RYDER, pp. 169, 198.

the forest/road – Kevbe Oghunmwun n’okuo muno ne – and prisoners who were taken in wars – ya khien vb’evbo ovbehe – and sold off in distant lands.³⁰

These are obvious allusions to kidnapping and possibly slave raiding as strategies for procurement. The existence of indigenous names for kidnapping and slave raiding these, attest to their practice within and outside of Benin Kingdom.

Kidnapping and slave raids were possible within Benin Kingdom, because the borders were also vulnerable to raids and even invasions. Oral traditions tell us that during the reign of Oba Esigie in the sixteenth century, Igala scouts/warriors reached the outskirts of the capital before the invasion was uncovered and repulsed. In 1894, the Royal Niger Company (R.N.C.) armed agents led by John MacTaggart marched unchecked into Benin City.³¹ Much earlier, David Van Nyendaël had noted the existence of insecurity: “I cannot say much for their wars; for notwithstanding that they are continually fallen on by pirates or robber, and their neighbours not subject to the King of Benin.”³² Ijaw predatory raids and sacking of trading posts and communities in Benin River are also well documented by Ryder. Information collected in the Ekiti Yoruba areas also showed that “the Owo people enjoyed the notoriety of brigands on the trade route from Ekiti to Benin”.³³ These kidnappings, raids and pirate activities within and outside Benin Kingdom partly necessitated the formation of trading associations to provide security for traders on some of the trade routes.

People from the kingdom who could not engage in raids within the kingdom lent themselves to mercenary activities elsewhere for booty, which included slaves. The civil wars in Benin Kingdom would have also provided slaves as well. For instance, shortly after the civil war in Benin in the 1720s, it is reported that the Oba and Ezomo tried to arrange the disposal of the prisoners of war with the Dutch and some were actually sold through Ijebu and Lagos.³⁴ Since they were prisoners from a civil war, it meant that the prisoners were native subjects of

³⁰ EGHAREVBA, *Itan Edagbon Mwen*, p. 78.

³¹ RYDER, p. 278.

³² ROTH, p. 127.

³³ S. A. AKINTOYE, *Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland 1840–1893: Ibadan Expansion and Ekitiparapo*, London 1971, p. 25.

³⁴ RYDER, pp. 169, 229.

the Oba or people of Edo origin. In addition, Benin Kingdom's wars against neighbours would also have made possible the acquisition of slaves of Benin or Edo people as captives. Though Benin Kingdom does not have any history of defeat (except from the British conquest), some of her warriors could have also been taken prisoners in these wars.

Other processes through which people originating from Benin Kingdom were enslaved were punitive measures like banishment and sale into slavery of those who committed crimes, deemed to be sacrilegious. In Benin Kingdom, Egharevba recorded that crimes like "*witchcraft, murder, piracy, conspiracy, robbery, malicious administering of medicines or ordeal, spying and treason (were) are punishable by banishment or execution*".³⁵ In the Esan area, apart from banishment or execution, the criminal could also be sold into slavery by the Onojie (Hereditary Chief or Duke) or by the Onotu (Age grade).³⁶ Onojie Ojiefu of Ewu is remembered to have sold of his son Abhulimen into slavery, out of frustration with Abhulimen's character.³⁷ This practice of punishing certain crimes through sale into slavery also obtained among some of the Northern Edo. For instance, Sigmund Koelle was informed by the two recaptives from Iheve (present day Iheve) that they were sold for their crime of theft.³⁸

A banished criminal was as good as sold. He or she was very vulnerable to enslavement and consequent sale. Banished people were not welcomed in any community as strangers and visitors had their background thoroughly investigated before acceptance and settlement in the new community.³⁹ According to Christopher Okojie, a banished person was "*usually led up to the village boundary and left to his fate which might be death in the hands of wild beasts or capture by slave raiders*".⁴⁰ The banished person had no protection from the state. Egharevba noted that "*if the assaulted person is a criminal, no fine would be inflicted on the as-*

³⁵ EGHAREVBA, *Benin Laws and Customs*, p. 56.

³⁶ OKOJIE, pp. 102, 242, 391.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 334.

³⁸ S. W. KOELLE, *Polyglotta Africana or a Comparative Vocabulary of Nearly Three Hundred Words and Phrases in More Than One Hundred African Languages*, London 1865, p. 8.

³⁹ O. EDMONYI, *Benin System of Government and Culture*, Mimeo [sine anno], p. 52.

⁴⁰ OKOJIE, p. 103.

sailant or assaulter".⁴¹ Banished criminals also posed a threat and security problems to the Kingdom. Since they could not reside in any community, they were answerable to no one. Some of these individuals took to residing in the heart of the forest and became known as *Izigha* (bandits and manic killers). They were reputed for their raids on communities for kidnapping and stealing purposes and were also known for their banditry on trade routes.⁴² Smuggling, slave raiding, trading and mercenary jobs were also taken up by some banished people. The European trading interlopers, civil and inter-state wars and organized slave raiding activities provided ample opportunities for these activities. Mercenaries of Edo origin are known to have participated in slave producing activities such as the Yoruba civil wars and Nupe slave raids, which affected the Northern Edo, and parts of Esan.⁴³

Kidnapping, banishments, raids, and wars exposed people of the Kingdom and other people of Edo origin to enslavement throughout the period of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Such slaves found their way to the various slave markets. For instance, Prince Abhulimen of Ewu in Esan, who was sold by his father into slavery in the late nineteenth century, was only redeemed somewhere in Northern Nigeria in 1903. In this way, natives of the Kingdom and other slaves of Edo origin were sold to European merchants without necessarily passing through Ughoton—the official port of Benin Kingdom and other ports of Benin River. Since they were acquired outside Benin Kingdom port areas, they would be assumed to be indigenes of the port areas in which they were acquired.

The Vulnerability of Practitioners of Sorcery and Witchcraft to Enslavement in Edo Society

The groups most vulnerable to enslavement among the Edo people were diviners and practitioners of witchcraft and sorcery or harmful magical arts. Egharevba describes, these categories of people thus: "*Native doctors* [...] *were the most popular of all classes in Benin, they were also the most feared, honoured and respected by all.* [...] *There were three*

⁴¹ EGHAREVBA, *Benin Laws and Customs*, p. 107.

⁴² Interview with Madam Osemwenowa EREBE, aged 80 years, at her Costain Road, Benin City residence, May 1986, and interview with Chief Thompson IMASOGIE, aged 92 years, at his Sokponba Road, Benin City residence, May 1986.

⁴³ J. U. EFGHAREVBA, *Some Prominent Bini People*, Neldeln 1971, p. 56; OKOJIE, p. 393.

kinds of native doctors: (a) medicinal or curative doctors, (b) divination doctor, (c) priest, or juju doctor, though in many cases their functions overlap.”⁴⁴

In spite of the respect they commanded, they were the most vulnerable people, any breach in their practice, which endangered people and the community was met with serious reprisals. Divining and herbal medicine were lucrative professions, which attracted people to their practice. As a result, diviners and herbalists were numerous in Benin Kingdom and other Edo polities. The diviners/herbalists constituted thirty-two out of the sixty-eight palace guilds of Benin Kingdom.⁴⁵ There were many more outside these guilds as well as people who were knowledgeable in these arts without professionalizing their practice. Their large number is not unconnected with the critical role of religion in Edo society.

Pre-colonial Edo society was highly religious and religion permeated virtually all aspects of life. Human life was largely interpreted in terms of activities of supernatural forces ranging from the Supreme Being or God, known as *Osanobua* or *Oghene*, through lesser gods and divinities known as *Ihen n’uri* (meaning that they numbered two hundred and one). Some examples of broadly revered divinities and deities are *Olokun* – a trans-Edo god of the sea and prosperity and *Ogun* – a trans-Edo god of iron and war. Others are deities known as *Ebo* such as *Ovia* – a local pan – Edo deity worshipped in Bini and Esan areas, *Okhuaihe* – a local deity of Ikhuen clan as well as ancestral and other spirits known as *Erinmwini* were the subjects of more localized reverence. There was also the belief in the existence of witchcraft and magical arts. Other mystical forces were (and are) believed to reside in the human person such as *Ehi* a guardian spirit, *Uhunmwunamure* – a person’s head – the seat of luck and so on.⁴⁶

People’s life fortunes were believed to depend on their ability to gain the favours of these supernatural forces as well as those of fellow human beings. Failure meant disaster or misfortune. Hence, people in Edo society from birth to death needed intermediaries to intercede

⁴⁴ EGHAREVBA, *Benin Laws and Customs*, p. 51.

⁴⁵ IGBAFE, pp. 392–395.

⁴⁶ U. USUANLELE, *State and Class in Benin Division, 1897–1960: A history of Colonial Domination and Class Formation*, M. A. Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria 1988, pp. 56–63.

on their behalf with these supernatural forces governing their lives.⁴⁷ These intermediaries or mediators were priests, diviners and medicine men invested with higher powers and/or knowledge by which they gained access to the supernatural.

One of the means of knowing the wishes or actions of the supernatural forces was through divination, which relied upon the use of some systematised knowledge or oracular means to proffer solutions to problems or predict the future. Divination existed in many and varied forms among the Edo peoples. Some of these divination practices existed independently of religious worship and cults, while others were dependent on religious cult practices. Two types of divination exist among the Edo people: one that uses material objects for divination and the one that uses no objects.

Divination without the use of oracular objects is known as *Obo-Iro*. In this system, the diviner listens to the problem brought by the client and then meditates on what has been said while gazing at the sky with intense concentration. After this exercise, the diviner proffers advice and/or solutions and makes prescriptions. This meditative sky-gazing system of divination is also practiced in Olokun cult by the *Olokun* priest or priestess.⁴⁸ But not all *Obo-Iro* are attached to or dependent on religious and/or cult ownership.

The divination system that uses oracular objects is known as *Obo-Iha*. There are many types such as the *Ewawa* which uses sculpted objects, *Akhuekuehi* which uses *Akhuehuehi* seeds tied in a string, *Akpele* which uses various objects that are thrown in a straw tray, *Evbe* uses cotyledons of four or eight kolanuts, while *Olokun* uses combination of cowries, coins, shells, and keys which are thrown in a straw tray filled with white chalk powder, *Ifa Orunmila* (uses string pods and is of Yoruba origin, and *Ominigbon* or *Oguega* uses sixteen halved *Oguega* seed pods which are stringed in fours). Not all the *Obo-Iha* are attached or dependent on religious or cult worship.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ O. EBOHON, *The Role and Responsibility of a Priest in the Nigerian Society*, Benin City [sine anno], p. 3.

⁴⁸ O. IMASOGIE, *Olokun: The Divinity of Fortune*, Ibadan 1980, p. 32.

⁴⁹ Interview with Mr. Ikponmwonsa OSEMWEGIE, practitioner of *Ominigbon* divination, poet, playwright and cultural activist at his Benin City residence, December 1996.

For instance, *Ominigbon* or *Oguega* divination is not attached to or dependent on any religion or cult worship and it is one of the most popular divinations among the Edo people. When the *Iha Ominigbon* (also *Oguega* or *Ominigbon*) divination is consulted, the diviner, known as *Obo-Iha Ominigbon* or *Oka-Ominigbon*, sprays chewed alligator pepper on his *uta* (made up of a small piece of wood or bone or any object), which is believed to be the messenger of *Ominigbon*. The diviner then gives the *uta* to the client who puts it on his lip while saying the purpose of consultation. After this is done, the diviner throws at once the sixteen half pods of *Oguega* seeds strung in fours. The emergent pattern of sixteen half pods (either open with the inside part facing up or closed), have different names, codes, and accompanying folktales or verses numbering two hundred and fifty-six. The emergent pattern is usually read from top to bottom and then from right to left in order to know the code and accompanying folktale or verses, which is then interpreted to the client. It is on the basis of the code and interpretation, that the solution and rituals are prescribed.

Ominigbon Oguega divination has been found to be similar to the Yoruba *Ifa Orunmila*.⁵⁰ *Iha Ominigbon* is claimed to be simpler than *Ifa Orunmila*, for which the period of training is as long as ten to fifteen years.⁵¹ Apart from its use in fortune-telling and in finding solutions to personal problems, it is also used for judicial purposes, especially in detection of crimes or causes for misfortunes such as death or sickness or pestilence. Hence, divination can be said to have played (and still plays) a very important role in the life of the Edo people and their society.

In spite of diviner's important role in Edo society, they were very vulnerable to enslavement. Their practice made them susceptible to committing some of the crimes that were punishable by banishment and possible sale into slavery. These crimes, according to Egharevba, were "*witchcraft and malicious administering of medicine or ordeal*". It takes knowledge of divination or involvement with its religious cults to commit such crimes. The involvement of these professional diviners or medicine men in such crimes is further attested to by Egharevba, who stated: "*The majority of juju priests practice divination as well, by*

⁵⁰ J. U. EGHAREVBA, *Iha Ominigbon*, Benin City 1965, p. 3; A. EMOVON, "Ominigbon Divination", in: *Nigeria Magazine*, 151, 1984, p. 6.

⁵¹ EMOVON, p. 4.

means of their juju, without consulting any oracle people frequently apply to them to curse or anathematise their enemies.”⁵² Perpetrators of such crimes (which are obviously malicious administration or ordeal) were punished when discovered.

Another aspect of divination that would have made its practitioners vulnerable to enslavement was its itinerant nature. Diviners at times went to distant places to provide services. Traveling to distant places could also expose them to slave raiders or kidnappers, especially as there were security problems in and around the Kingdom. Likewise, diviners could be taken as prisoners of war, since they usually accompanied the army to render services during wars. In this way, diviners who were captured in wars could be enslaved and sold off. Some of them eventually reached the Americas through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Historical and Etymological Evidence from Benin Kingdom for Tracing the Origin of Obeah Practices in the Americas

Slaves of Edo origin from Benin Kingdom and other Edo polities were exported to the Americas through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. They were one of the first groups to be sold and exported, from as early as the 1470s and 1480s when the Portuguese reached the Niger Delta. These slaves were initially exported by the Portuguese to Sao Jorge do Elmina (present day Cape Coast, Ghana) Sao Tome and Principe, the Kongo (or Angola) and later to Lisbon, which became a major supplier to Europe and Spanish colonies in the Americas during the sixteenth century.⁵³ The British and French merchants who came in the sixteenth century continued until the nineteenth century to export slaves from the Kingdom to the Americas. The Dutch, who took over after the exit of the Portuguese, established factories in Ughoton to conduct trade with Benin and to collect slaves for export. Trading alongside them, were Sao Tome and Principe Island merchants who also bought slaves from the Kingdom for export to Santo Domingo, San Juan, and Brazil.⁵⁴

Apart from the evidence of European slave traders and their agents purchasing of slaves from the Benin Kingdom and slaves of Edo ori-

⁵² EGHAREVBA, *Benin Laws and Customs*, p. 51.

⁵³ RYDER, pp. 35–66.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 66, 168.

gin from their neighbours, the destination of some of these slaves are also fairly well documented. Sao Tome as one of the earliest destinations for slaves from Benin, and its Creole language is now known to have a significant Edo influence.⁵⁵ Hilary Beckles has shown that in the first half of the sixteenth century, the Dutch supplied the bulk of the slaves to Barbados with Bight of Benin coming next to Angola in the quantity supplied.⁵⁶ Beckles went further, to include Edo as the ethno-linguistic origin of some of these slaves.⁵⁷ Alonso de Sandoval who resided in the Spanish port of Cartagena (present-day Colombia in South America) collected information from slaves and ship captains who gave him explicit descriptions of life and events in Benin which were used for his book publication in 1627.⁵⁸ Edo words and names have also been found in the Gullah language of the U. S. states of Georgia and South Carolina.⁵⁹ In Africa, Edo slaves were amongst the recaptives of the nineteenth century settled in Sierra Leone. S. W. Koelle collected information on language from one Agmoifo (possibly Agbonifo) or James Johnson, a Sawyer and slave recaptive at York, Sierra Leone whose language was obviously the Edo dialect of Benin City (where he claimed to have been born and raised until his enslavement at the age of eighteen), and who claimed to have few of his countrymen living in Freetown.⁶⁰ In addition to these, were other recaptives of Edo origin specifically Ihewe or Isewe (most probably Ihevbe or Sebe in present day Owan East Local Government, Edo State, Nigeria), and Oloma.⁶¹ The recaptives in the Sierra Leone case are consistent with the findings of David Eltis and David Richardsons that “with nearly 30,000 departures in the seventy years after 1721, Benin was not sealed off

⁵⁵ L. I. FERAZ, *The Creole of Sao Tome*, Johannesburg 1979, pp. 95–97.

⁵⁶ H. BECKLES, *Black Rebellion in Barbados: The Struggle against Slavery 1627–1838*, Bridgetown 1987, p. 19.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

⁵⁸ J. THORTON, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1680*, Cambridge 1992, p. 154.

⁵⁹ R. WESCOTT, “Bini Names in Nigeria and Georgia”, in: *Linguistics*, 15, 1974, pp. 21–34; W. S. POLLITZER, *The Gullah People and their African Heritage*, Athens 1999, pp. 10–11.

⁶⁰ KOELLE, pp. 2–4, 8.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

from the slave trade to quite the extent that earlier interpretations would have us believe".⁶²

Considering Itsekiri and Ijaw peoples and Benin Kingdoms very early contact and trade with Europeans and other neighbouring African groups and polities, slaves of Edo origin were purchased from various sources and exported from the numerous ports in both the Bights of Benin and Biafra, from the Gold Coast to Bonny and Calabar. The various European nationals including the Spanish who were mainly buyers of African slaves received slaves of Edo origin into their colonies including the Spanish Caribbean colonies, and Jamaica, which was to become an English colony. The English colony of Barbados also received Edo slaves through Dutch merchants. When the English took over Jamaica in 1655, they met African slave maroons who continued their resistance against the English.⁶³

Life on the American slave plantations and in the Maroon communities presented their own specific spiritual, psychological and material challenges. They sought solutions to their problems in the religious and cultural values, which they remembered from their African homelands. Problem solving institutional practices like divination and associated religious practices were used by the transplants from Africa. The Edo people shared some divination and religious divinity worship (such as *Ifa* divination and associated *Orunmila* divinity, *Ogun* etc.) with groups like the Yoruba and Fon and would have participated in and contributed to their establishment of these commonly-held practices in the Americas. It has been shown that groups other than mainstream Yoruba people contributed to the establishment and practice of *Ifa* in Brazil.⁶⁴

But in some other areas, Edo cultural influence seems to have predominated from the earliest time. Slaves of Edo origin were alleged to be rebellious,⁶⁵ and some were diviners and herbalist who were knowledgeable in the practice of witchcraft and sorcery. These qualities would have earned them leadership positions in some of the ear-

⁶² D. ELTIS – D. RICHARDSON, "West Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade: New Evidence of Long-Run Trends", in: *Slavery and Abolition*, 18, 1, 1997, p. 27.

⁶³ P. SHERLOCK – H. BENNET, *The Story of the Jamaican People*, Kingston 1998, p. 27.

⁶⁴ W. F. FENSER – P. VERGER, *Dilogun: Brazilian Tales of Yoruba Divination Discovered in Bahia*, Lagos 1989, p. v.

⁶⁵ RYDER, p. 125.

liest communities. In turn, this enabled them to establish their cultural and linguistic influences in these communities. These diviners-turned-leaders would have retained the professional title of *Obo* (also *Obo-Iro* or *Obo-Iha*) as they were referred to by the Edo in Africa. *Obo* is a generic name for “diviner”, *Iha* is generic name for “divination”, and *Obo-Iha* is also a generic name for “diviner”. It is only when one wants to specify the type of divination or diviner that *Obo-Iro* is used for diviners who do not use oracular objects and *Obo-Iha* is used for diviners who use oracular objects. Both systems would have been easy to practice especially as some of them did not require cults or shrines to operate.

Reports on some of the slave and Maroon communities in seventeenth century Jamaica observed that their leaders who were also witchdoctors or diviners were called “*Obi*” or “*Obeah man*” and used the power and belief in the “*Obi*” to control their communities.⁶⁶ In this mixed ethnic community, Edward Byran further observed the Maroons to speak a “*dissonance of the African dialects, with a mixture of Spanish and broken English*”.⁶⁷ Given this linguistic situation, the words *Obo*, *Obo-Iro* and *Obo-Iha* were probably contracted and corrupted into “*Obeah*”.

Obeah as a generic name for divination, associated beliefs and ritual practices in many African communities in the Americas, is similar to these practices among the Edo people and some other African groups.⁶⁸ On the basis of this etymological closeness between the Edo words “*Obo-Iha*” or “*Obo-Iro*” and “*Obo*” and the Caribbean creole word “*Obeah*”, it is inferred that *Obeah* might have been derived from the Edo word and term. The divination and ritual practices of slaves of Edo origin who were among the earliest Africans to arrive in the Americas influenced the adoption of the term from the Edo. The blending of the cultures of various African ethnic communities’ cul-

⁶⁶ B. EDWARDS, “Observations on Disposition, Character, Manners and Habits of the Maroon Negroes of the Island of Jamaica and a Detail of the Origin, Progress and Termination of the late War between these People and the White Inhabitants 1796”, in: R. PRICE (ed.), *Maroon Societies: Rebel Communities in the Americas*, New York 1973, p. 240.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ I. FRANCIS, “*Obeah: An African Traditional Cult Practice in Grenada*”, in: *Aman: Journal of Society, Culture and Environment*, 3, 2, 1984, pp. 65–69.

tures under the impact of slavery in the Americas⁶⁹ combined with partial, temporary restriction of slave exports from Benin Kingdoms as well as the influx of slaves from other African ethnic groups to the Americas, put the distinctive Edo character of Obeah practice under strain. Obeah practice would have been mixed up with similar practices from other African groups and such hybridization would have blurred the distinctive Edo cultural character, while retaining the original Edo name and possibly word stock.

Conclusion

This article has explored previous speculations on the African origin of Obeah in the Americas and showed the impossibility of elision of the diphthong “Nd” and consonant “D” from the Igbo words “Ndi-Obea” and “Dibia” respectively to get at the etymology of Obeah and derive its origin as argued by Chambers and supported by Handler and Bilby. The article went on to show how the limitations of Handler’s and Bilby’s criteria of words in various African languages precluded them from considering other words and meanings in the various African languages. The article argued that the various ways in which slaves of Edo origin entered the Trans-Atlantic market and the Americas without necessarily passing through Benin Kingdom’s port and official trade commodities by focusing on the internal history of relations with their neighbours and posits that the Kingdom’s contribution might be more than hitherto asserted. The article also argued that since practitioners of witchcraft and sorcery amongst whom were diviners generically known as *Obo* (or *Obo-Iro* and *Obo-Iha* to specify the type) were most vulnerable to banishment and consequently enslavement and export. For this reason, they might have introduced these divination and other religions practices, which gave the name Obeah to their practice in the Americas. The divination and other associated religio-cultural practices of the slaves of Edo origin might have been hybridized by the influx of slaves from other ethnic groups, which blurred the distinctive Edo cultural stamp over time, while the Edo name by which the practice was established in the Caribbean

⁶⁹ O. PATTERSON, *Slavery and Slave Revolts: A Sociohistorical Analysis of Maroon Societies; Rebel Communities in the Americas*, New York 1973, pp. 250–252.

survived. This was in a corrupted and contracted form as Obeah or Obi, which came to be used for Obo-Iha and/or Obo-Iro and Obi for Obo.

This article postulates that since the dominant literature on the Benin Kingdom have tended to emphasize marginal participation and contribution to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the Benin Kingdom and the slaves of Edo origin were overlooked in their contribution to the culture of the African diasporas in the Americas. This is further reinforced by the fact that Edo culture and language is largely understudied, and this would have made a comparative study of Edo culture and African diaspora culture and language in the Americas relatively difficult to undertake. It is recommended that more research should be undertaken on this comparative study of the culture and language of Edo people and those of the African diaspora in the Americas.

The Emergence of a Modern Pilsen and Struggle of the Czech National Party for the National Emancipation of the Czech Majority in Pilsen in the Latter Half of the 19th Century, Using the Krofta Family as an Example

*Naděžda Morávková**

This paper aims to describe the influence and fate of the prominent Pilsen family Krofta in the latter half of the 19th century and, based on his biography, show the typical process of the formation and development of national capital entrepreneurship and finance. It also attempts to illustrate the penetration of Czech influence into the city administration and local politics and capture the changes in the lifestyle of townspeople and the intelligentsia during the 19th century. The history of the Krofta family is a typical example of how the process of the National Revival reached its peak in a local setting outside Prague.

[Josef Krofta; Pilsen in 19th century; Czech National Party and Old Czech political club; The City Savings Bank in Pilsen]

Introduction

Few Czech cities experienced such rapid development, be it economic, industrial, building or demographic, as Pilsen in the 19th century. From being a predominantly artisan-agrarian medieval town, within a few decades it had developed into a centre of modern industry. The population rose from 5,246, as recorded in the census of 1787,¹ to

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¹ J. STRNAD (ed.), *Listář královského města Plzně a druhdy poddaných osad*, Plzeň 1901, p. 910.

100,000 recorded in 1917.² During the Napoleonic Wars Pilsen grew relatively quickly to extend far beyond the erstwhile medieval fortification walls, which had been uncompromisingly removed in the 1780s. The beginning of the 19th century saw rapid housing development spreading northwards into the Saxon district; similar development was only slightly slower in the south-eastern Prager district. In the latter half of the 19th century the new construction of modern tenement blocks filled the Imperial district, extending some distance south-west from the former fortification walls. This construction work was forced by industrial development, which above all gradually changed a once medieval town into what in modern times is known as “black Pilsen”, the metropolis of the west of Bohemia. During this period Pilsen became the second largest and richest city in the Czech kingdom, immediately after Prague.

In the first half of the 19th century industry was still emerging within a traditional framework of crafts typical of medieval Pilsen – drapery, tanning and from the 17th century also small-scale ironworks and ceramics. In 1836 pottery painter Karel König founded a ceramics factory in Lochoťín; in 1857 there appeared the stove-making factory of Tomáš Khüry in the then Střelecká, now Pallova, Street. The beginnings of large-scale production could also be seen in the food industry – milling, sugar, distilling. Hýra Mill in Prokop Street was the first factory in Pilsen to use steam-powered machinery. Jewish capital featured regularly in the first Pilsen factories; the most successful entrepreneurs included, amongst others, the Lederer brothers and David Leopold Levit. In 1839 a committee of townspeople with brewing rights decided to found a modern brewery in a location known as Bubeneč in the Prager suburb. It was here in 1842 that brewing began of what later became the world famous Pilsner beer.

In the second half of the 19th century there gradually appeared proper industrial factories. In addition to the well-known Waldstein ironworks there was also the engineering works of the Belani Brothers, Bartelmus foundry and enamel works, state railway workshops, Hirsch nail and wire works, Pilz engineering works, Brožík coach

² I. MARTINOVSKÝ et al., *Dějiny Plzně v datech od prvních stop osídlení až po současnost*, Plzeň – Praha 2004, p. 122.

workshop, Klotz brickworks, Piette paper mill, Gambrinus brewery company and many others.

Industrialisation required the development of transport, infrastructure, building, education, health care, culture – especially the press, theatre, social life, sport.³ It also brought an interest in national emancipation. As early as the 1840s there were visible signs of a struggle between German and Czech capital. This was accompanied by an increasingly intensive political involvement of Czech townspeople at both city and regional level, as well as in the power structure as a whole.

On 30 June 1850 Pilsen abolished the regulated town hall, which was replaced by an elected local council. Although the last administration of the incumbent burgomaster Martin Kopecký had defended in exemplary fashion the interests of Pilsen people, council elections still offered a new political opportunity and the possibility of fighting to increase Czech influence over German interests, which might have

³ By way of illustration, here are some significant dates in the development of the economy, society and national life in Pilsen in the latter half of the 19th century: 1860 saw the ceremonial opening of railway transport in Pilsen, initially privately owned; in 1850 the Pilsen Chamber of Commerce and Trade commenced its activities, followed by the City Savings Bank in 1857; in 1858 a Pilsen – Mariánské Lázně telegraph line was set up; 1883 brought the first Pilsen telephone network for 11 participants; 1860 saw the ceremonial lighting up of the first gaslights in what is today Kopecký and Smetana Gardens; in 1889 a new municipal waterworks in Homolka commenced operations; in 1854 J. M. Schmid started publishing the modern periodical *Der Pilsner Bote*; in rapid succession city discussion clubs appeared – first Slovanská lípa (Slavic Linden), then Měšťanská Beseda (Burghers' Club), Řemeslnická Beseda (Craftsmen's Club), Občanská Beseda (Citizens' Club), Hlahol, Sokol, the Vlastimil Reading Association, National Pošumavská Association and many others, including for workers; new schools appeared, especially high schools with Czech as the language of tuition: the best known included the Czech higher realschule in Veleslavínova Street, built in 1865, soon upgraded to a realschule-grammar school and later converted to the first Czech realschule; specialised schools appeared: from 1876 there was a German state industrial school (the second in Bohemia as a whole after Liberec) with engineering and construction departments; from 1886 there was a Czech business school with two classes; in 1876 the city library was founded; thanks to the efforts of Pavel Švanda from Semčice and Vendelín Budil the Pilsen Czech Theatre was emancipated; in 1893 after lengthy efforts there was success in starting the construction of a museum; from 1832 a new city hospital was opened at the end of Veleslavínova Street in the direction of today's 5th May Gardens etc. For more on the development of Pilsen in the 19th century, see especially works by Ladislav Lábek, Jaroslav Schiebl, Fridolín Macháček, Václav Čepelák and Miloslav Bělohávek listed in the literature.

been in a minority but were supported by Vienna. After the collapse of the Bach regime in the 1860s, there was a considerable increase in Czech political strength in Pilsen too. As early as 1864 Czech candidates were winning elections to the local council, Landtag and Imperial Council at lower level committees and in 1897 to the highest, so-called supreme body, which hitherto had favoured German candidates.⁴ True, Czech politics was to some extent weakened by a splintering into Old Czechs, who for years occupied key positions on the council, and Young Czechs, whose influence became more prominent towards the turn of the century; nonetheless, despite minor disagreements, in 1893 all Czech politicians in Pilsen, with the exception of the Social Democrats, came together in the Czech National Club.⁵ Their common efforts contributed to the transformation of Pilsen into a prosperous modern city. Patriotism and the struggle for national emancipation were strong unifying elements. For a long time members of the council had the support of voters and enjoyed considerable popularity. This in turn gave them a sense of satisfaction from the extensive and often exhausting commitment to their job which was frequently required in an era burdened with patriotic struggles.⁶ Only political disagreements following initial successes in the effort for Czech emancipation, plus an increase in social tension linked with the appearance of a left-wing opposition in the form of workers' unions and parties at the end of the 19th century, broke what up to that time had been basically a united political bloc in Pilsen. Nonetheless, it should be noted that representatives of the Czech National Party in Pilsen played a significant role in modernisation of the city during the latter half of the 19th century and its transformation into a prospering industrial metropolis of the region. They contributed to promoting the power of the Czech majority in politics, economics and culture.

Now let us focus on one of the politicians involved, burgomaster Josef Krofta and his family. The history of this family and the biographies of its prominent members are a characteristic illustration of the typical career development of Czech national politicians, entrepreneurs and intellectuals, often in the shape of one person, from the

⁴ Archiv města Plzně (further only AMP), Okresní výbor a okresní zastupitelstvo collection, Box Seznam členů výboru a zastupitelstva okresu 1868–1899, inv. no. 4823.

⁵ Ibidem, Zápisy ze schůzí zastupitelstva 1865–1921, inv. nos. 4805, 4779–87.

⁶ See the Pilsen press of the time, especially *Der Pilsner Bote* and *Plzeňské noviny*.

19th century up to and including the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic.

The Krofta Family

The Pilsen Krofta family came from the small village of Potvorov, near Kralovice, in the north of the Pilsen region. This poor village was in no way exceptional apart from its Church of St Nicholas. This valuable single-nave Romanesque construction with an apse and four smaller annexes is one of the oldest preserved buildings in the region. According to available sources, it appeared between 1220 and 1240 and was clearly inspired by Bavarian-Romanesque architecture. Maybe it was from the strength of this genius loci, or maybe the influence of the rural chronicler Hruška, who was his father's grandfather on the maternal side,⁷ that from a backwater rural setting there emerged an educated and passionate lawyer, future mayor of Pilsen and deputy of the Imperial Council and Landtag, Josef Krofta, father of the First Republic emissary and minister Kamil Krofta. In the 19th and 20th centuries the family spread considerably; today its ranks contain many prominent lawyers, doctors, teachers and artists, including the prominent Strettio family of creative artists.

The first mention of the family name Krofta refers to a farmer, undoubtedly of German origin, in the tax register from 1654,⁸ where he declared ownership of 19 strychs at Nynice in the Pilsen region. In the Theresian Cadastre of 1713 the owner of the farm is given as Matouš Kroft. In the cadastre from the end of the 18th century there appears the name Vojtěch Krofta. One of the bearers of the surname Krofta, who was born according to the birth register 5 August 1820 in Obora near Plasy in a farmhouse known as Fránovský grunt, got married accord-

⁷ Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd České republiky, v. v. i. (further only MÚA AV ČR), Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, R. KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofta a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby", typescript, 36 sheets, unnumbered, 1925. Additional copy: AMP, Literární pozůstalost (further only LP) Josef Krofta collection, sign. 64/16.

⁸ O. BAUER (ed.), *Berní rula*, Sv. 1, K edici berní ruly: úvodní pojednání, Praha 1950, p. 129; M. DOSKOČILOVÁ (ed.), *Berní rula*, 23, Kraj Plzeňský, Díl I, Praha 1952, p. 442; A. CHALUPA et al. (eds.), *Tereziánský katastr český*, Sv. 2, Rustikál (kraje K-Ž), Sumář a rejstřík, Praha 1966, p. 523. Cf. also F. MACHÁČEK, "Rod a rodina", in: J. WERSTADT (ed.), *O Kamilu Kroftovi, historikovi a diplomatu. Stati psané k jeho šedesátinám*, Praha 1936, pp. 11–19.

ing to the marriage register 24 November 1840 in another village near Plasy, namely Potvorov. He took as his wife Anna Hrušková, a widow after Jan Hruška but also the daughter of Josef Hruška, a farmer in Potvorov (no. 46) and Barbora, daughter of Jakub Koza, likewise a farmer from Potvorov (no. 47), and Marie, née Machovcová (Potvorov, no. 6). It was into this marriage that the afore-mentioned Josef Viktor Krofta was born.⁹ Anna was from the chronicler Hruška's family, as noted in the memoirs of their descendants Kamil and Richard Krofta.¹⁰ This concludes our brief summary of the Krofta family. The next section will take a more detailed look at Josef Viktor Krofta.

JUDr. Josef Viktor Krofta (1845–1892)

Josef Viktor Krofta was born 27 February 1845 as the first of seven children of farmworker Jan Krofta (1820–1911) and his wife Anna, née Hrušková (1818–1910) in Potvorov, building no. 46.¹¹ This house no longer exists, having been destroyed by fire shortly after Josef Krofta's death. Josef's mother was a native of Potvorov; his father came from Obora near Plasy and originally earned his living as a carter.¹² The afore-mentioned ancestors of Jan Krofta had once been German settlers who came to Bohemia during the Thirty Years' War; by the 19th century, however, the family was completely Czech.¹³ Father Jan was a simple peasant who in his youth had even experienced forced labour and was unable to read or write.¹⁴ Mother Anna, however, was a cultivated and well-read woman who led the young Josef to a respect for

⁹ "Porta fontium. Sběrka matrik západních Čech. Matrika Církve římskokatolické, farní obvod Potvorov", <http://www.portafontium.eu/iipimage/30067478?x=-337&y=-40&w=1603&h=901> [2015–12–20].

¹⁰ MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofty a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby"; K. KROFTA, *Vzpomínka na rodiče. Památce JUDra Josefa Krofty a jeho choti Marie*, Plzeň 1932; AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 59/1. Birth certificate of Josef Viktor Krofta.

¹¹ AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 59/1. Birth certificate of Josef Viktor Krofta.

¹² MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofty a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby".

¹³ KROFTA, *Vzpomínka na rodiče*, p. 4.

¹⁴ He was not, however, "simple-minded", as JUDr. Richard Krofta recalls literally in his memoirs. Private archives of Mrs Johana Matějčková, great-granddaughter of Richard Krofta, R. KROFTA, "Ze starcovy paměti a zásuvky. Výstřižek ze života jedné rodiny a její doby", typescript, 1950, p. 6.

literature.¹⁵ The boy's knowledge and potential for learning were spotted by local priest Leopold Droz, who recommended the parents send their son at the age of 11 to the main school in Rakovník. The parents heeded this advice and enrolled their son at the school, which he subsequently attended for one school year, 1855–1856. He performed with distinction and tried to master especially the basics of German. Soon he was recommended for the German premonstratensian grammar school in Pilsen.¹⁶ Before this, however, he spent a language-orientated stay in Germany, since teaching at the grammar school was conducted exclusively in German, of which the young Josef still did not have a sufficient command.¹⁷ He was accepted at the grammar school, where he subsequently performed excellently.¹⁸ Among his teachers at that time there were such prominent names as, for example, Josef František Smetana,¹⁹ the well-known Pilsen revivalist and cousin of

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ The building of today's Education and Research Library in Smetana Gardens, Pilsen.

¹⁷ "Learning German was necessary for study since at that time there was no secondary school offering tuition in Czech. For this reason Josef was sent to Germany as part of a deal, whereby he was given to a farmer in a nearby German village in order to learn German, and in exchange the Krofta family accepted a boy from the said farmer's family. The boys received full protection in their guest families, with neither having to pay anything extra; however, in their new setting they had to serve as a replacement for their counterpart, with whom they had exchanged places." Private archives of Mrs Johana Matějčková, great-granddaughter of Richard Krofta, KROFTA, "Ze starcovy paměti a zásuvky", pp. 6–7.

¹⁸ AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 59/19. School-leaving examination certificate of Josef Krofta from 1864.

¹⁹ Josef František Smetana (1801–1861), secondary school teacher, Premonstratensian. He studied at grammar school in Hradec Králové, from 1819 went on to study philosophy in Prague, transferring two years later to the Archbishop's seminary, then in 1823 entered the Premonstratensian Order at Teplá near Mariánské Lázně. During his novitiate he studied theology in Prague, on 23. 10. 1825 he took the vows of canons regular and assumed the name Josef. 14. 8. 1827 he was ordained as a priest. In his further studies (natural history and physics) he continued in Vienna, passing his teacher's examinations in 1831 and in 1832 worked as a physics teacher at the Philosophical Institute in Pilsen. In 1849 he transferred to the Pilsen grammar school, where he taught both physics and natural history. His revivalist patriotic activity was extensive. He organised lectures about the Czech language and Czech literature, established Czech libraries (e.g. in Lochotín), organised amateur theatre performances and during the holidays looked for Czech language monuments in German-speaking regions. He also had a great influence on the nationalist awareness of his cousin Bedřich Smetana, who studied in Pilsen 1840–1843. Since he had been an active participant in the revolution of 1848 (he was local mayor of Lípa slovanská in Pilsen, wrote for the *Konstituční pražské noviny* newspaper, participated in the Prague

Bedrich Smetana, or the literatus Hugo Jan Karlík.²⁰ Another teacher of the young Josef Krofta was the revivalist intellectual Jan Nepomuk František Desolda.²¹ All these men ignited within him a passionate patriotism, especially Smetana who, in addition to natural sciences, liked to educate his charges in Czech history and literature. 22 September 1864 Josef Krofta passed his school-leaving examination²² and in the

Slavic Congress), in February 1849 he was banned from political activity and placed under police surveillance. He wrote for various publications, such as *Lumír*, *Časopis Českého musea*, *Živě*, *Rodinná kronika*, *Radbuza*, *Vlastimil*, *Květy* and *Časopis pro katolické duchovenstvo*. He was an author of professional literature as well as poetry. On 12 November 1874 a monument to him was unveiled in Smetana Gardens consisting of an above-lifesize statue with a commemorative plaque. The sculptor was Tomáš Seidan; the pedestal was designed by Tomáš Nechutný. Cf. "Regionální databáze osobností Knihovny města Plzně", <http://lanius.kmp.plzen-city.cz/clpr56.htm> [2015–12–20].

²⁰ Jan Hugo Karlík (1807–1894), cleric, Premonstratensian, pedagogue. Studied at grammar school in Jindřichův Hradec, philosophy in Prague and theology in České Budějovice. In 1830 he entered the Premonstratensian monastery in Teplá. After ordination as a priest there he taught history and clerical law. 1849–1860 teacher of Czech language at the Pilsen grammar school. Also worked as a vicar and priest in Úherce and until 1874 in Dobřany. From there he returned to the monastery in Teplá. He was the author of textbooks and religious literature. Cf. "Regionální databáze osobností Knihovny města Plzně", <http://lanius.kmp.plzen-city.cz/clpr56.htm> [2015–12–20].

²¹ Jan Nepomuk František Desolda (1811–1885), patriotic priest, pedagogue. After studying in Klatovy and Pilsen he entered the Premonstratensian Order and in 1837 was ordained as a priest. Worked as a chaplain in Litice and Dobřany. From 1847 he was a teacher of Czech at the German grammar school in Pilsen, where he later became head. As a teacher he aroused in young Czech people a sense of patriotism. He shone primarily as a translator. He was the first to provide a Czech translation of Plato's dialogues *Phaedo* (1867), *Euthyphro* (1871) and *Protagoras* (1871), which appeared in Kvíčala's *Bibliotéka klasiků řeckých a římských*. He translated numerous works by clerical writers, e. g. Tomáš Kempenský (*Zlatá kniha o následování Krista*, 1870), Alphonsus Maria de' Liguori (*Uctění velebné Svátosti oltářní*, 1871), St. Irenaeus (*Patero kněh proti kacířství*, 1876), Jan Zlatoušský (*O kněžství kněh šestero*, 1885), František Saleský (*Bohumila*, 1893). From German he translated *Základní pravidla katolického vychování* (1878), the work of Friedrich Clerico on raising children in the family. He also translated and compiled prayer books (*Svatý Alois, vzor a ochránce křesťanské mládeže*, 1871, *Kytice rajská, Svatyně sionská*, 1858 aj.). He published several shorter translations in the Catholic weekly *Blahověst*. As a translator he also participated in the completion of Frencl's edition of the Czech Bible (1861–1864), which was based on a German translation of the Bible. Cf. "Regionální databáze osobností Knihovny města Plzně", <http://lanius.kmp.plzen-city.cz/clpr56.htm> [2015–12–20].

²² AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 59/19. School-leaving certificate of Josef Krofta from 1864.

same year enrolled as an outstanding student at the Law Faculty of Charles University in Prague.

Krofta's university lecturers again included some famous names: historian and archivist Antonín Gindely; historian and politician Václav Vladivoj Tomek; historian and archaeologist Jan Erazim Vocel, whose subject Krofta signed up for additionally out of interest; lawyer and politician Antonín Randa; lawyer and politician Josef František Frič, father of the writer Josef Václav Frič. There were also several prominent names amongst Krofta's fellow students: Czech lawyer and politician Ignác Hauschild; politician and deputy Karel Adámek; well-known Prague advocate Bedřich Jahn senior; Sudeten German politician and minister Gustav Schreiner; future mayor of Pilsen and Krofta's direct successor Václav Peták; future professor at the Law Faculty Jiří Pražák; state prosecutor in Pilsen Josef Částek; grandson of Josef Jungmann and advocate in Kostelec nad Černými Lesy Jaroslav Musil, plus many others.²³ Krofta completed his studies in 1868²⁴ and, after passing all postgraduate examinations, was declared a qualified doctor of law of all categories 10 November 1870.²⁵ In the colloquium on theses from jurisprudence and state law which preceded his graduation, he defended modern democratic and liberal ideas.²⁶

Coming from a modest background, Josef Krofta greatly appreciated the opportunity to study and the sacrifices made by all his family. While still a student he tried to gain some income of his own so as to ease his family's burden. Immediately after passing his first postgraduate examination in the spring of 1869 he applied for the post

²³ MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofty a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby"; KROFTA, *Vzpomínka na rodiče*, p. 6; Private archives of Mrs Johana Matějčková, great-granddaughter of Richard Krofta, KROFTA, "Ze starcovy paměti a zásuvky", p. 7.

²⁴ AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 59/33. Final examination certificate of Josef Krofta from 1868.

²⁵ Ibidem, sign. 59/38. State doctoral examination certificate of Josef Krofta from 1870.

²⁶ Richard Krofta in his memoirs cites the credo of Josef Krofta, which was one of the ideas borne by these theses: "Common sense requires that appropriate human rights be granted to everyone in equal measure. All the power is from the people. The death penalty is neither just nor useful. It is desirable that enlightened persons be granted greater influence over the administration of church assets. A free-thinking constitution and advancing welfare are the main pedestals for increasing the population." Private archives of Mrs Johana Matějčková, great-granddaughter of Richard Krofta, KROFTA, "Ze starcovy paměti a zásuvky", p. 7.

of regional secretary in Manětín but was unsuccessful. Thus after his final examinations he began work at the advocate's office of JUDr. Jindřich Steinschneider, a Czech Jew, in Pilsen and remained there until May 1876.²⁷ From May to November of that year he continued to obtain the necessary practice as an articulated clerk at the regional court. Neither his work at the advocate's office nor that at the court was paid. At that time Krofta was being supported by the family of his wife, Marie Svátková, who had pledged herself to him at the age of 14, while Krofta was still a student. He married her soon after finishing his studies on 31 January 1871, once she had come of age. Krofta at that time was 25 years old.²⁸ Marie came from a well-situated family of merchants in Pilsen: her parents were the respected townspeople František Adalbert Svátek and Josefa Svátková, whose financial support of their son-in-law was no problem.²⁹ Another source of support and a friend to Josef Krofta was his brother-in-law, Richard Svátek, who was just one year older. Richard later became a district mayor in Pilsen, as well as a successful entrepreneur and member of the administrative board of the Burghers' Brewery in Pilsen.

The young married couple initially lived on the first floor of a house belonging to the bride's parents, which Krofta's father-in-law had set up for business purposes on the corner of Palacký Avenue and Kramář Gardens (today 35th Regiment Gardens), no. 70, directly opposite the barracks of the 35th regiment.³⁰ It was here that their children were subsequently born: Richard (1873), Marie (1874) and Kamila (1876). When Josef Krofta was finally able to open his own advocate's office, the family moved in 1878 to the so-called Tušnerovský house on the

²⁷ As Richard Krofta states in the above-mentioned typescript, even in those days Josef Krofta came across as a fearless fighting politician. He had to face minor disciplinary proceedings after criticising his opponent, Dr. Čečil in court for using the word "swindle"; however, his comments were made in anger under the influence of the "infectious atmosphere" of the office of Dr. Jonák. He returned briefly to Schneider's office as an articulated clerk in 1877. Ibidem, sheets 4 and 5. For more, see AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 59/58. Statement of Josefa Krofta about his work as an articulated clerk from 1877.

²⁸ MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofta a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby".

²⁹ For further details see the section on Marie Svátková-Kroftová.

³⁰ MACHÁČEK, p. 14; MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofta a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby"; KROFTA, *Vzpomínka na rodiče*, p. 6.

corner of Pilsen's main square and Zbrojnická Street. The building had undergone reconstruction to combine what had originally been two existing houses, nos. 109 and 110, previously rented out by Krofta's father-in-law (this building is now no. 229). The Krofta family had both their home and an advocate's office at this address and more children were born here: Otakar (1878), twins Josefa a Marta (1881), Libuše (1883) and Anna (1888).³¹ In 1877 JUDr. Josef Krofta passed his advocate's examinations and was officially registered on the list of defence lawyers valid from 1 January 1878.³² As a deputy and later also mayor of the city of Pilsen, Josef Krofta was active primarily in legal matters concerning national economy and finance – e. g. weights and measures reform, improvement of brotherhood cash offices, or the issue of the Pilsen railway station.

Marrying into a prominent Pilsen family helped Josef Krofta acquire the respectability of an honourable burgher. For all the undoubted personal qualities of the young advocate, who was an active participant in social life, patriotic issues and work in clubs, as well as a frequent contributor to newspapers, his marriage was beneficial for obtaining a favourable position amongst the townspeople and his subsequent election to the Landtag at the start of 1876, when he was still only 31 years old. The following year he was also elected to represent Pilsen on the Imperial Council. Although, along with other Czech deputies, he did not participate in the meetings for two years as a gesture of passive resistance, he did become active as a deputy as he was repeatedly elected up to 1890³³ when he resigned his imperial mandate in order to focus fully on his work as Pilsen burgomaster. He continued to carry

³¹ Altogether the Kroftas had ten children; however, three died prematurely (unbaptised twins František and Josef (b. 1871, d. 1871) and Libuše (b. 1884, d. 1888). Today the house no longer exists, having been replaced in 1910 by the building which still stands today. After Josefa Krofta's death in 1892, the family moved to a smaller flat at no. 922, Nerudova Street. Cf. MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofta a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby"; KROFTA, *Vzpomínka na rodiče*, p. 6; MACHÁČEK, p. 15.

³² AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 59/57. Advocate's licence of Josef Krofta from 1877.

³³ Several times he was praised by the City Council for his excellent work as a deputy and motivated again to accept an Imperial mandate. Cf. AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 62/28. Letter from the City Council of the royal city of Pilsen to JUDr. Josef Krofta dated 27 April 1885. Additional copy: AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 607/157a, 157b. Anniversary of the Czech Deputies Club for 1876 and 1877.

out responsibly his work as a Landtag deputy until his death. Here it is worth noting a comment by Karel Krofta on how his father, along with two other young Pilsen politicians, František Schwarz, also a close personal friend and closest collaborator, and Václav Peták, were strong supporters of active politics from the very beginning.³⁴

As a local politician and deputy Krofta demonstrated repeatedly that he was a passionate patriot who would not shirk from work or sacrifice where Bohemia was concerned, whether it be a question of culture – patriotic clubs in Pilsen or Czech education; economics – support for Czech capital and doing business in the country; or the political struggles of the age between a strengthening Czech majority population and the traditionally influential German minority in Bohemia's second most important city. Throughout his political career, Josef Krofta, as a member of the National Party and Old Czech political club honoured the Old Czech political programme. And this was true even in an era when he felt, especially with the signing of the so-called Punkta agreement in Vienna in 1890, that the times were moving in a different direction. His loyalty to his Old Czech mandate never wavered. One particular great authority for him, and at the same time a personal and family friend, was František Ladislav Rieger.³⁵ Rieger considered Krofta a very capable and reliable party member and thus was happy to entrust him with important Old Bohemian political tasks in the Pilsen district. He relied on him completely, proof of which is the following letter from Krofta's literary remains:

³⁴ KROFTA, *Vzpomínka na rodiče*, p. 7.

³⁵ The memoirs of Adolf Srb (1850–1933), journalist and Old Czech politician working for the dailies *Politik* and *Plzeňské listy*, reveal the interesting circumstances of Josef Krofta's entry into politics: "At the time decisions in the Old Czech Party concerning the list of candidates were taken by a small panel of confidants, headed by Dr. Rieger – in fact by Dr. Rieger himself and the panel willingly accepted his suggestion. It quite often happened, especially in the 1860s, that the panel only got to know their future deputy at the election itself, or even that they did not know him at all. [...] With Dr. Krofta, however, it was different. Having settled in Pilsen and married into the respected Svátek family, he soon achieved widespread popularity and his nomination as a parliamentary candidate was greeted with joy. It was in 1874 or 1875, when Dr. Rieger gave me the task of going to Pilsen and compelling Dr. Krofta to take over a parliamentary mandate, which however at that time was not carried out in practice because of the policy of passive opposition. Dr. Krofta hesitated, being reluctant to devote himself to politics, but in the end agreed to be a candidate and at a time when elections were often repeated, he was always elected by a large majority. In 1879 when Czech deputies entered the Imperial Council, Dr. Krofta was one of them and soon made his mark." A. SRB, *Z půl století. Vzpomínky Adolfa Srba*, Praha 1913, p. 162.

“Esteemed Sir,

Requiring sincerely that the political persuasion of the Czech nation be allowed to take its course, a committee of trustees of Czech deputies declared that prior to the forthcoming elections to the Imperial Council in all judicial regions, as well as in directly enfranchised towns, electoral committees be established, consisting of men who enjoy particular respect among the population and devote special attention to the political interests of the Czech nation, men who would see to it that they also recognised voters’ political opinions as well as men who, having gained the trust and favour of the voters, are able and willing to defend the rights of the nation in such fashion as the majority of deputies acknowledges as good. [...] Therefore I turn to you with an appeal, should it be possible, that through your direct personal involvement, you would organise and run such an electoral committee in the towns and administrative districts which you represent in the Council.

*With the greatest respect,
F. L. Rieger
Prague, 24 May 1879”³⁶*

The committed and faithful Old Czech Krofta did not disappoint Rieger. He considered adherence to the Old Czech philosophy a matter of honour and morality, regarding New Czechs in a certain sense as renegades. Nonetheless, more than once the New Czechs tried to win him over to their side. Evidence of this appears in a letter from the prominent politician, Imperial Council and Landtag deputy JUDr. Jakub Škarda,³⁷ who himself had transferred from the Old to the New

³⁶ AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, Box 607, sign. 142b. Letter from F. L. Rieger to J. Krofta.

³⁷ JUDr. Jakub Škarda (1828–1894) came from Skvrňany near Pilsen, from a prosperous farming family. He studied law in Prague and became one of the most prominent Czech lawyers of his time. He worked in Prague and also became involved in politics in the Prague City Council, and as a deputy in the Landtag and Reichsrat. He was also a law theorist, whose work concerned mainly the emerging modern local administration. He was a member of the National Party but in 1874 he left the Old Czechs since he considered the politics of passive resistance ineffective and misguided. He did not transfer immediately to the Young Czechs, first attempting to establish a third Czech party, sometimes even referred to as the Škarda Party; this, however, did not take root. Only at the end of the 1880s did he join the National Liberal Party. Throughout his life he had numerous links with Pilsen and the young local politicians there; he was a good advisor and tutor especially to Krofta and Schwarz.

Czechs. Through persistent pressure on Krofta, Škarda's intention was to gain his support for the New Czechs and convince him of the harm caused by passive politics. In a canvassing letter dated 10 March 1875 he wrote:

"Dear Sir,

For my part, I have long been of the firm conviction that by inaction we shall achieve nothing; the current inaction is no passive resistance, the conduct of which in this country has become a futile endeavour: it is idleness. Anyone will persuade me that idleness will lead nowhere in one's private life; how, then, could it possibly succeed in public life? We can see the fruits of many years of such idleness. Once we were fighting a common enemy; now we are maybe fighting more fiercely – but brother against brother. Idleness is the source of all evil. I remain firmly convinced that there will be no change in the miserable conditions, which sadden the heart of every true Czech, until once again the entire Czech nation rises to action worthy of it. Would that it were to happen soon! Now I have strayed from my topic and must request your forgiveness for allowing my thoughts free rein; I considered it necessary for you to know my opinion before you carry out an important right, namely voting for deputies to the Landtag. I make no secret of my political views and would not want to receive votes from anyone who disagrees with me. Decide now for yourself to whom you will give your vote and pay no heed to others. The matter is simple. If you believe it is possible and probable that deputies will achieve something for their motherland and nation by staying at home, then vote for whoever promises to remain inactive; if, however, based on your own experience, you consider that without work nothing grows, that every farmer must work with sweat on his brow so that his land will yield some crops, then you will realise that also in public life the much longed-for fruit will not fall into one's lap on its own, that it needs to be worked for with sweat on one's brow, and that the work is all the more intense when here and there lurks an enemy who would ruin the fruits even of the hardest labour. And when you realise that, you will vote for someone who tells you he wants to work on the land which was meant for him. [...]

*I remain your respectful servant,
JUDr. Jakub Škarda"³⁸*

³⁸ AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, Box 607, sign. 143. Letter from Jakub Škarda to Josef Krofta.

Krofta was not convinced by Škarda's arguments: he had his own ideas about passive resistance but remained faithful to Old Czechism and the Rieger line.

His relationship towards the Realists and Masaryk was more complex. Initially he had also rejected them as unpatriotic but later, thanks mainly to Masaryk, they gained his growing respect. Kamil Krofta recalls how his father, influenced by Masaryk, even began shortly before his death to learn English with Professor Klostermann.³⁹

Of course, from a Pilsen perspective, Krofta's work for the benefit of the local community was more important than his activity as a parliamentary deputy. Josef Krofta was first elected to the municipal council of the Pilsen region in 1876⁴⁰ in place of the deceased Jan Kleissl.⁴¹ Shortly thereafter he was named deputy mayor. He was a member of committees, especially that of finance. After the death of the municipal mayor, Karel Hahnenkamm in 1882, Krofta was chosen as his replacement, thus becoming a member of the city council. 7 May 1888, following the death of the short-term mayor JUDr. Karel Houška,⁴² he was elected Pilsen burgomaster by Czech votes against German.⁴³ Since he took this office very seriously, he resigned from his positions as municipal mayor and member of the Imperial Council

³⁹ KROFTA, *Vzpomínka na rodiče*, p. 8.

⁴⁰ He then remained a member of the district council for 16 and a half years. Cf. AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 62/9. Electoral certificate of Josef Krofta.

⁴¹ Jan Kleissl (1829–1876), also known as Jan Kleisl, was an Austrian and Czech entrepreneur and politician from Pilsen, in the 1860s and 70s he was a deputy of the Bohemian Landtag. He came from a family of immigrants to Pilsen from Tyrol at the end of the 18th century but identified himself with the Czech National Movement. By profession he was an entrepreneur and trader in Pilsen, where he was also active in public and political life. He was a member of the city council, deputy mayor and chairman of the local Sokol organisation. He first became a Pilsen councillor in 1864. In 1865 in the local administration he advocated support for the Czech theatre in Pilsen. In 1866 when the invading Prussian army was approaching Bohemia, Kleissl was entrusted with the transfer of valuable public property and important documents to safety in Linz. At the time he was one of the leading representatives of the young generation of Pilsen Czech politicians. He was also a rival of Emanuel Tuschner, who became mayor of Pilsen at the end of the 1860s. At the beginning of the 1870s he supported the beginning of the construction of a public water supply system in Pilsen.

⁴² JUDr. Karel Houška (1833–1889) became Pilsen burgomaster in 1888, following the death in that year of Pilsen burgomaster František Pecháček (in office 1873–1888). Less than eight months later, however, Houška himself died after a sudden stroke.

⁴³ MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k živo-

in order to devote himself fully to affairs of the city of Pilsen. After 16 years service in regional administration Krofta left behind him a relatively respectable legacy. He was destined to be burgomaster for a mere three years; however, there should be added to this the period when he was influencing the burgomaster's office via his friend and predecessor František Pecháček, with whom he consulted numerous issues.⁴⁴ In Krofta and such friends of his as Václav Peták, František Schwarz or Josef Čipera, Pecháček appreciated the views and opinions of the younger generation on the Pilsen political scene.

A review of Josef Krofta's legacy in the administration of Pilsen shows the extent of his influence. Under his leadership, Pilsen obtained a special city status which hitherto in the empire had been granted only to some German cities. It was thanks to Krofta's support during his time in office that Pilsen was transformed into a modern city: he supported the costly completion of the city water supply; there continued the construction of a sewage system and paving of the city; Krofta also supported repair work and the completion of new important roads throughout the region. New highways appeared, for example, from Pilsen via Lobzy to Božkov and Letkov, from Chrást via Kyšice and Letkov to Starý Plzenec, and from Pilsen to Štěnovice via Losiná; other roads to be built included Bolevec-Ledce-Tlučná, Horní (then Německá) Bříza-Hromnice and Nynice-Darová. Krofta supported the construction of new bridges, especially the Pražský and Saský bridges; construction work commenced on new bridges in Doudlevec, Doubravka and Radobyčice. He supported the development of a railway network running through Pilsen, as well as nationalisation of the railways. He was also active in improving public

topisu zemřelého Josefa Krofta a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby".

⁴⁴ Similar to the memoirs of accounting board members Čeněk Bílý and Jan Kessler, Richard Krofta also notes in his own memoirs: "In recent times under the mayorship of Pecháček the director of the fate of the Pilsen community has in fact been Dr. Krofta, or at the very least he exerts great influence on Pecháček. I judge this by their frequent friendly conversations and mutual visits. Every year Pecháček would visit Krofta at his summer residence in Richardov near Chrást (municipality of Smědčice, district of Rokycany) and Krofta would go to Pecháček's place for supper, where they were served the hunter's prey of the mayor, prepared in a variety of ways through the celebrated culinary art of the mayor's wife. My father went on a trip with Pecháček to the Giant Mountains and paid frequent visits to the Pilsen forests, for which Pecháček was a responsible official on the city council. The company of these two friends was usually supplemented by František Schwarz, MUDr. Josef Tyl, city doctor and personal doctor of all the afore-mentioned, as well as pharmacist Alois Formánek." Ibidem.

administration, arranging a review of all public property. He fought for a separate building for the industrial museum, a modern hospital building, supported the establishment of a city insurance company and played an active part in the process. He promoted changes in social areas, such as a new law on the Colliers Brotherhood Cash Office insurance company and a statute on public charity; he also had a new almshouse set up. In 1889 he became the initiator in the local administration and also the president of the preparatory committee for a public kitchen. This institution was first a cooperative, then from 1891 an association under the patronage of the municipality. Krofta was elected chairman of this association, which also operated a so-called soup charity that provided free food, at the authority's expense, to poor children.⁴⁵ Krofta was also active in the Kreutzer Association, founded in Pilsen in 1890 and based on the Sušice model: this served to support children at city schools, whose parents were poor. Thanks to Krofta, permanent grants were established for poor and diligent children.⁴⁶

During Krofta's time on the local council he and his friend Václav Peták ensured great attention was devoted to education in Pilsen. Peták in particular, an admirer of Pestalozzi's views on education, had an excellent knowledge of the monarchy's laws on education and as a deputy of the Landtag he was entrusted with the division of national education between 1875 and 1899. Both Peták and Krofta were convinced of the need for new, better Czech secondary schools for a Pilsen which was developing both industrially and commercially, and both men committed themselves to the cause. Thanks to their efforts during this period, Pilsen's first Czech realschule was set up at no. 42, Velešlavínova Street. The school was ceremoniously opened in 1864; then in 1871 it was transformed into an imperial-royal Czech state grammar school. It was one of the first Czech secondary schools of its kind.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ Until that time Pilsen had had only a German grammar school, Premonstratensian, which in fact Krofta himself had attended and he respected the institution. But that also made him more aware of the fact that the times demanded a Czech secondary school, even though many teachers at the German grammar school were committed Czech patriots and led their students, as Krofta himself had experienced, towards love and respect for the Czech nation. Putting through the proposal for a Czech grammar school was not easy as many people were calling for another German in-

A request for the establishment of a three-year upper secondary level Czech realschule was made by Emanuel Tuschner⁴⁸ at a meeting of the council on 22 November 1862. In fact his proposal was only for an upper secondary level realschule but the campaign for Czech as the language of tuition soon followed. The proposal contained a plan to finance the construction of the school by means of a so-called “beer kreutzer”, whereby for every mug of beer pulled one kreutzer would go to the city coffers to be spent on building costs: this was to be in effect until 1878. As early as October 1865 teaching commenced in the newly-built school. Its first head was František Částek, who came to Pilsen from the realschule in Loket. Částek was an outstanding pedagogue and patriot; a further fact in his favour was that the battle of the nationalist representatives, Krofta, Peták and Schwarz, for the Czech character of the realschule had ultimately been successful. Částek also held the position of a local school inspector in the Pilsen region and in the course of his work encountered an interesting project by Václav Křížek, a native of Strážov na Šumavě. In the town of Tábor, Křížek had established the first realschule-grammar school in Bohemia and elaborated a special study plan for this new type of school. The first two years of teaching were common for pupils of both the realschule and grammar school; then from the third year onwards tuition was split into a five year programme for the realschule students and six years for the grammar school. Částek was taken by the project and

stitution. The situation surrounding nationality was highly specific in Pilsen, as publicist Adolf Srb interestingly notes in his memoirs: “It used to be said that there are really three nationalities in Bohemia – Czechs, Germans and Pilseners (which, however, was true only of the propertied classes). The last mentioned could not decide on one or the other nationality, contributing nothing to either and caring only about their own welfare. This explains why, despite the enormous numerical superiority of the Czech population over the German, it took one much longer than in Prague to recognise that Pilsen is a Czech city.” SRB, *Z půl století*, pp. 136–137.

⁴⁸ Emanuel Tuschner (1828–1882), Pilsen burgomaster 1868–1873, Landtag and Reichsrat deputy. His time at the town hall saw the construction of an extensive water supply system, modification of the banks of the River Mže, building of new streets, renewed activity of the Czech theatre by Pavel Švanda from Semčice, girls’ high school established, etc. He purchased various property for the city of Pilsen, whose cost was covered only by promissory notes and the city’s budget showed a deficit. In 1873 he resigned from his position. He was arrested and charged but the court found him not guilty. He moved to Vienna, where he worked as a clerk for the Slavia Insurance Bank. He also died in Vienna.

persuaded the municipal council that Pilsen request details of the plan from Tábor. The Landtag school council ultimately decided in favour of this change and by the beginning of the 1871/1872 academic year, Částek had already set up a realschule in Pilsen. It was located in a newly constructed building at the end of Veleslavínova Street and built according to a plan by a Vienna architect with roots in Křimice, Moritz Hinträger.⁴⁹

Another important deed, for which both Krofta and Peták deserve credit, was the German realschule in Resslova Street, where patriot and writer Karel Klostermann taught; there was also the state industrial school at no. 931, Tylova Street. While this latter school was German, it had a majority of Czech students and teachers. From 1892 the newly formed Pilsen Czech Pedagogical Institute was also based here. In 1886 there appeared the Czech Higher Business School, later Business Academy, where Josef Krofta was also the chairman of the curatorium and committed himself to changing the status from private to state school and ensured significant financial support from the municipality.⁵⁰ In 1892, after lengthy preparation and thanks to Krofta's

⁴⁹ This was an educational institution of very high quality and is linked with the names of several renowned teachers: Tůma (Tomáš) Cimrhanzl, teacher of history and geography, propagator of Šumava history and geography; František Alois Hora, well-known Pilsen polonophile; composer and founder of the Pilsen Sokol organisation, Hynek Palla; music teacher Julius Koráb and many others. Many well-known names can be found amongst former students too, e.g. notable chemist Zdeněk Jahn; writer and pedagogue Josef Kožíšek; folklorist a supporter of Czech-Serbian solidarity Josef Zdeněk Raušar, and others. Both elder sons of Josef Krofta, Richard and Kamil, graduated from this school. The youngest son Otakar also started here but transferred to military school. V. SPĚVÁČEK, "Základy novodobého českého školství v Plzni", in: V. ČEPELÁK et al., *Dějiny Plzně II, od roku 1788 do roku 1918*, Plzeň 1967, pp. 127–132; F. ČÁSTEK, "Kronika obecní vyšší reální školy v Plzni. První roční zpráva obecní vyšší reální školy v Plzni", in: M. HRUŠKA, *Knih pamětní královského krajského města Plzně*, Plzeň 1883, pp. 869–882; V. ČEPELÁK, "K stému výročí budovy Pedagogické fakulty v Plzni", in: *Sborník PeF v Plzni: MXL a D*, Vol. 6, Plzeň 1965, pp. 5–32; M. SUCHÁ, "Plzeňské Klementinum. Historie jedné budovy", in: *Minulost Plzně a Plzeňska*, Vol. 3, Plzeň 1960, pp. 149–174; N. MORÁVKOVÁ, "K působení Františka Aloise Hory (1838–1916) – milovníka polského jazyka a kultury v západních Čechách / Wpływ Františka Aloisa Hory (1838–1916) – miłośnika języka i kultury polskiej w zachodnich Czechach", in: J. LIPOWSKI – D. ŻYGADŁO – CZOPNIK (eds.), *Podzwonne dla granic: Polsko-czeskie linie podziałów i miejsca kontaktów w języku, literaturze i kulturze*, Wrocław 2009, pp. 61–71.

⁵⁰ In 1913 Antonín Kostinec devoted the following words of thanks on the occasion

support, a second classical grammar school, Czech, was opened on Husova Street. Preparations were also begun for setting up a rural school, as well as a reform school for disturbed and problematic young people; here, however, success was not achieved during Krofta's lifetime.

For the support of education and culture, as will be seen below in the case of the Měšťanská Beseda building, Josef Krofta used all the means available to him, including for example his political status, or his position in the Pilsen City Savings Bank, where he held the position of manager. He put through the construction of a new savings bank building, kept the company prosperous and consistently led it to support the city, education and various patriotic and charitable institutions.

Primarily, though, Krofta was a thoroughly patriotic mayor. As he himself stated at his inauguration: *"I am a child of my times and with every vein of my heart I cling to my nation, to which I shall remain faithful till the very end."*⁵¹ He eloquently expressed his passionate patriotism in a commemorative speech on the occasion of the opening of new rooms at the Měšťanská Beseda building on 28 December 1876. Amongst other things here he associated himself with the legacy of his favourite grammar school teacher Josef František Smetana and his predecessor in National Revival matters, Josef Vojtěch Sedláček. In his speech he stated: *"Social life resembles a stream which quietly flows between its two banks, leaving parched the extensive meadowland alongside. But when it finds the strength to climb above its banks, it bears fresh greenery wheresoever it spills. Would that Czech society in our city could be given the chance of that much desired development which from days of yore was the striving of patriotic men who cared for the welfare of our nationality. [...] It was a farmworker who at the beginning of this century ensured the first trivial school and Czech kindergarten, institutions which by educating in the*

of the ceremonial opening of the business academy: *"The main credit for supporting this new institution belongs to the late JUDr. Josef Krofta who died so suddenly. When elected chairman of the curatorium, he willingly devoted himself to the function and used his influence to gain substantial support for the school from both the community and the regional committee and also other corporations, thereby ensuring the long-term existence of this modern institution."* MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofta a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby".

⁵¹ KROFTA, *Vzpomínka na rodiče*, p. 12.

mother tongue were the first to build a dam against the German flow. Then yet more powerful was the work in this direction done by his successor Smetana. It was from Smetana's heart here in Pilsen, at that time still strongly Germanified, that there came every nationalist movement, even the barely perceptible, and every patriotic act, both great and small. It was Smetana who first focused around himself in the 1840s the Pilsen townspeople at the Měšťanská Beseda – not an club but merely a venue for patriotic purposes in what was then the White Rose inn. In the end it was he who in 1848 initiated the requisite literary and collective activity in Pilsen and supported it as strongly as he was able. He it was who preserved our time-honoured city for the nation. May these men be blessed with eternal fame."⁵²

For all his strong sense of Czechness, Krofta as mayor treated Germans correctly and advocated a policy of mutual respect.⁵³ He even made reference to this in his inauguration speech: "These gentlemen may not have honoured me with their votes; nonetheless, I promise them that I shall treat the German minority in the city in such a way as I would wish Czech minorities be treated in German cities."⁵⁴ In further elections in 1890, Krofta even obtained German votes and was elected unanimously.

From his youth Josef Krofta was active in a number of Pilsen's clubs and associations. Obviously one of the most prominent was the aforementioned Měšťanská Beseda, of which he was a member, agent and ultimately chairman, and whose building fund he helped gain substantial financial sums and material gifts. He did not live to see the new building in its modern form but his contribution to the club and its building are indisputable.⁵⁵

⁵² AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 62/1, Ceremonial speech of JUDr. Josef Krofta on the opening of new rooms at the Měšťanská Beseda, 28 December 1876.

⁵³ AMP, Okresní výbor a okresní zastupitelstvo collection, Box Protokoly schůzí výboru z let 1865–1921, inv. no. 4805.

⁵⁴ MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofta a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby".

⁵⁵ The Měšťanská Beseda club in Pilsen, whose original name was Spolek měšťanů, was established 6 August 1862. It followed on from the Slovanská lípa club which, thanks to the efforts of Josef František Smetana, František Pecháček, Ignác Schiebl and Bernard Guldener was formed in July 1848. The Beseda club was founded by the drawing up and issuing of constitutional documents and allocation of registry number 40,247, applied for by its founder members (especially František Pecháček and Ignác Schieblem, also Emanuel Tuschner, Tomáš Nechutný, Antonín Holub, Jakub Sýkora and other representatives of revivalism in Pilsen) from the Měšťanská

Another prominent group in which Krofta played a significantly active role was the Czech Political Association, founded in Pilsen in 1871. Its aim was the strengthening of political and national rights and liberties of Czechs. Krofta's friends and colleagues took turns at its head – František Schwarz, MUDr. Vilém Šel, JUDr. Václav Peták and finally Josef Krofta himself. The group set up a reading room with political and didactic literature, arranged lectures and meetings, organised

Beseda in Prague. The club's first headquarters was the home of the entrepreneurial Belani family at no. 170, Vaňkova Street. The first meeting was held here on 3 November 1862. From the beginning the club had a large membership; it continued to grow rapidly and consequently lack of space became a major problem. There was an initial attempt to solve the situation by renting a further part of the house on Vaňkova Street, but even this was insufficient to accommodate the growing interest in the club's activities. Dr. Jan Maschauer, who was Pilsen burgomaster at the time, was elected as its first chairman as the club continued to expand apace: within the first year of its existence membership reached 260 and more appropriately spacious headquarters were required. After lengthy negotiations, a committee (according to Maschauer, it consisted of Antonín Feyerfeil, Emanuel Tuschner, František Pecháček and Antonín Federmayer) decided to buy a plot of land for the construction of a new Beseda building in Kopecký Gardens, on the site of Hässlerovský House, which was the headquarters of the Central Financial Office. In the early days, the club's finances were complicated – and not only because of the decision to construct a new building. Subscriptions were low and affluent members initially had no interest in investing more private money in the club. The Měšťanská Beseda commenced its activity with a debt of 350 gulden, which gradually rose to 740 gulden. Precisely here Krofta's significant merit becomes clear: from 1875 he was a member of the new building committee, later becoming its president in 1890, and during this period he not only made generous personal donations but also by the patriotic persuasion of influential entrepreneurs and important townspeople gained financial means for the building as well as generous gifts in kind, such as building materials. He also used his political influence to the same end. In 1888, for example, he obtained for the Beseda a donation of 10,000 gulden and a large quantity of bricks from Emil Škoda in return for an order for the Škoda firm to construct the city's water supply system. He also secured the construction a financial loan from the city, which, however, was realised by his successor, František Pecháček. Thanks in part to the financial activities and donations from Josef Krofta, today's Pilsen Měšťanská Beseda was opened to the public 29 December 1901. By then, however, one of its most important benefactors, Josef Krofta, was no longer alive. Cf. R. NESTL, *Pětasedmdesát let Měšťanské besedy v Plzni: 1862–1937*, Plzeň 1938, p. 5; AMP, *Měšťanská beseda v Plzni 1862–1949* collection, Box 1248, inv. no. 178, "Vzpomínky Jaroslava Schiebla na vznik a počátek Měšťanské Besedy", p. 17.; *Výroční zpráva Měšťanské besedy v Plzni. Za padesátý správní rok 1912*, Plzeň 1912, p. 15; MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofty a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby".

public assemblies and petitions; it also set up a special consortium⁵⁶ which as a free group of voluntary contributors supported a minimum monthly levy of 30 gulden from each person to fund the publication of a Czech newspaper in Pilsen: this began life as *Plzeňské noviny* and later became *Plzeňské listy*. In the name of the Czech Political Association Krofta also managed to gain for Pilsen the above-mentioned special status of a city.

Josef Krofta was a founder member of the National Pošumavská Association; he also established its Pilsen branch which came into existence on 15 November 1884. He was elected chairman of this branch, whose members included Václav Peták and František Schwarz.⁵⁷ Thanks mainly to Krofta's efforts and his unique tirelessness, the Pilsen branch strove to support effectively patriotic activities in the region, as well as cultural, social and political events.

Josef Krofta remained politically active right up until his death. In addition to the above-mentioned institutions he was also, for example, a representative of the patron of St. Bartholomew's Church in Pilsen, he chaired the curatoria of city museums, the city orphanage, the health council, was an inspector and honorary captain of the Sharpshooters' Club and founder member of the Association of Czech Journalists in Pilsen.⁵⁸ He was an honorary member of the Pilsen Sokol organisation, the Pilsen Association of Veteran Soldiers, the Association of Mutually Supportive Workers from Pilsen and the surrounding area, Reading and Entertainment Club in Nýřany,⁵⁹ as well as an honorary citizen of the villages of Radnice and Sulislav.

According to the memoirs of both his sons, Richard and Kamil, Josef Krofta was a keen reader, especially of patriotic literature and newspapers (regularly *Plzeňské listy*, to which he contributed and whose famous editor Adolf Srb was Krofta's good friend; also the reviews *Vlast* and *Čas* (*Native Land* and *Time* respectively)). He was interested in na-

⁵⁶ The negotiator and organiser of the consortium was again Josef Krofta. MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofty a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby".

⁵⁷ Cf. F. J. MALÝ, *Čtyři desetiletí národní jednoty pošumavské v Plzni 1884–1924*, Plzeň 1924, p. 13.

⁵⁸ AMP, LP Josef Krofta collection, sign. 607/137. Certificate of founder member of the Association of Czech Journalists for Josefa Krofta.

⁵⁹ MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofty a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby".

tional history, which he studied diligently in his free time or while on holiday at Richardov. He supported Karel Klostermann and read all of his works that were published during Krofta's lifetime. In the early days he even arranged for Klostermann to publish anonymously in *Plzeňské listy* under the pseudonym Faustin, thanks precisely to his friendship with the afore-mentioned Adolf Srb.⁶⁰ In fact Srb liked to remember Josef Krofta and wrote the following about him in his memoirs: *"I have fond memories of the Franciscan monastery. [...] Often after lunch an amicable group would gather there for a pleasant meeting. One of those who would attend was the unforgettable Dr. Josef Krofta, who sadly passed away much too soon. [...] The centre of Czech society was in the smallish rooms of the Měšťanská Beseda in Vaňkova Street,⁶¹ where every evening in the winter months leading personalities would meet for friendly conversation. It was especially lively in the bar, decorated by a large number of humorous illustrations related to Pilsen people and events; most were by teacher Knor from the Czech realschule and Böttinger, owner of the well-known photography studio. In this cosy room there were frequent discussions about everything connected with public life in Pilsen; hence came an initiative for all social and national enterprises. Almost every evening mayor František Pecháček participated in the discussions, a very pleasant fellow guest was Dr. Josef Krofta, later the mayor of the city of Pilsen."*⁶²

There is no doubt that Josef Krofta took serving the nation and Pilsen very seriously. He set great store in his honest and honourable profile; he respected the truth, even if it was unfavourable to him and sources agree that he brought up his children in the same spirit. His public functions, including work in the Imperial Council, Landtag, Pilsen council and also the role of Pilsen mayor, certainly did not in themselves bring him any financial profit; on the contrary, more than once he subsidised activities out of his own pocket. Had it not been for the material base acquired through marriage, he would hardly have been able to devote himself to politics and patriotic activities and leave his law practice in the hands of articulated clerks. His last will covers predominantly property of the Svátek family⁶³ acquired through mar-

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

⁶¹ Today Jungmannova [author's note].

⁶² SRB, *Z půl století*, pp. 146, 159, 162.

⁶³ Even if the Krofta couple, just like two other siblings of Mrs Marie Kroftová (née Svátková), built a new recreational villa on the family land. At the time of Josef

riage; this was bequeathed to his wife and children.⁶⁴ Just as he spared no personal expense, nor did he look after his health. He was known for putting his public and political activities before himself. Having suffered a serious rheumatic illness, he ignored the advice of doctors to slow down a little, avoiding stress and demanding activities since the illness had taken its toll on his heart and circulatory system. The first major bout of illness occurred towards the end of 1891. In the spring of that year Krofta, together with his daughter Marie and the Rieger family travelled to the Italian resort of Arco near Lago di Garda for a relaxing healthcare stay. This did indeed benefit Krofta; subsequently, however, he returned to his previous exhausting work routine and this proved fatal. On 10 August 1892, despite the hot weather and feeling unwell, he still travelled to Sulislav, where he was an honorary citizen, to support a Czech candidate against a German rival in the community elections. As a result, he collapsed, horrifying both his colleagues and those close to him, and in fact he was never to recover. He spent the remainder of that summer as a patient in Richardov with his wife dutifully looking after him; in the autumn he was in Pilsen, under the supervision of Dr. Josef Tyl and again tended by his wife. He died 3 November 1892 at the age of 47 with his whole family gathered around him. He left behind a wife who had barely turned 40 and seven children, only two of whom were adults: the eldest child, Richard, was still a student; the other was Kamil, also a student, who had just turned 18. Josef Krofta entrusted the guardianship of his underage children to his brother-in-law Richard Svátek.⁶⁵ His sudden death meant a huge loss not only to his family but also to the city of Pilsen. The respect and gratitude of the city as well as of the nation's wider political and social representation were expressed in the numerous obituaries which soon appeared and were by no means limited to the Pilsen press. All of them laud Krofta's selfless patriotism and diligent work for society.⁶⁶ Further proof of the respect he enjoyed is evident in a decision taken at

Krofta's death, however, it was not ready and completion of the construction work had to be arranged by his widow.

⁶⁴ MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22, inv. no. 640, KROFTA, "Data k životopisu zemřelého Josefa Krofta a ke charakteristice jeho působení a doby".

⁶⁵ Ibidem.

⁶⁶ Most obituaries and death notices can be found in the AMP and in the personal remains of the Josefa Krofta collection, partly also in the MÚA AV ČR and the Kamil Krofta collection. Cf. MÚA AV ČR, Kamil Krofta collection, Box 22; AMP, LP Josef

an extraordinary session of the municipal committee of the royal city of Pilsen held on 5 November 1892 and chaired by Krofta's deputy, JUDr. Václav Peták. It was unanimously agreed that a grand funeral for Josef Krofta should be arranged at the city's expense and that the city would also pay for a worthy tomb in Pilsen's Central Cemetery.⁶⁷

From the numerous obituaries, the following words by the editor of *Plzeňské listy*, Karel Jonáš,⁶⁸ will serve as an illustration: "As soon as he assumed the role of mayor, he sought to introduce a new, more active style into local administration. He himself worked with exemplary diligence, keeping a record of everything that was happening in the city. Although he faced incredibly difficult tasks, he carried them out with admirable assiduity, overcoming hundreds and hundreds of obstacles in his path. He turned his main focus to ensuring that all the various developments did not lead to new, huge debts for our city and in that sense he was a proponent of rational economics. In this respect his efforts were not always understood by everyone but the more perspicacious citizens were grateful to him for it. During the relatively short time in which he was mayor, Krofta did much that was beneficial to our city. From a whole range of worthy deeds, let us mention only completion of the water supply system, building of a grammar school and industrial secondary school, reform of public charity, elaboration of statutory issues, and so on and so forth. As mentioned earlier, he himself studied every issue, was actively involved in its being dealt with and therefore almost all his time was devoted to the good and well-being of the community. Yes, it may be stated that it was precisely his selfless endeavours which exhausted the very best of his strength and brought him to his death-bed."⁶⁹

Krofta collection.

⁶⁷ Before the tomb was constructed, the remains of Josef Krofta were deposited in Pilsen's Mikuláš Cemetery, in the Svátek family grave. AMP, Okresní zastupitelstvo a okresní výbor v Plzni collection, Box Protokoly schůzí výboru z let 1865–1921, inv. no. 4805.

⁶⁸ Karel Jonáš (1865–1922), journalist, writer, poet, dramatist. He studied at grammar school and later turned to journalism. 1885–1887 he worked in Soběslav, then in 1888 in Brno as the Moravian correspondent of *Národní listy*, briefly edited the *Boleslavan* papers. 1889–1894, with breaks in between, he ran *Plzeňské listy*; in 1896 he worked on the editorial board of *Národní politika* in Prague. In 1897 he edited *Budívoj* magazine in České Budějovice, then returned to Pilsen. In 1906 he edited *Venkov* (*Country*), the paper of the Agrarian Party in Prague.

⁶⁹ Private archives of Mrs Johana Matějčková, great-granddaughter of Richard Krofta, KROFTA, "Ze starcovy paměti a zásuvky", p. 50.

Conclusion

In order better to appreciate the enormous importance of Josef Krofta in Pilsen, in an era when the city was transforming itself to become the modern Czech economic centre of the region, a process which this paper attempts to capture, it is again important to realise the starting position in the mid-19th century. A remarkable feature of the history of Pilsen has always been a certain conservatism amongst its townsfolk. To a considerable extent this is given by the geographical location of the city, close to German influence and its easy entry into all spheres of life, whether economic, business, political, religious or cultural. The German inhabitants in Pilsen might have been in a minority but at the beginning of the 19th century they still had significant influence. They were much more progressive and bolder in business than the townspeople declaring Czech nationality. Moreover, many Czechs in Pilsen, just like all over Bohemia at that time, especially those from the upper classes, usually spoke German. The National Revival was still in its infancy. German capital was spreading in quite a determined manner. A significant proportion of the investment capital was also Jewish. A look at some of the largest enterprises with which the early days of capitalist enterprise in Pilsen are associated will make the situation clear: Waldstein engineering works, Belani Brothers carriage works, Bartelmus malthouse, paper mills of Piette and Fürt & Gellert, Halb-mayer steam mill, Hirsch wire works, Gambrinus and Prior breweries, Lagerhaus warehouse and business enterprise, König ceramic works in Lochotín, Klotz brickworks; the Lederer brothers from Bušovice, who brought to Pilsen the production of marocain and saffian; David Leopold Levit, who built a successful tannery in the area of today's Na Rychtářce Street, then Moric Auer who opened a distillery in the Prager district where today Nádražní and Sirková streets lead towards the Prazdroj brewery. Jewish capital was making itself felt in the financial sector; Germans controlled the Chamber of Commerce in Pilsen. The conservative nature and excessive caution of the Czech townspeople in Pilsen, combined with the fact that in those days the state demonstrably gave preference to German entrepreneurs, led to a situation in which Czech capital, as well as Czech political and social influence in the city and regional administration in Pilsen, had to struggle long and hard for its place in the sun. Success came slowly and in very fragmented form. There can be seen a gradual implementation of

Czech influence in industry: the Waldstein ironworks and engineering works were transferred to the ownership of Dr. Emil Škoda; in 1856 the steam rolling mill of František Hýra appeared in Prokopova Street; Khüry's ceramic works in the Prager suburb was taken over in 1870 by Hugo Jelínek; König's ceramic works in Lochotín was bought by Ferdinand Bauer; Czech capital was invested in beer brewing in Pilsen. Most important, however, was the entry of Czech capital into the financial sector and banking. The City Savings Bank and Pilsen Bank at the beginning were significantly connected with Josef Krofta. Moreover, the political influence of Josef Krofta and his work not only as a Pilsen burgomaster and in the Pilsen local administration but also in national and imperial organs and in the Old Czech movement (as described in this study) played a fundamental role in the Czechification and development of economic and social life in Pilsen. It can certainly be stated that Josef Krofta ranked among the names who stood behind the transformation of Pilsen from a conservative, primarily agrarian-artisan "German" city, with many remnants of a medieval economic system, into a modern Czech industrial and cultural metropolis of the West Bohemian region.

The Anglo-French Rapprochement and the Question of Morocco: an Uneasy Way to the Entente Cordiale, 1898–1904

Marcela Šubrtová*

Through the signature of the Entente Cordiale, France and Great Britain settled their colonial disputes in non-European territories and started the cooperation. The entente became a milestone towards the birth of the alliances, which later clashed in the First World War. Based mainly on the non-published documents, this contribution tries to analyze the motives that permitted the Anglo-French rapprochement from 1898–1904. Attention is paid to the influences of the world diplomacy on the development of the negotiations. Furthermore, this article deals with the Moroccan points of contention between France and Great Britain, which together with the Egyptian question, were of crucial and strategic importance for the development of the Anglo-French relations.

[Entente Cordiale; Anglo-French relations 1898–1904; Morocco; Lord Lansdowne; Paul Cambon]

Introduction

In April 1904, nearly a diplomatic revolution took place when the eternal enemies, Great Britain and France, finally came to terms and throughout settlement of their mutual difficulties in extra-European areas concluded alliance, which had far reaching effects upon the later world diplomacy. However, the origins of the Anglo-French rapprochement and final understanding must be seen farther than in spring of 1904, but as soon as in 1898.

When Théophile Delcassé succeeded Gabriel Hanotaux at the post of the French Foreign Minister in June 1898, his vision was to improve the French diplomatic position. He was reported to have said: “*I do*

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not wish to leave this desk without having restored the good understanding with England.”¹ He was in between two millstones since his genuine desire was to make the Anglo-French rapprochement come true but on the other hand he was sincerely devoted to the cause of ending the British occupation of Egypt.² In the autumn of 1898 the Anglo-French relations became tight because of the existing struggle for the Upper Nile basin. Jean-Baptiste Marchand led an expedition from the French Congo to the Upper Nile and hoped that the French presence in the area would force the British to reopen the Egyptian question. Marchand reached Fashoda on July 10, 1898 and hoisted there the Tricolour. The British mission for the re-conquest of Sudan, controlled by religious fanatic Khalifa, disciple of Mahdi, had already begun by that time. On September 2, 1898 the Mahdists were defeated in the battle of Omdurman by Anglo-Egyptian army led by Horatio Herbert Kitchener and the British forces then continued south in the direction towards the confluence of Sobat and White Nile, to Fashoda.

On September 7, 1898 Delcassé met Edmund Monson, British Ambassador in London, and since he had already received news of the victorious battle of Omdurman, he was worried and told British Ambassador that Captain Marchand had received “*the clearest instructions as to his position and attitude*” and that “*he had been distinctly told that he is nothing but an emissary of civilisation*” and emphasized, that “*all outstanding differences between the two countries might be amicably arranged by the exercise of patience and conciliation*”.³ Monson then wrote to Salisbury that Delcassé’s moderate tone and very cordial manner inspired him to believe that Frenchmen will discuss the question again with calmness.⁴ Delcassé knew, that France could not go to war, and as soon as Great Britain pointed out that she is not willing to share the influence upon Upper Nile Basin with any other European country,

¹ J. M. GOUDSWAARD, *Some Aspects of the End of Britain’s “Splendid Isolation”, 1898–1904*, Rotterdam 1952, p. 96.

² C. ANDREW, “France and the Making of the Entente Cordiale”, in: *The Historical Journal*, 10, 1, 1967, p. 93.

³ Monson to Salisbury, Paris, September 8, 1898, in: G. P. GOOCH – H. W. V. TEMPERLEY (eds.), *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898–1914. The End of British Isolation*, Vol. 1, London 1927 (hereafter BD 1), Doc. No. 188, p. 163.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

he knew that diplomacy would be the only way out of the precarious situation.⁵

When the French expedition of Captain Jean-Baptiste Marchand finally encountered the expedition of Herbert Horatio Kitchener on September 19, Fashoda became nearly a nightmare for Quai d'Orsay. Delcassé was afraid that Kitchener's encounter with Marchand might end in blows and provoke a European conflict. He tried to reduce the possible harm by denying existence of Marchand's mission itself and pointing out that "*Marchand was but a one of the subordinates of Liotard*" whose mission started in 1892/1893, so already two years before Edward Grey's speech, by which Great Britain claimed the whole area of the Upper Nile Basin and stated that any incursion would be considered an unfriendly act.⁶

After receiving news of the encounter at Fashoda on September 26 Delcassé realized that Marchand and Kitchener exchanged just formal protests and drank a bottle of champagne and such information was a load off his mind. He wrote to his wife: "*I can at least congratulate myself for having taken the first step a month ago [on September 7] in opening negotiations and having thus perhaps prevented bloodshed.*"⁷ He knew that the Nile valley was not worth of a large-scale war, but he did not want to abandon Fashoda without discussion. According to Charles Porter, he should have told captain Baratier on October 27, 1898: "*You cannot desire a hostility of such a powerful state as England when we are still bleeding on our eastern frontier.*"⁸ It was no surprise that Delcassé was hoping to find such a way out of the crisis that would save the face of France. But regrettably, Great Britain did not offer such a way. According to Christopher Andrew: "*Delcassé firstly wanted to use interpellations on the Fashoda crisis as an opportunity to address the Chamber on Marchand's withdrawal, but on November 4 he finally changed his mind and told the Chamber that the national interest demanded that he stay silent.*"⁹ Delcassé finally agreed to withdraw from Fashoda, but even though

⁵ J. J. MATHEWS, *Egypt and the Formation of the Anglo-French Entente of 1904*, London 1939, p. 19; A. J. P. TAYLOR, *Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848–1918*, Oxford 1954, p. 381.

⁶ Monson to Salisbury, Paris, September 19, 1898. BD 1, Doc. No. 192, p. 166.

⁷ C. M. ANDREW, *Théophile Delcassé and the Making of Entente Cordiale. A Reappraisal of French Foreign Policy 1898–1905*, London 1968, p. 92.

⁸ C. W. PORTER, *The Career of Théophile Delcassé*, Philadelphia 1936, p. 130.

⁹ ANDREW, *Théophile Delcassé...*, p. 102.

the crisis was settled quickly, Fashoda left deep scratches in the face of the French national pride.¹⁰

Throughout the year of 1898 the core of the French *parti colonial*¹¹ realized that without any French foothold in the Basin of the Upper Nile not only would they not be able to reopen the Egyptian question but neither get support of any other country. Eugène Étienne and Paul-Anthelme Bourde¹² therefore considered for the first time the idea of territorial compensation. The birth of the idea of the Anglo-French barter lies in autumn of 1898, when the Bulletin of the *Comité de l'Afrique Française* declared for the first time French “readiness to accept Egypt as English in return for compensation in Morocco”. However, Delcassé was not ready to take it as a solid base for the French policy yet.¹³

There were three men whose influence upon Théophile Delcassé was significant. These gentlemen were Étienne, Bourde and Paul Cambon, who was a close friend of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Pierre Paul Cambon had a law degree from Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh Universities and he later started his diplomatic career by becoming the French minister plenipotentiary at Tunis. A prelude to the Anglo-French rapprochement was a change at the post of ambassador at the Albert Gate House, the seat of the French Embassy in London. When the Fashoda crisis was culminating, Delcassé suggested to the British Government that Paul Cambon should replace baron de Courcel in London. By that time, Cambon was already well known as an Anglophile and according to Monson “he was the best man that could be [sic] chosen”.¹⁴ Delcassé was well aware of Cambon’s exceptional diplomatic qualities and negotiation skills and therefore

¹⁰ P. M. H. BELL, *France and Britain, 1900–1940. Entente and Estrangement*, 2nd Ed., London 2014, pp. 19–20.

¹¹ Delcassé was one of the founders of *parti colonial*, colonial group which existed in the French Chamber and whose purpose was to carry the ideas of colonialism through. For further reference see: C. ANDREW – A. S. KANYA-FORSTNER, “The French Colonial Party. It’s Composition, Aims and Influence, 1885–1914”, in: *The Historical Journal*, 14, 1, 1971, pp. 99–128.

¹² Both Étienne and Bourde had large influence upon Théophile Delcassé. Bourde, who was Delcassé’s close friend, was believed to be his right hand and the soul and the brain of the whole French colonial movement.

¹³ ANDREW, “France and the Making of the Entente Cordiale”, p. 91.

¹⁴ ANDREW, *Théophile Delcassé...*, p. 113.

he emphasized that “the French republic is [...] choosing an ambassador notoriously most friendly and inspired with the best disposition towards England”.¹⁵ Queen Victoria’s approval came by a letter by Edmund Monson, British Ambassador in Paris, on September 19, 1898 and the path to the Anglo-French entente could hereby begin.

Shortly after his arrival to London, Cambon reported to Delcassé about tight atmosphere and hoped he would not become the second Benedetti.¹⁶ His instruction was to dissipate the persistent points at issue in between of France and Britain.¹⁷ In December 1898 Cambon told his guests at the reception for the French colony that “the interests of France and England are not incompatible and they ought always to be in accord with those of civilisation and progress”.¹⁸ Monson wrote privately to lord Salisbury that he did not know why France expected that Cambon would be able to plunge into the most serious negotiations with the Prime Minister and he was persuaded that such was the hope of both Quai d’Orsay and Élysée Palace.¹⁹ When it was finally publicly announced that Fashoda had been evacuated on January 11, 1899, Cambon tried to approach Salisbury and discuss the question of the area of Bahr al Ghazal, where Fashoda was located. Salisbury refused any other than commercial outlet to be allowed and Cambon shortly came back with an idea of demarcation line which Salisbury admitted to be a possible basis for the settlement. Cambon tried to bring up the question of Newfoundland fisheries rights, but Salisbury did not take up the bait and said that the problem has been discussed for sixty years already and could continue for a long time.²⁰

The negotiations of the fate of Bahr al Ghazal continued throughout January and February of 1899. The Anglo-French treaty was finally

¹⁵ K. EUBANK, *Paul Cambon: Master Diplomatist*, Westport 1978, p. 62.

¹⁶ H. CAMBON (ed.), *Paul Cambon, ambassadeur de France (1843–1924) par un diplomate* (hereafter CAMBON), Paris 1937, p. 173.

¹⁷ ANDREW, “France and the Making of the Entente Cordiale”, p. 94. According to W. L. Langer Cambon accepted the post of French Ambassador to London on condition that efforts will be made in the direction of coming to some general agreement in between of France and the Great Britain. See W. L. LANGER, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890–1902*, New York 1951, p. 566.

¹⁸ EUBANK, p. 65.

¹⁹ ANDREW, *Théophile Delcassé...*, p. 113.

²⁰ Delcassé to Cambon, Paris, January 14, 1899, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris (hereafter MAE), Papiers d’agents, Paul Cambon papers (hereafter PA, Cambon), 78, f. 091.

signed in London on March 21, 1899 and the spheres of influence in the Congo-Nil watershed were determined as follows: the whole Egyptian Sudan and the part of the Libyan dessert adjacent to the western part of Egypt passed under the control of Great Britain while France gained the area between Darfur and Lake Chad.²¹ As soon as the treaty was signed, Delcassé was persuaded that a settlement of the other mutual colonial disputes will follow shortly.²² Cambon tried to approach lord Salisbury before the summer of 1899, but the talks on Madagascar, Newfoundland, Muscat and Shanghai had failed before any real negotiations could have started. Salisbury actually believed that nothing more than a status of mutual apathetic tolerance could exist in the relations of Great Britain and France.²³

Due to the Boer War, which burst out during the fall of 1899, the mutual relationships worsened again. Paul Cambon reported “*prevailing Francophobe sentiments of the British society*” and his apprehension that “*once British deal with the Transvaal issue, they will have time to look for a dispute directed against us*”.²⁴ In a letter to D’Estournelles de Constant at the end of October 1899 Paul Cambon confessed, that he was asked from all sides why France did not seek any discord with England while she was busy in Transvaal.²⁵ He begged Delcassé to quiete the French press which actually referred to London as to “*an eternal enemy*”, while on the other side of the Channel, the British press ostentatiously refused to leave the topic of the Dreyfus Affair.²⁶ According to Christopher Andrew “*the mutual hostility of both sides of the Channel became with the beginning of the Boer War even greater than during a Fashoda Crisis a year before*”.²⁷ In a letter to D’Estournelles de Constant, Paul Cambon confessed: “*There is an abyss in between of what the English say and what they really do, in between of what they believe in and what the reality is. It is necessary not only to be aware of this but to act accordingly.*”²⁸

²¹ EUBANK, p. 66.

²² ANDREW, “France and the Making of the Entente Cordiale”, p. 94.

²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Cambon to Delcassé, London, November 11, 1899. Documents diplomatiques français (hereafter DDF), 1st series, Vol. XV, Paris 1959, Doc. No. 297, p. 514.

²⁵ CAMBON, p. 30.

²⁶ MATHEWS, p. 16; P. GUILLEN, “The Entente of 1904 as a Colonial Settlement”, in: P. GIFFORD – W. R. LOUIS (eds.), *France and Britain in Africa. Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, London 1971, p. 334.

²⁷ ANDREW, “France and the Making of the Entente Cordiale”, p. 94.

The situation at the close of 1899 was according to Daily Mail such as follows: "The French successfully persuaded John Bull about being his eternal enemies [...]. Nothing like Entente Cordiale could exist between Great Britain and her nearest neighbour."²⁹ Even Cambon expressed his worries in a letter to his mother on November 28, 1899: "Delcassé's discourse will luckily bring 'une détente' because we have been marching to the war" and later on December 10 he expressed his disillusionment about the atmosphere in the French Chamber: "I am terrified by foolishness of our deputies. It's been 8 days since Delcassé gave a speech for which he received much praise and ovation. Etienne said the exact opposite but ended with the same ovation and praise. Lockroy declares that a war with England is inevitable."³⁰

Paul Cambon wrote to Delcassé on December 12, 1899 that according to some indications he received from several sources Foreign Office would appreciate to come to more relaxed relations with France, and such was the British public opinion, even though the indications were still vague. Cambon was persuaded that British, who suffered succession of failures in South Africa, would appreciate the return of the French sympathies.³¹ However, the question remains whether the wish was not the father to the thought.

Another affair which brought mutual relations to a boiling point was the one of French caricaturist Lucien Léandre who offended Queen Victoria by displaying British Secretary of State for the Colonies Chamberlain hiding behind her skirts. The Queen has seen the caricatures personally and the fact that Léandre was decorated with the Legion of Honour by the Minister of Fine Arts was taken by her as an insult. She even privately urged that British Ambassador Monson should be recalled from Paris. Monson left the French metropolis, and he moved less ostentatiously to Cannes. There was a large campaign in the French press making fun of the Queen and criticizing the current French Government.³² French journal *Gaulois* referred to this in-

²⁸ P. CAMBON, *Correspondance 1870–1924*, Tome II, Paris 1940, p. 29.

²⁹ G. MARTINEAU, *L'Entente Cordiale*, Paris 1984, p. 78.

³⁰ CAMBON, *Correspondance 1870–1924*, p. 31.

³¹ Cambon to Delcassé, December 12, 1899. MAE, Nouvelle série (1896–1918, hereafter NS), Grande Bretagne, 12, f. 121.

³² *Ibidem*.

cident as to a “*revenge for Fashoda*”³³ while *Écho de Paris* ribbed Sir Edmund Monson for taking a French leave and criticized Théophile Delcassé for being a boot licker of the British Government.³⁴ *La Patrie* described Delcassé in the same way, as a person who has no equal concerning apologizing to British and demeaning French diplomacy.³⁵

On 21 March 1900 Cambon informed Delcassé about the campaign the British press pursued against Germany and he expressed his hopes that such a campaign would lead to persuasion that any conflict between France and Great Britain would help no one but the interests of Germany.³⁶ Just one day later he wrote to his brother Jules, French Ambassador to Madrid at that time, that he met Lord Salisbury the day before and he was sure that détente was coming but we should not be too optimistic in France, because the impression caused by the Léandre affair was not dispelled yet.³⁷ The same day Delcassé received a letter by Edmund Monson in which he thanked him for punishing the offenders and for suggesting the Minister of Public Instruction (the same gentleman who decorated caricaturist Léandre) the inconvenient results which may arise from the delivery of lectures at this moment upon South African questions.³⁸ The change in the English public opinion and the relief in the Anglo-French relations were finally perceptible. According to Paul Cambon, such a change in the English public opinion was caused by three principal causes: (1) Britain was exhausted by the ongoing Boer war which was very expensive and could not see any profit in the possibility of running a new conflict; (2) the British politicians realized that any conflict between London and Paris would help only to the interests of Germany; and (3) the French decided to effect a defensive and fortification works in their ports and colonies.³⁹

The mutual rapprochement was supported at the end of March during the banquet organized in London by municipal corporations. The mayors of the important cities were invited to attend this event as well

³³ *Le Gaulois*, February 17, 1900. MAE, NS, Grande Bretagne 12, f. 147.

³⁴ *L'Écho de Paris*, February 6, 1900. MAE, NS, Grande Bretagne 12, f. 143.

³⁵ *La Patrie*, February 6, 1900. MAE, NS, Grande Bretagne 12, f. 142.

³⁶ Cambon to Delcassé, March 21, 1900. MAE, NS, Grande Bretagne 12, f. 217.

³⁷ CAMBON, *Correspondance 1870–1924*, p. 41.

³⁸ Monson to Delcassé, March 22, 1900. MAE, NS, Grande Bretagne 12, f. 220.

³⁹ Cambon to Delcassé, April 5, 1900. MAE, NS, Grande Bretagne 12, ff. 241–245.

as number of politicians and some members of British Government. Baron Estournelles de Constant attended the event too and he used this opportunity to give a speech on the Anglo-French relations, for which he received an applause and praise. He stated that there can never be complete peace between two nations whose interests are colliding in so many parts of the world, but he insisted on the necessity of living in harmony without any hostilities.⁴⁰

In the meantime Delcassé had changed his priorities – he postponed his hopes for understanding with Great Britain in near future and he decided to pursue another matter instead. He believed that British engagement in South Africa would allow France to resolve the questions of Egypt and Morocco. But instead of settling those questions jointly and by agreement with London, he decided to take them apart and solve them without the prior agreement of London.⁴¹ Delcassé's plan was to divide Morocco between France and Spain and not earlier than in 1903 he was ready to modify this plan and to offer British anything more but commercial freedom and neutralisation of the Strait of Gibraltar.⁴²

By March 1900 Delcassé realized that he will not be able to end the British occupation in Egypt and this moment was crucial for the origins of the Entente Cordiale since there was an essential step towards Delcassé's eventual conversion to the idea of Morocco-Egypt barter.⁴³ Since 1899, Cambon had given the French foreign minister pieces of advice and exact recommendations, particularly on the subject of the Moroccan question and of Anglo-French relations. In the previously mentioned subjects they usually had opposite opinions. In the Moroccan question Delcassé adhered, according to Cambon, too much upon the *status quo*. Therefore the French ambassador to London persuaded him that it was necessary to open the debate with England on that subject.⁴⁴

British were in a difficult position at the turn of the century. The Boer war produced diplomatic weakness and they had to face French in Morocco and Russians in Persia and Afghanistan. Great Britain had

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ ANDREW, "France and the Making of the Entente Cordiale", p. 95.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 99.

⁴³ Ibidem.

⁴⁴ C. GEOFFROY, *Les Coulisses de l'Entente Cordiale*, Paris 2004, pp. 236–237.

never before been confronted with such intensive competition in every part of the world.⁴⁵ This war together with other circumstances led the British to the idea that the time has come to leave the policy of splendid isolation. In November 1900 the change of the balance of forces in the British Cabinet allowed pro-German section to open the way for an experiment in foreign policy. Lord Lansdowne, new Foreign Secretary, was involved in the negotiations with Germany throughout the 1901, but the attempt to conclude any Anglo-German alliance failed.⁴⁶

Paul Cambon, apart from Delcassé, decided that the time has come to raise the interest of the British Government for the settlement of Moroccan question and he tried to pursue this in March 1901 on his own. Cambon called upon Lord Lansdowne, who replaced Lord Salisbury as the British Foreign Secretary, and he tried to get him involved in the idea of exchanging French position in Morocco in return for French claims in New Foundland.⁴⁷ Edmund Monson was surprised by Cambon's proposal: "*Cambon has reputation of being keenly ambitious, but his suggestion of obtaining compensations on the Moroccan frontier for a French abandonment of Treaty Rights in Newfoundland seems to my limited intelligence [...] and unpractical so much so that I cannot but think that so clever a man as he is could only have been thinking of eliciting an expression of opinion as to the length, to which his country may go in that region without hindrance or protest of England.*"⁴⁸

While Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for Colonies, was willing to discuss the issue further, Lansdowne was not ready to consider that matter yet. Regarding Morocco, Chamberlain reminded Lansdowne: "*[I]f we are to discuss such a large question as Morocco, please bear in mind that the Germans will have something to say – and both they and we will want compensation.*"⁴⁹ Cambon approached Lansdowne again

⁴⁵ G. MONGER, *The End of Isolation. British Foreign Policy 1900–1907*, London 1963, p. 13.

⁴⁶ For further details see A. LAJEUNESSE, "The Anglo-German Alliance Talks and the Failure of Amateur Diplomacy", in: *Past Imperfect*, 13, 2007, pp. 84–107.

⁴⁷ ANDREW, *Théophile Delcassé...*, p. 206; Monson to Lansdowne, March 22, 1901. The National Archives, London, Kew (hereafter TNA), FO 800/125, f. 83. According to George Monger, Cambon proposed to Lansdowne on 6 March 1901, that New Foundland fishery privileges could be surrendered in exchange for a territory in the Gambia. See MONGER, p. 39.

⁴⁸ Monson to Lansdowne, March 22, 1901. TNA, FO 800/125, f. 83.

⁴⁹ MONGER, p. 39.

in June 1901 and during the conversation he mentioned that “*the compensation for the loss of Treaty Shore Rights in Newfoundland being possibly to be sought for in the granting of a free hand to France in the dealing with Morocco*”.⁵⁰ Lansdowne was actually convinced of the necessity of keeping *status quo* in the Moroccan question and he was not ready to change his mind about this issue, at least not till the end of 1903.

Morocco was of a strategic importance to Great Britain because of the Strait of Gibraltar and because of the trade, as she controlled more than 50 per cent of Moroccan trade. The sultanate dominated the western portion of the Mediterranean Sea. The French, who were in possession of neighbouring Algeria, occupied oasis Tuat in 1899 and then since 1902 tried to penetrate to Mauritania. The frontier between French Algiers and Morocco stayed undefined.⁵¹ Young sultan Abdelaziz invited many European counsellors in order to modernize the country and such a request represented an ideal opportunity for Great Britain that was willing to increase its influence in the country.⁵² Therefore many British financial and technical experts were heading towards Morocco. Among them, Harry Maclean, known as *kaid*, military instructor and former non-commissioned officer in the British army, who worked his way up to become Sultan’s private advisor. Another important Englishman was Sir Arthur Nicolson, British Minister at Tangiers who pressed for firm action against the French. He reported that “*Sultan had decided upon an extensive scheme of reforms and had asked for a British loan to carry them out*”.⁵³ He believed that Britain must either get the reforms through or she must be ready to give up Morocco in favour of France and therefore pressed for cooperation with Germany in order to support Sultan.

On June 22, 1901 Moroccan Minister of War, Menebhi, who was well known to be an ardent Anglophile, arrived to London accompanied by Nicolson.⁵⁴ The British were careful not to make any promises and

⁵⁰ Monson to Lansdowne, June 28, 1901. TNA, FO 800/125, f. 101.

⁵¹ E. GOMBÁR, *Moderní dějiny islámských zemí*, Praha 1999, p. 351.

⁵² Nicolson to Lansdowne, April 1, 1901. TNA, FO 800/135, ff. 13–14.

⁵³ MONGER, p. 40.

⁵⁴ Originally, Sultan himself wanted to visit London in person, but Lansdowne dismissed this idea as such a visit would not be opportune and suggested that a visit of the Minister of War would be less objectionable. Lansdowne to Nicolson, March 20, 1901. TNA, FO 800/135, f. 8.

Moroccan envoy departed to Berlin “*virtually empty handed*”.⁵⁵ During his visit in Berlin, the German Minister at Tangiers Mentzingen criticized French plans in Morocco and declared that “*the Kaiser was even ready to go to war to thwart them*”.⁵⁶ Lansdowne was persuaded that reports on the French activity in Morocco were exaggerated and after Cambon’s assurances the British did not want to believe that France was considering any forward action in Morocco.⁵⁷ When a serious crisis burst out at the end of July 1901, Lansdowne could see that since he would not come to terms with France, his only possibility was to turn to Germany. However, Morocco was a question of far greater importance to Britain than to Germany, and therefore Lansdowne was lucky that no further crisis flamed up until the end of 1902.⁵⁸

Throughout 1901 Cambon tried to broach other points at issue as well. In July 1901 he renewed his proposal for renouncement of the French Shore fishery rights in Newfoundland in return for compensation elsewhere and Lansdowne referred to Chamberlain as follows: “*I don’t see why a settlement should be unattainable – I wish they would ask for a bit of hinterland somewhere or other.*”⁵⁹ On 31 March 1901 Lansdowne opened a discussion, which finally ended at a deadlock due to Cambon’s ostentatious claim for Gambia territory compensation. Lansdowne rejected that on the ground that “*it would give rise to further demands on each side for concessions and counter concessions, demands which, in my opinion, would probably destroy all hopes of an arrangement*”, but he offered that he would be ready to discuss a compensation elsewhere but Gambia. Cambon did not take up the bait and because Lansdowne remained silent, the negotiations ended.⁶⁰

In Siam the British and French were at odds because of the spheres of influence. By the end of 1901, London received alarming reports that other Powers might be trying to penetrate into the Malay States while using the Siamese suzerainty. The Colonial Office was pressing

⁵⁵ Sultan planned that his emissary would visit London, Paris, Berlin and St. Petersburg, but French agent informed him that neither Paris nor St. Petersburg would accept a mission which previously went to London and Berlin. Nicolson to Lansdowne, TNA, FO 800/135, f. 27.

⁵⁶ MONGER, p. 41.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 44.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

the Foreign Office hard to assert British rights there. In October Lansdowne expressed his worries about Germany possibly interfering in Siamese affairs: *"Her interests are different from ours and she has a habit of securing her pound of flesh whenever she confers or makes belief to confer a favour. In this case I should be afraid of her cutting the pound of our joint. She has lately been hoping to squeeze out British employees of the Siamese Government and she is sure to seek privileges or preferences of some sort at our expense."*⁶¹

Lansdowne preferred to negotiate with Siam directly instead of trying to come to terms with France, but the negotiations with Siamese ended at a deadlock by July. Later in August he realized that he would need to find other way instead of relying on Siamese only. Germans were interested in a coaling station and Russia was possibly interested in the area too. Lansdowne therefore proposed that a decisive unilateral action should be taken in order to defend British interests in the Malay Peninsula. Chamberlain had presented the idea to lord Balfour and new Prime Minister *"agreed that French influence in Mekong can do us no harm"*.⁶²

The year of 1902 brought a decisive change into Franco-British relations. By that time Paul Cambon argued that the solution to the Franco-British disputes laid in the Moroccan-Egyptian exchange, which would address a reciprocal recognition of interests and swapping of rights and advantages they enjoyed in those countries. At the beginning of 1902, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Monson: *"The attitude of the French Government towards the Morocco question appears to have undergone a remarkable change."*⁶³ When Cambon met Lansdowne after lord Salisbury's retirement in July 1902, French diplomat suggested possible settlement of Moroccan issue – he proposed that Britain could secure the neutralisation of Tangiers in return for unspecified concessions in the hinterland to be done in favour of France. Cambon stated: *"Our interest in Morocco is Tangiers. Europe cannot let us establish there and we cannot let any Power to do the same. Why don't we neutralize Tangiers?"*⁶⁴ Later on he went further and on July 30 he added that France

⁶¹ Lansdowne to Monson, October 13, 1901. TNA, FO 800/125, f. 113.

⁶² MONGER, p. 78.

⁶³ Lansdowne to Monson, January 2, 1902. TNA, FO 800/125, f. 125.

⁶⁴ Cambon to Delcassé, July 23, 1902. MAE, PA, Cambon, 78, ff. 111–112.

and Britain could come to terms in Siam too.⁶⁵ Lansdowne assured Cambon he was aware of special interests of France in the area along the Moroccan-Algerian frontier, where political unrest occurred.⁶⁶ The British were “*persistently discouraging Sultan from any extravagant enterprises as well as from any action calculated to embroil him with his French neighbours*”.⁶⁷

Because of the reports of Saint-René Taillandier, new French Minister in Tangiers, Cambon was very concerned about the activities of British in Morocco, particularly about Maclean, who constituted a battalion of Personal Guard, well equipped and well trained. The British secured a monopoly to supply all military equipment including guns.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the Sultan was considering a loan and he was pressing British, that if they refuse to help him he would turn to France or to Germany. Sultan was considering conceding the telegraph monopoly to British, which aroused temper in France too.⁶⁹ Another source of anxiety was restless Moroccan tribes. Cambon was aware that Moroccan sultan was weak and this made him feel uneasy about the future.⁷⁰ He was equally depressed about the French attitude to the Moroccan question and for that reason he wrote to Delcassé on July 23, 1902: “*For God’s sake, let’s stop complaining and start acting a little bit rationally.*”⁷¹

On August 6, 1902 Paul Cambon and Lord Lansdowne met and had another long and important conversation. French Ambassador had met Delcassé and he was authorized to present definite proposals. He emphasized that France was not dreaming about new acquisitions with regards to her colonial dominion and that “*all that France desired was to ensure the security of what she already possessed*”.⁷² According to Delcassé there were only two points where French position was insecure, Siam and Morocco. In Siam, French and British had signed an agreement in 1896 under which each of them had recognized that

⁶⁵ MONGER, p. 77.

⁶⁶ EUBANK, p. 73.

⁶⁷ Lansdowne to Monson, January 2, 1902. TNA, FO 800/125, f. 125.

⁶⁸ Cambon to Delcassé, July 23, 1902. MAE, PA, Cambon, 78, f. 113.

⁶⁹ Cambon to Delcassé, January 13, 1902. MAE, PA, Cambon, 78, f. 103.

⁷⁰ EUBANK, p. 74.

⁷¹ Cambon to Delcassé, July 23, 1902. MAE, PA, Cambon, 78, f. 113.

⁷² Lansdowne to Monson, August 6, 1902. TNA, FO 800/125, Doc. No. 316A, f. 198.

the other possessed a sphere of influence in the Siamese territory. Concerning Morocco, the French were worried about “*too energetic [British] officers, who might, by the advice which they gave to Sultan, encourage him to adopt a policy which might drive him in conflict with France*”.⁷³ Most importantly, Cambon presented Delcassé’s concerns that “*the two Governments should frankly discuss the action which they might need to take in the event of Morocco’s passing into liquidation*”. He admitted that Spain would have to be reckoned with. Regarding Tangiers, Delcassé suggested that the best solution would be to make it an open and international port.⁷⁴

Lansdowne was reluctant to any premature liquidation of Morocco, as he feared a possibility of further complications and international crisis, because at least Germany, Italy and Spain were having their interests there too. Nevertheless, he promised to consider the proposal and to consult the cabinet, which was on eve of the parliamentary vacation, and because of that he might not be able to say anything more on the subject for a few weeks.⁷⁵

Few weeks later, the Moroccan Minister of War informed German vice-consul in Fez about negotiations being in progress between London and Paris and he referred that these negotiations might give French the free hand in Morocco. Walter Harris from London Times had informed the vice-consul that he was the source of the information and a roundabout of pumping about the talks begun. Austrian chargé d’affaires in Paris was inquiring Monson about details and von Eckhardstein was inquiring Lansdowne in London and he finally got a statement that the French had made some propositions.⁷⁶

Cambon made another attempt to discuss the matter on October 15, 1902 when he repeated what he said in August already, suggesting that Spain should get a stretch of the coast and some hinterland, leaving France to exercise exclusive influence in the rest of the country. He kept turning back to German failure to establish them in Morocco and he emphasized that Italy was now without an interest in the area.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibidem, f. 199.

⁷⁴ Ibidem.

⁷⁵ Ibidem.

⁷⁶ EUBANK, p. 76.

⁷⁷ MONGER, p. 77; MATHEWS, p. 46. Delcassé was able to manage the Italians quite easily. He aimed to break up the coalition between Italy and the Triple Alliance, and

However, Lansdowne did not have any motive to discard his idea of ignoring the Moroccan question as far as possible and he rejected Cambon when stating that they were not prepared to discuss a possible “liquidation of Morocco”. Lansdowne then wrote to Monson: “We have no wish to anglicize the Sultan’s army and use it then in favour of our interests. I wish we could persuade M. Delcassé of an absolute sincerity and disinterestedness.”⁷⁸ The Moroccan question was mothballed then.⁷⁹

Two months later, Cambon approached Lansdowne again broached the Moroccan problem on the ground of omitting formal treaty and discussing the present situation and possible future development. He emphasized the need for being prepared for unexpected events in the future. Another meeting took place on December 31, 1902 and Cambon did his best to avoid speaking about “liquidation” which probably frightened Lansdowne before. He assured Lansdowne that France desired the status quo even if the ongoing insurrections should lead to the overthrow of Sultan Abdelaziz. He equally mentioned that there was a danger that German Emperor might intervene in case of revolts in Morocco.⁸⁰

When Lansdowne repeatedly refused to come to terms on Moroccan issue, Cambon tried to reopen talks with Spain, whose interests were advocated in Paris by Ambassador Léon y Castillo. During September, October and November, the Spanish Liberal Government opposed any agreement which concerned Morocco and the situation did not change even despite the arrival of a Spanish conservative cabinet in December 1902. This cabinet declined any signature of such an agreement without previous notification of the British Government.⁸¹

In the second half of 1902 Great Britain had to face Russians in the Central Asia (Persia and Afghanistan), they challenged the question

for this purpose he made use of the Italian economic crisis. This policy bore fruit in 1900 and in 1901 when France successfully ruptured the Triple Alliance by signing a pact with Italy. In November 1902 Italy finally signed an agreement with France by which she promised neutrality in the event that France would face the aggression of one or several powers, or in case France would have to take the initiative because of direct provocation. That was Delcassé’s masterpiece.

⁷⁸ Lansdowne to Monson, December 28, 1902. TNA, FO 800/125, ff. 208–209.

⁷⁹ EUBANK, p. 82.

⁸⁰ J. M. GOUDSWAARD, *Some Aspects of the End of Britain’s “Splendid Isolation”, 1898–1904*, Rotterdam 1952, p. 101.

⁸¹ GEOFFROY, p. 240.

of the neutrality of Straits once again in September 1902 and then in January 1903. In August 1902 Arnold Foster visited Kiel and reported about the German naval establishments, emphasizing that Germany should be now regarded as possible enemy. Germans were a source of anxiety for British in the area of Yangtze and Shanghai in China too. By the beginning of 1903 the ground for possible Anglo-French entente was getting ready. Chamberlain was advocating the entente with France not only as a settlement of colonial differences but he desired it to be an arrangement for general diplomatic cooperation as well. According to George Monger, Balfour and Lansdowne were still more inclined to seek some kind of arrangement with Russians; it was mainly because of British precarious position in Central Asia. In December 1902 France was the only European Power with whom British had friendly relations. Furthermore, she was an ally of Russia.⁸²

When Moroccan insurrections burst out at the end of December 1902, Lansdowne could not ignore the problem anymore.⁸³ He was perturbed by the latest news from North Africa which revealed that sultan had sustained a serious revolt and he was afraid that the French might take advantage of such a course of events and renew the overtures.⁸⁴ Monson referred then: *“He [Delcassé] was undoubtedly excited and anxious about the situation in Morocco, and I cannot too much emphasize his insistence of the expediency of not sending ships of war to the coast and thus risking the further exasperation of the fanatical element against the Europeans in the country.”*⁸⁵

Spanish Ambassador then arrived to Paris and when he called upon Delcassé he was so upset that he was speaking so loud that all the ambassadors in the meeting room could hear him. He should have told Delcassé that *“Moors were a formidable race of warriors and it would take an army of four thousand men to reduce them”*. Monson believed that his Spanish colleague was rather given to exuberance of language and he added that *“I fear that very probable catastrophe which seems to await the sultan will not cause either this Government or public opinion in France*

⁸² MONGER, p. 108.

⁸³ For further details about the insurrections see: Gaillard to Saint-René Taillandier, January 12, 1902. France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Documents Diplomatiques, Affaires du Maroc, 1901–1905, Paris, 1905, Doc. No. 41, Anexe, pp. 55–56.

⁸⁴ Lansdowne to Monson, December 28, 1902. TNA, FO 800/125, ff. 208–209.

⁸⁵ Monson to Lansdowne, December 31, 1902. Ibidem, f. 211.

any regret. He [sultan] is generally considered more or less a puppet in the hands of British advisers and his disappearance would be tailed as 'a check to our intrigues'".

According to Monson all what Delcassé desired was that the Moroccan struggle would be decided promptly and effectively on spot.⁸⁶ British Ambassador went further when stating that: "When one sees what fanatics these Moors are, many years must elapse before the French will be able to round off their African dominions by the acquisition of the Northwest corner of the continent. [...] I cannot imagine that anyone, except so sanguine and enterprising an annexationist as Cambon, would care to stir up such a hornet's nest in cold blood."⁸⁷ During this crisis Monson repeatedly warned Lansdowne not to believe Delcassé: "I have found it impossible to take him at his word, and have been compelled to acquiesce that he is not only a liar, but a clumsy liar also."⁸⁸

The situation in Morocco worsened again and therefore at the beginning of February 1903 even Paul Révoil, the French Governor General of Algeria, alarmed Delcassé when stating that he considered it dangerous for the safety of the people and for good relations with Morocco to ignore the current insurrections at the western part of the region and continuing the passive attitude.⁸⁹

Five British ships were hastily sent to Gibraltar to protect British residents in Morocco and Lansdowne had to make a decision with whom to cooperate with. He finally decided to go the way of least resistance and therefore he opted for France. According to George Monger, such a decision was a response to the needs of moment rather than any new general diplomatic course. At least Lansdowne and Balfour perceived it as temporary arrangement.⁹⁰

At the beginning of 1903 France and Britain came to agreement over one part of the Moroccan question. At that time, a private joint loan for the Sultan of Morocco was discussed in the banks in Paris, Madrid and London. In February the British revealed that the French were trying

⁸⁶ Monson to Lansdowne, December 31, 1902. Ibidem, f. 212.

⁸⁷ Monson to Lansdowne, January 9, 1903. Ibidem, f. 229.

⁸⁸ Monson to Lansdowne, November 28, 1902. Ibidem, f. 204.

⁸⁹ Révoil to Delcassé, February 9, 1903. France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Documents Diplomatiques, Affaires du Maroc, 1901–1905, Paris, 1905, Doc. No. 44, pp. 57–58.

⁹⁰ MONGER, p. 113.

to keep the loan entirely in their hands and therefore the British had to intensify their pressure.⁹¹ The loan was finally contracted in April 1903 as three separate loans of the same size and on the same terms. The Moroccan question was then left alone until summer.⁹²

The time has come to prepare the grounds for future Anglo-French rapprochement and eventual agreement, therefore all newspapers, magazines and British and French chambers of commerce did their best to get the public opinion in favour of the mutual friendship. *The Times* of March 5, 1903 reported: "*The French Ambassador said he considered it his first duty to work for the development of good relations between the two countries [...] France and England had no serious reason for disagreement!*"⁹³ Cambon then suggested that The Association of Chambers of Commerce should be established.

New impetus for improvement of mutual relations came with the planned visit of the King to Paris. On March 11 Monson received a confidential letter from Lord Lansdowne stating that the King is thinking about taking a cruise on the Portuguese, Spanish and Italian coasts and that he would be pleased to meet the French president Loubet on the French soil, either in Cannes in the middle of April or at the end of April in Paris.⁹⁴ Due to the planned visit of Loubet to Algeria and Tunis with the planned return to Paris on May 1, 1903, the King decided to postpone his return and to appear in Paris on May 2.⁹⁵ The visit by Edward VII to Paris brought about a considerable change into the mutual relations of both countries. The English monarch was given a warm reception upon his arrival and he repeatedly emphasized that "*the enmity was no longer an issue*".⁹⁶

The king's visit to Paris provoked Berlin, where German newspapers commented on Edward's stay in the metropolis upon Seine sardonically. While one part of Germany was afraid that the king's visit to Paris would give birth to the anti-German alliance of France, Russia

⁹¹ Ibidem.

⁹² Saint-René Taillandier to Delcassé, April 2, 1903. France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Documents Diplomatiques, Affaires du Maroc, 1901–1905, Paris, 1905, Doc. No. 56, p. 65.

⁹³ *The Times*, March 5, 1903. TNA, FO 800/125, f. 242; EUBANK, p. 80.

⁹⁴ Lansdowne to Monson, March 11, 1903. TNA, FO 800/125, ff. 246–248.

⁹⁵ Lansdowne to Monson, March 13, 1903. Ibidem, ff. 257–258.

⁹⁶ MATHEWS, p. 43.

and Great Britain, the second part thought that the journey of Edward VII could be an overture for the alliance of France, Great Britain and Italy.⁹⁷ Germany watched that visit with animosity not only because of fear of a possible alliance, but also because “*the Emperor’s uncle had not visited Berlin officially yet since the coronation of Wilhelm II*”.⁹⁸ German Ambassador at London Paul Metternich later wrote to German chancellery Bülow that rapprochement between France and England is a product of “*the general dislike of Germany*”.⁹⁹ In contrast the royal visit in Paris was well received in Saint Petersburg where such a visit was perceived as a slap in the face of German Emperor.¹⁰⁰

While relations with France were gradually improving, Britain had to face other problems and the most acute one among them was the Far Eastern Crisis. When British had concluded their alliance treaty with Japan in 1902, they hoped that such an agreement would ease their burden and they would not need keeping a strong force in Far Eastern waters anymore. In April 1903 the crisis burst out entirely and Hayashi announced that “*Japan could no longer pursue a policy of forbearance and would approach Russia for a direct settlement of the differences between the two countries in Manchuria and Korea*”.¹⁰¹ He invited Britain under the terms of alliance, to suggest the steps to be taken in defence of their threatened interests. British Government was in an uneasy and unenviable position. And a possible way out of the walk on the tightrope was a close entente with France.¹⁰²

At the end of May, Paris publicly announced the planned visit of French President Loubet to Great Britain. Before the visit took place, Eugene Étienne travelled to London to call upon Lansdowne. During their interview, Étienne “*dwelt in particular on the necessity of coming to terms with regards to Morocco*”.¹⁰³ The visit was probably Delcassé’s

⁹⁷ Prinnet to Delcassé, Berlin, April 26, 1903. In: DDF, Série II, Tome III, Paris 1931, Doc. No. 201, p. 277.

⁹⁸ Ibidem.

⁹⁹ MATHEWS, pp. 49–50.

¹⁰⁰ Bompard to Delcassé, May 21, 1903. France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Documents Diplomatiques Français, Série II, Tome III, Paris 1931, Doc. No. 255, p. 343; P. J. V. ROLO, *Entente Cordiale. The Origins and Negotiations of the Anglo-French Agreements of 8 April 1904*, London 1969, p. 167.

¹⁰¹ MONGER, p. 127.

¹⁰² Ibidem.

¹⁰³ Lansdowne to Monson, July 2, 1903. TNA, FO 633/17, Doc. No. 325, p. 1.

idea, because he could unofficially find out Lansdowne's views prior to any commitment would be made by the French Government.¹⁰⁴ Few days after, the official state visit of President Loubet took place. He spent in London 3 days from July 6 until July 9, 1903 and during his stay he was accompanied by Théophile Delcassé. Cambon, who was in charge of the final preparations of the state visit, pressed upon Delcassé, that "*the entire trip would be of little value if the two ministers of foreign affairs would not meet in order to exchange the views*". Therefore at a very last moment such a private meeting was arranged at Cambon's request and Delcassé called on Lansdowne in the morning of July 7, 1903.¹⁰⁵ Lansdowne stated that even though the previous negotiations with Cambon did not bring any definite results, they helped them to understand that the points at issue between France and Britain were few in number and by no means incapable of adjustment.

Lansdowne then broached the questions of Newfoundland. In the previous discussions with Paul Cambon the French had proposed withdrawal from the French Shore on condition of receiving sufficient compensation, both territorial and monetary. He had suggested then that the subject of territorial compensation could be Gambia and Lansdowne had refused such a solution.¹⁰⁶ After seeing Lansdowne's somewhat reluctant attitude, Delcassé changed the subject and pointed out that the possibility of coming to an understanding as to the Newfoundland question will entirely depend upon the British attitude with regard to French interests in Morocco.¹⁰⁷ Regarding Morocco, Lansdowne required a guarantee that British trade and enterprise will not be placed at any disadvantage, neutrality of Straits and of the sea-board and finally, proper regards to be shown to Spanish interests. Delcassé said French would not have objections to any of these three points.¹⁰⁸

Lansdowne then broached the question of Siam and New Hebrides where both men came to an understanding. The most important points

¹⁰⁴ MATHEWS, p. 66.

¹⁰⁵ Lansdowne to Monson, July 7, 1903. TNA, FO 633/17, Doc. No. 336, p. 3; EUBANK, p. 82.

¹⁰⁶ Lansdowne to Monson, July 7, 1903. TNA, FO 633/17, Doc. No. 1, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, p. 4.

at issue, Morocco and Egypt, were not discussed in detail.¹⁰⁹ Delcassé only stated that *“the Egyptian question formed part of the larger African question which could, he felt sure, be disposed of satisfactorily if the both countries could come to an agreement as to the position of France and Morocco”*.¹¹⁰ Delcassé did not go to any details with regard to the idea of general and comprehensive settlement, but the way to an entente was initiated. Shortly after the end of the state visit the Prime Minister Balfour informed Edward VII that British Government decided unanimously to continue Anglo-French negotiations.¹¹¹

The British General Consul of Egypt, lord Cromer, encouraged Lansdowne to take an advantage of the opportunity made by French for settling the various outstanding questions. He summarized the issues as follows: *“In Morocco, Siam and Sokoto the French want various things which we have it in our power to give; in Newfoundland and Egypt the situation is reversed. In these latter cases we depend to a greater extent on the good will of France. The New Hebrides question [...] does not fall into one or other of these two groups.”*¹¹² Cromer then emphasized that his own opinion is in favour of making concessions in Morocco, in return for counter-concessions in Egypt and elsewhere. He acknowledged: *“Morocco will, to all intents and purposes, become before long a French province.”*¹¹³ In Egypt, Cromer wanted to get rid of the Caisse de la Dette and he wanted to realize the conversion of the Egyptian Debt and he expected the French objections. Cromer suggested not entering into any discussion on the Egyptian question yet, because it will require very careful consideration. He finally ended his letter to Lansdowne while stating that *“I should be inclined [...] to negotiate on the basis of an explicit, or in any case implicit, recognition by the French that Egypt falls within our sphere of influence, as Morocco would fall within theirs”*.¹¹⁴

Later in July, Paul Cambon took over the task to continue the negotiations with Lord Lansdowne and presented the views of Delcassé on questions they had discussed before. The only question which was not

¹⁰⁹ GEOFFROY, pp. 248–249.

¹¹⁰ Lansdowne to Monson, July 7, 1903. TNA, FO 633/17, Doc. No. 1, p. 3.

¹¹¹ Monson to Lansdowne, July 24, 1903. TNA, FO 800/126, f. 17; ANDREW, p. 211.

¹¹² Cromer to Lansdowne, July 17, 1903. TNA, FO 633/6, f. 174, p. 347.

¹¹³ Ibidem.

¹¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 349.

mentioned was the Egyptian one and Lansdowne immediately paid attention to it. According to Delcassé Egypt, like Morocco, formed part of the “African question” and if British and French would come to terms as to Morocco, there would probably be no great difficulty in coming to terms as to Egypt too. Cambon suggested leaving the Egyptian problem alone for the present and firstly settling the other points at issue, but Lansdowne refused to do so. Cambon then emphasized that France would only give up her rights in Egypt for equivalent concessions in Morocco.¹¹⁵

Both diplomats met again on August 5 and discussed the details. Lansdowne consulted lord Cromer again and the General Consul of Egypt presented a memorandum where he made many suggestions particularly regarding obtaining as much freedom of action as possible in the administration of Egypt. Lansdowne then adopted this memorandum and used it as a basis for his letter to Paul Cambon.¹¹⁶

The French suggestion about the settlement of Moroccan problem caused uproar in Britain. The Colonial Office and War Office were consulted and particularly the latter one was against Lansdowne’s plan to leave the future fate of Morocco in the hands of France and Spain. According to memorandum of July 31, 1903 War Office argued that “*as the concessions which France asks for in Morocco will be to our disadvantage and may carry with it serious consequences, it should not be granted unless we receive a very substantial quid pro quo in other parts of the world*”.¹¹⁷ Another opponent of the French suggestions was Prince Louis of Battenberg, the Director of Naval Intelligence, who argued that leaving the fate of Morocco in the French and Spanish hands, especially in a situation when France had recently been working towards Latin League and trying to ally with Spain and Italy, would be foolishness. He was convinced that “*no more formidable coalition could be brought against us in the Mediterranean*”.¹¹⁸ He therefore concluded that “*our possible acceptance of these French proposals must depend in the main on how far it would be practicable to effectually prevent France from using the Moroccan coast as her own in time of war, and further, we must consider how far any advantages*

¹¹⁵ Lansdowne to Monson, July 29, 1903. TNA, FO 633/17, Doc. No. 4, p. 8.

¹¹⁶ Memorandum by the Earl of Cromer. TNA, FO 633/17, Doc. No. 6, pp. 11–13.

¹¹⁷ MONGER, p. 130.

¹¹⁸ Memorandum by August Battenberg, August 7, 1903. TNA, PRO, FO 800/126, ff. 32–33.

we may gain elsewhere [...] can be held to balance the risk involved to our maritime position in the Mediterranean by allowing France to obtain such a mastery of the interior of Morocco".¹¹⁹

According to George Monger, it was finally the situation at the Far East, which persuaded Lord Lansdowne that *"the Government's service advisors must be overruled and the strategic risk of concessions in Morocco accepted"*.¹²⁰ On September 10, 1903 he issued a memorandum and pushed his colleagues towards the entente. *"An all-round settlement with France upon the lines now suggested would, I believe, be enormously to our advantage. [...] A good understanding with France would not improbably be the precursor of better understanding with Russia, and I need not insist upon the improvement which would result in our international position, which, in view of our present relations with Germany as well as Russia, I cannot regard with satisfaction."*¹²¹

Lord Cromer supported Lansdowne and they shared the same views regarding the entente with France. He wrote to Prime Minister: *"The question [...] extends to far wider sphere. I cannot help regarding an understanding upon all pending questions with France as possibly a stepping-stone to a general understanding with Russia [...] this possibly may prepare the ground for some reduction in our enormous military and naval expenditure."*¹²² Lansdowne believed in the same and he particularly hoped that the entente might be a stepping-stone towards an agreement with Russia.¹²³

Lansdowne was persuaded, that Britain could not prevent France from penetration into Morocco and he shared the opinion of Nicolson, that surrender in Morocco was sooner or later inevitable, because the French were gaining positions not only in Fez but in the whole country and *"if bargains are to be made it would perhaps be prudent to arrange them before the French have entirely occupied the field"*.¹²⁴ With regards to Morocco, there was another Power that Lansdowne had to reckon with –

¹¹⁹ Ibidem.

¹²⁰ MONGER, p. 132.

¹²¹ Memorandum by Lansdowne, September 10, 1903. TNA, PRO, FO 27/3765, ff. 15–16.

¹²² Cromer to Balfour, October 15, 1903. TNA, FO 633/6, Doc. No. 340, p. 326, f. 164.

¹²³ MONGER, p. 136.

¹²⁴ Nicolson to Sanderson, July 26, 1903. TNA, FO 800/135, f. 163.

Germany and it was recognized that as far as Morocco was concerned, Germany “will do her best to make things difficult”.¹²⁵

Lansdowne’s memorandum of September 10 was approved by the Cabinet and therefore Lansdowne could send Cambon the first definite statement of the terms upon which Britain would be able to conclude an entente on October 1, 1903. A detailed discussion about the general scheme of an Anglo-French entente then followed and it was more and more clear that the proposed entente would be based on an exchange of interests in Morocco and Egypt.¹²⁶ Monson reported to Lansdowne that “either he [Delcassé] or someone in his confidence seems to dribble to the press at frequent intervals some of information as to the continuance of your negotiations with Cambon” and he mentioned that: “The French would of course never have dreamed of entering on negotiation of such extensive proportions had it not been for their hungering after Morocco, and their fear that unless they secured that big bite at North West Africa now the tempting morsel might eventually be snatched from their lips.”¹²⁷

The next meeting, which took place on October 7, showed that the French were unwilling to abandon their rights and privileges at Newfoundland and the British would not do so at Morocco.¹²⁸ By that time, both Lord Lansdowne and the Earl of Cromer were persuaded that Great Britain was getting more in Egypt than she was losing in Morocco.¹²⁹

Delcassé answered to Lansdowne’s proposals by letter from October 26 and few days later Cromer could write to Lansdowne: “the French answer is quite as favourable as we could reasonably expect [...] the Newfoundland question seems to me the most serious task ahead [...]. We ought to be able to come to terms about Morocco and Egypt”.¹³⁰ Meanwhile in Morocco, both Governments were considering another loan to the Sultan. Lansdowne informed Balfour about the progress of the negotiations: “Cambon told me today that he had been in communication with

¹²⁵ MONGER, p. 134.

¹²⁶ ANDREW, p. 212.

¹²⁷ Monson to Lansdowne, October 16, 1903. TNA, FO 800/126, f. 55.

¹²⁸ Lansdowne to Cambon, October 1, 1903, in: G. P. GOOCH – H. W. V. TEMPERLEY (eds.), *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898–1914. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Franco-British Entente*, Vol. II, London 1927, Doc. No. 370, p. 317.

¹²⁹ T. G. OTTE, *The Foreign Office Mind. The Making of British Foreign Policy, 1865–1914*, Cambridge 2012, p. 287; MATHEWS, p. 84.

¹³⁰ Cromer to Lansdowne, October 30, 1903. TNA, FO 800/124, f. 108.

Delcassé as to the possibilities of a further loan to the Moors. He was instructed to tell me that the French Government would make no objection to a new loan on the same conditions as the loans raised in April. [...] It is possible that the Spaniards may wish to come in also. Delcassé added that should our negotiations with regard to Moors result in the establishment of an understanding of the kind proposed, the loan to be raised here would be repaid by a new operation, which would be conducted entirely in France."¹³¹

During October and November 1903 Cambon and Lansdowne were finally able to come to terms regarding Morocco and Egypt, the agreement was based on the lines determined earlier in the summer. A very important measures were achieved regarding the British position in Egypt: *"In return for being given a free hand in Morocco [...] France is willing to enter into following pledges as regards Egypt – not to impede the action of England in Egypt, nor to demand the termination of British occupation of that country."*¹³² Lansdowne only refused Cambon's proposal that British advance in Egypt should go with an equal step with the French advance in Morocco.¹³³ Meanwhile, British Governor General Cromer was very anxious about the reaction of the other powers, particularly Germany. He was as well anxious that in case British secured the French consent to the abolition and to the conversion of the Egyptian debt, there might still be obstacles from the other Powers and from the bondholders. Cromer therefore pushed Lansdowne to guard against the possibility of German obstructions and he wanted to use diplomatic support of France in order to achieve this goal. According to Cromer's letter from October 30, 1903, the Caisse de la Dette should be nominally maintained on condition that the French will pledge that they will, in case of need, address the other Powers conjointly with Britain in order to urge them to accept the plan previously agreed by British and French.¹³⁴

After another meeting which took place on December 9, 1903, Bafour reported to King that: *"There seems no insuperable or even serious difficulty in connection with Egypt; and though Morocco still presents*

¹³¹ Lansdowne to Balfour, October 28, 1903. British Library, Prime Minister Papers, Add. 88906/17/5.

¹³² Memorandum on the proposals from October 1, 1903 and October 26, 1903. TNA, FO 27/3765, ff. 40–41.

¹³³ MONGER, p. 144.

¹³⁴ Cromer to Lansdowne, October 30, 1903. TNA, FO 633/17, Doc. No. 17, pp. 27–28.

certain point of difference, it ought not to be hard to find a way through them." All seemed promising but the negotiations then came later that month to a deadlock due to the question of Newfoundland and cessation of Gambia, which was broached again by Cambon, who required territorial compensation for the abandonment of French Shore fishing rights.¹³⁵ When Gambia was rejected, Delcassé suggested a territory on the right bank of Niger instead. According to Monson, this territory was "infinitely more valuable than Gambia", but Lansdowne refused again.¹³⁶

Cambon then warned Lansdowne, that "it is important to reach agreement on this point before continuing our conversations on other questions" and he emphasized that "it is useless to reach agreement on Egypt [...] if the failure of our talks on Newfoundland prevents us from making any settlement".¹³⁷ The negotiations reached another deadlock in January 1904. When Balfour heard about the situation, he wrote to Lansdowne: "I am sorry, but not surprised at the hitch which has occurred in the French negotiations. It would be an international misfortune if they broke down and unsatisfactory as any negotiation must be which does not include the vexed question of Newfoundland. I would rather that we settled Egypt, Morocco and Siam without Newfoundland, than that we settled nothing at all. However I imagine we have not yet heard the last word."¹³⁸ But Lansdowne did not want to leave the Newfoundland question alone and answered to Prime Minister that "the arrangement would be very incomplete without it, and we shall be less liable to attack if we are able to show that we have succeeded in clearing the French, bag and baggage, out of a British colony".¹³⁹

At the same time, Cambon reminded Delcassé not to agree too hastily to the agreements. The British were more eager to settle the Egyptian question than the French were to conclude an agreement over Morocco and therefore Cambon wanted to bide their time and wait for better offer.¹⁴⁰ Monson reported to Lansdowne that "the time now come in which Delcassé must consult colleagues on the general scheme of ar-

¹³⁵ GOUDSWAARD, p. 113.

¹³⁶ Monson to Lansdowne, January 15, 1904. TNA, FO 800/126, f. 84.

¹³⁷ ROLO, p. 233.

¹³⁸ Balfour to Lansdowne, January 15, 1904. British Library, Prime Minister Papers, Add. 88906/17/5.

¹³⁹ Lansdowne to Balfour, January 18, 1904. Ibidem.

¹⁴⁰ EUBANK, p. 85.

rangement".¹⁴¹ The French were annoyed by the British reluctance to sacrifice either Gambia or territory in Western Africa in return for the Newfoundland issue. Lansdowne argued that *"our position in Egypt is practically unassailable, although we should be glad to regularize it. [...] In France, on the other hand, France had no position corresponding to ours in Egypt, and we should certainly be told that we were retreating ignominiously from that country"*.¹⁴² Cambon opposed that *"France, for instance, would still have to negotiate with Spain, and perhaps with the other Powers, about Morocco, and she could, if she chose, make herself very inconvenient to us in Egypt"*.¹⁴³ The French were exasperated and George Cogordan, Director of Political Affairs at the Quai d'Orsay informed French Consul General in Egypt: *"The negotiations with the Great Britain were interrupted [...] it would be desirable if you visited lord Cromer and informed him about the possible failure of the negotiations unless some fairly valuable territorial concessions were made."*¹⁴⁴ Two days later, Cromer cabled to Lansdowne that *"the information received by me leaves little room for doubt that serious danger of the breakdown of the negotiations exists. The necessity of making concessions [...] appears to me most urgent"*.¹⁴⁵

At the end of February, Lansdowne informed the Spanish Government that the negotiations about Morocco had already started.¹⁴⁶ Despite this step Lansdowne finally caved in to French pressure and allowed France to negotiate with Spain separately.¹⁴⁷ Madrid would be informed of the final statement once this was already settled between France and Great Britain.¹⁴⁸ On March 4, 1904, the question of territorial compensation in the area of Nigeria and Lake Chad were raised

¹⁴¹ Monson to Lansdowne, January 15, 1904. TNA, FO 800/126, f. 84.

¹⁴² Lansdowne to Monson, January 13, 1904. TNA, FO 633/17, Doc. No. 32, pp. 44–45.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁴ Cogordan to De la Bouliniere, January 19, 1904. DDF, Série II, Tome IV, Paris 1932, Doc. No. 198, p. 274.

¹⁴⁵ Cromer to Lansdowne, January 21, 1904. TNA, FO 633/17, Doc. No. 36, pp. 46–47.

¹⁴⁶ MATHEWS, p. 92; ROLO, p. 247.

¹⁴⁷ During November of 1903, Lansdowne informed Cromer about the note by Paul Cambon, which commented an existing draft of entente between France and Spain. According to Lansdowne Cambon's note contained such a declaration, by which Spain and France prohibited any cessation of the Moroccan territory to any third Power. Lord Lansdowne warned that this would not prevent Spain from ceding them to France. See Lansdowne to Cromer, November 13, 1903. TNA, FO 800/124, ff. 128–129.

¹⁴⁸ ROLO, p. 237.

and after nine days both powers reached a compromise. The long discussions about the territorial changes were therefore completed.¹⁴⁹ On March 13, France and England then agreed, that the question of Newfoundland should be arranged by a special convention.¹⁵⁰

Both powers finally came to terms on April 6, 1904 and Lansdowne informed the King in his letter later that day that the mutual Anglo-French negotiations are leading to the successful conclusion: *"I beg to inform Your Majesty that my discussion with French ambassador has proceeded satisfactorily and that I hope to reach a final agreement tomorrow. As Parliament is not sitting I think that no announcement should yet be made."*¹⁵¹ The agreement was signed two days later at Chateau Clouds and consisted of three documents, the Convention between the United Kingdom and France respecting Newfoundland and West and Central Africa, the Declaration between the United Kingdom and France respecting Egypt and Morocco with five Secret Articles and the Declaration between the United Kingdom and France concerning Siam, Madagascar and the New Hebrides.¹⁵² All the pending colonial disputes in non-European territories were to be settled between France and England through what later became known as the Entente Cordiale.

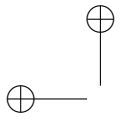
By the Entente Cordiale the friction between France and England in non-European territories was removed. The colonial rivalry was ended and the mutual relations between both great powers were finally smoothed out. France abandoned the policy of pinpricks in Egypt in exchange for the policy of a free hand in Morocco, but the struggle over Morocco was still not ended. However, the main opponent was not Britain, but Germany and the fate of Morocco was to be determined seven years later.

¹⁴⁹ Lansdowne to Monson, March 13, 1904. In: BD 2, Doc. No. 399, p. 354; ROLO, p. 253.

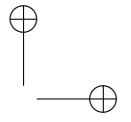
¹⁵⁰ D. VILLEPIN, *L'Entente Cordiale de Fachoda à la Grande Guerre dans les archives du Quai d'Orsay. Dans les archives du Quai d'Orsay*, Bruxelles – Paris 2004, p. 90.

¹⁵¹ Lansdowne to Edward VII, April 6, 1904. British Library, Lansdowne Papers, Add. 88906/19/25.

¹⁵² Convention signed at London, April 8, 1904. TNA, FO 633/17, Doc. No. 95, pp. 123–128.

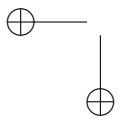


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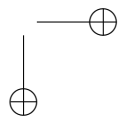


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British Policy in China and Russo-Japanese Rivalry in the Far East

Roman Kodet*

By the end of the 19th century Great Britain had to deal with new serious problems in the Far East. The position of its international rivals – especially Russia – rose considerably during the 90s. This was quite apparent in the northern part of Qing Empire – Manchuria where the Russians gained important concessions and a naval base of Port Arthur. Britain therefore tried to utilize the deepening of the Russo-Japanese rivalry, which was apparent since the second half of the 19th century. After new Russian pressure ensuing the Boxer revolution, London started direct negotiations with Tokyo. Their result was the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which ended the era of British “Splendid Isolation”. Thanks to this development and naval and economic cooperation of both countries, Japan was able to soundly defeat Russia in the Russo-Japanese war. This was a considerable success of the British diplomacy, which was able to stop its main opponent without going to war itself. On the other hand, the rise of Japan as a Great Power meant, that the Land of the Rising Sun became a key factor in the British position in China. Britain started to be increasingly dependent on its support in next years.

[Great Britain; China; Japan; Russia; diplomacy; international relations; Russo-Japanese War; Anglo-Japanese Alliance]

China’s defeat¹ in the war with Japan (1894–1895) and the subsequent fight for concessions between the Great Powers and China’s response in the form of the anti-foreigner movement culminating in the Boxer Rebellion of 1899–1900 led to a marked change in the balance of power in China, which began to be called “*the Sick Man of the Far East*” by

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certain observers.² The international resolution to the Boxer Rebellion definitively demonstrated that Chinese issues were no longer under the sole control of Great Britain as they had been for most of the 19th century. The weakening of China as a result of external pressure and the erosion of the central government's power had led to the gradual erosion of British influence and prestige throughout the region. The main catalyser of change in the Far East was the Sino-Japanese War, which transformed the balance of power in Asia in a fundamental way.³ In subsequent years, a large number of Great Powers forced new concessions which represented the foundations for their influence in China. Between 1895 and 1902 alone, Germany, Japan, Russia, Italy and also representatives of the Habsburg monarchy and Belgium acquired concessions in Tianjin. Germany (Jiaozhou),⁴ Russia (Dalian and Port Arthur) and France (Guangzhouwan) then acquired major leased territories which significantly helped them to promote their interests in the Middle Kingdom and create their own spheres of interest which were meant to secure them trade penetration of the crumbling Qing Empire. As such, Britain's concept of free penetration of China, which reached a peak in the period after the Second Opium War,⁵ essentially collapsed despite the fact that Britain still retained its clear dominance of Chinese trade.⁶

As such, London had to pay a lot more attention to the Chinese issue following the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion than it had done in the prior period. In the years following the signing of the Boxer Protocol, Britain (as the country with the most significant economic interests in China) and the other Great Powers had to deal with a number of fundamental issues of Chinese policy. From London's perspective,

² D. SCOTT, *China and the International System, 1840–1949*, New York 2008, p. 152.

³ S. C. M. PAINE, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895*, Cambridge 2003, p. 370.

⁴ T. G. OTTE, "Great Britain, Germany, and the Far-Eastern Crisis of 1897–8", in: *The English Historical Review*, 110, 439, 1995, pp. 1157–1159. Britain responded to the German presence in Jiaozhou and the Russian presence in Port Arthur by leasing the Weihaiwei base. Modern historians have come to the conclusion that this step was motivated by an intention to neutralise Germany's entry into China rather than an attempt to balance Russia's position. *Ibidem*, p. 1177.

⁵ J. K. FAIRBANK, *Dějiny Číny*, Praha 1998, p. 237.

⁶ The National Archives, London, Kew (further only TNA), Foreign Office (further only FO) 405/171, General Report on China for the year 1906, p. 21, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 1. 6. 1907.

two issues were particularly important: the policy of the other powers in China, and internal developments in the Middle Kingdom, which had to deal with the failure of its previous policies. Looking at the first issue, a primary problem for Britain was Russia's sudden penetration of northern China which threatened Britain's overall position in the region. In terms of China's internal affairs, the issue of reform of the formerly powerful empire and the problems related to this – loans, concessions and foreign trade – played a key role. Great Britain thus had to carefully monitor all aspects of Far East Policy more than ever before in order to be able to continue to control the course of events there and maintain its interests and position within China.

Rivalry of the Great Powers in Northern China and the Establishment of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance

As has already been noted, it was the entry of the other Great Powers onto the Chinese stage which represented a fundamental problem for Britain's policy in the Far East from the 1880s. London may have seen the main threat in Russia's penetration of northern China.⁷ The failure of Chinese reforms then made the Middle Kingdom a stage for a new struggle between the Great Powers to expand their interests and spheres of influence. A fairly young power (of only regional importance at this time) in the form of Japan's regime of Meiji period reformers, however, got involved in this conflict, and its dynamic entry into Chinese politics and its protectorate, Korea, had a fundamental impact on the development of the situation here in the form of Japanese–Russian rivalry,⁸ whose roots can be traced back to the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, when the Russians expressed marked interest in the islands of Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands claimed by Japan.⁹ Russia had even governed the island of Tsushima in the Korea Strait for a short time in 1861, before they were forced out following emphatic British protests.¹⁰ In 1875,

⁷ A. MALOZEMOFF, *Russian Far Eastern Policy 1881–1904*, Berkeley – Los Angeles 1958, p. 36.

⁸ PAINE, pp. 94–95.

⁹ M. B. JANSEN, *The Making of Modern Japan*, Cambridge – London 2000, pp. 258–264; for more on the beginning of Russia's penetration of Japan and the Far East, see G. A. LENSEN, *The Russian Push Towards Japan. Russo-Japanese Relations, 1697–1875*, Princeton 1989.

¹⁰ M. R. AUSLIN, *Negotiating with Imperialism. The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of*

St Petersburg forced the government in Tokyo to sign a treaty which secured Russia control of Sakhalin.¹¹ Further Russian claims subsequently persuaded Japan that satisfying Russian demands only led to further demands. As such, Tokyo, at the time mainly dealing with internal reforms, endeavoured to find a way to secure itself against possible Russian aggression.

One of the ways for the leaders of the recent Meiji Revolution represented by the slogan “fukoku kyohei” (enrich the state, strengthen the military) to achieve their goals was for Japan to expand its territory along the model of the Western Powers. In this regard, Tokyo was quick to imitate the form of their expansion, as demonstrated during the expedition to Formosa in 1874, and in particular two years later when Japan used the threat of warfare to force Korea to open up through signature of the Gangwa Treaty.¹² Japan’s penetration of the peninsula, however, led to strong rivalry between Japan and China, which the European powers also got involved in (mainly Russia and Great Britain,¹³ culminating in 1894 in the outbreak of a war between the two countries in which China was heavily defeated to the surprise of the European public (though not to the diplomats present there). As such, the Middle Kingdom found itself on the edge of calamity.¹⁴ The outcome was the signature of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (17 April 1895) which awarded Formosa, the Pescadores islands, the Liaodong Peninsula and 200 million taels (25 million pounds) in war reparations to Japan.¹⁵ These profits, however, were in direct conflict with Russian ambitions in the Far East, which aimed to acquire an ice-free port in

Japanese Diplomacy, Harvard 2006, pp. 80ff.

¹¹ LENSEN, p. 458; details also in J. L. McCLAIN, *A Modern History of Japan*, New York – London 2002, p. 288.

¹² P. DUUS, *The Abacus and the Sword. The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895–1910*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1995, pp. 46–48; J. KOČVAR, “The Opening of Korea until 1876”, in: *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations*, 2009, pp. 209ff; H. CONROY, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea – 1868–1910*, Philadelphia 1960, pp. 65–66.

¹³ For more on British policy in Korea before the Sino-Japanese War, see A. SKŘIVAN st. – A. SKŘIVAN ml., “Velká Británie a ‘hra o Koreu’. K vývoji na Dálném východě před první čínsko-japonskou válkou”, in: *Historický obzor*, 25, 9/10, 2014, pp. 207–215.

¹⁴ At the end of the war, even its capital city was at the mercy of Japan’s weapons. D. TWITCHETT – J. K. FAIRBANK (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 11, London – New York – New Rochelle 1980, p. 273.

¹⁵ PAINE, pp. 271ff.

the form of the Port Arthur base on the southern tip of the Liaodong Peninsula. As such, with the support of France and Germany, Russia placed itself at the head of the so-called Triple Intervention which forced Tokyo to give up Liaodong and the Pescadores Islands in exchange for a further 30 million taels in war reparations.¹⁶ Just two years later, a Russian fleet overwintered in Port Arthur, and St Petersburg forced Beijing to sign a treaty leasing the port to the Russians.¹⁷ The subsequent Sino-Russian agreement on construction of a railway line from the port to the then built Trans-Siberian Railway,¹⁸ clearly testifies to the importance Russia gave this region, and the level of its engagement in the Far East.

Britain was, of course, aware of the serious threat Russia's penetration represented to its interests.¹⁹ London anticipated that approval of the construction of the Russian railway in Manchuria was just another of Russian Finance Minister Sergei Yulyevich Witte's steps to acquire a dominant position not just in Manchuria, but the whole of northern China.²⁰ This fact naturally brought it closer to Japan, for whom Russian expansion also represented a serious threat and which could not forget the humiliation it had experienced during the Triple Intervention which had deprived it of its sweetest fruits of victory. Even before the conflict and during the war, a number of Britain's representatives in the Far East had expressed fairly open sympathy with Japan.²¹ The victory of the Land of the Rising Sun was subsequently considered by some observers as proof of Japan's entry to the club of "civilised" countries, something also evidenced in an article by the *News Chronicle* newspaper correspondent, Sir Henry Norman, who

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 289; cf. D. KEENE, *Emperor of Japan. Meiji and His World, 1852–1912*, New York 2002, pp. 506–508; A. SKŘIVAN st. – A. SKŘIVAN ml., "Soumrak říše Čchingü. Čínsko-japonská válka, 1894–1895", in: *Historický obzor*, 25, 11/12, 2014, pp. 255ff.

¹⁷ T. G. OTTE, *The China Question. Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation, 1894–1905*, New York 2007, p. 139. It is interesting that a number of Russian naval commanders did not consider Port Arthur an ideal base because of geographical conditions and doubted that it would meet naval needs. MALOZEMOFF, p. 100.

¹⁸ MALOZEMOFF, p. 112.

¹⁹ TNA, PRO 30/33/16/1, Ernest Mason Satow diary, 4. 5. 1896.

²⁰ A. L. ROSENBAUM, "The Manchuria Bridgehead: Anglo-Russian Rivalry and the Imperial Railways of North China", in: *Modern Asian Studies*, 10, 1, 1976, p. 44.

²¹ I. NISHI, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance. The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894–1907*, London – New York 2012, pp. 11–14.

wrote that, “the war with China [...] will at last force foreigners to see Japan as she is. The Japanese are a martial and proud race, with marvellous intelligence, and untiring energy and enthusiasm”.²² Following the Triple Intervention, Britain assured Tokyo that Britain did not approve of this development and it never planned to deprive Japan of the “reasonable fruits of her victories, although they would have much preferred no disturbance of the status quo”.²³ Britain’s favourable position towards Japan, however, did not automatically signal possible collaboration between the two countries, although it did herald a change in London’s approach to the country which until recently had been perceived as an “uncivilised” state at the level of China. Britain, whose policy during the conflict was focused on ensuring its status in China and Japan was not damaged (which was quite difficult), as such hoped that their non-participation in the Triple Intervention would allow for future collaboration with the island empire.²⁴

Russian strategy in the second half of the 1890s, however, aroused ever greater fears in Britain regarding St Petersburg’s intentions. The greatest worries were induced by the fact that Russia had, through a combination of promises and pressure, been able to exploit the Chinese government’s weaknesses and the fact that at that time China “was not a centralized state like France but a group of loosely federated satrapies”, which gave the Russia the opportunity to govern China’s outlying territories, over which the imperial court had mere formal control.²⁵ This reality expressed itself above all following the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion, which also affected Russia’s sphere of interests in Manchuria,²⁶ and on the pretext of maintaining order it allowed Russia to more than double its military presence in the region. At the end of November 1900, St Petersburg was able to sign a treaty with Beijing in which it was able to keep its forces in Manchuria for as long as it considered necessary.²⁷ This development convinced many

²² PAINE, p. 17.

²³ OTTE, *The China Question*, p. 70.

²⁴ SKŘIVAN – SKŘIVAN, “Soumrak říše Čchingů”, p. 257; for more on Britain’s stance on the Treaty of Shimonoseki, see F. Q. QUO, “British Diplomacy and the Cession of Formosa, 1894–95”, in: *Modern Asian Studies*, 2, 2, 1968, pp. 141–154.

²⁵ TNA, PRO 30/33/16/4, Ernest Mason Satow diary, 8. 10. 1901.

²⁶ J. A. WHITE, *The Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War*, Princeton 1964, p. 5.

²⁷ TNA, PRO 30/33/16/4, Ernest Mason Satow diary, 14. 12. 1900; MALOZEMOFF, pp. 153–155.

observers that Russia had basically created its own protectorate in Manchuria and that it was planning to annex the northern part of Manchuria, including Harbin.²⁸ Britain's envoy in Beijing, one of the absolute leading experts on Far East issues, Sir Ernest Mason Satow, said of this whole situation that because Russia had managed to convince the imperial court that it was its best friend it had increased its influence in the Far East significantly.²⁹ The British diplomat considered Russia's objective to be the acquisition of a dominant position in China to the detriment of Great Britain.³⁰ As such, Russian policy represented a deadly threat to London's key interests, for which trade with China was more important than with any other part of the British Empire. Bringing together political and economic issues in its Far East policy meant that Britain's political position and influence in Beijing was closely associated with its economic interests. These were now at threat due to increasing pressure from Russia.

As such, British policy endeavoured to force Russia to commit itself to withdrawing its forces from Manchuria – the territory of a foreign country – by a certain (specific) time. For a long time, St Petersburg refused to acquiesce to these demands, and once it had begun negotiations with Beijing on withdrawing its units, its intention was clear – to avoid a clear commitment in this regard and force China to make the greatest concessions possible. One such concession, for example, was the agreement that China would not allow any other country than Russia mining rights in Manchuria. When the agreement on evacuating Manchuria was finally signed in 8 April 1902, it was merely a response to the collapse of previous negotiations with China and the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.³¹ By this time, most Chinese, including Li Hongzhang, who had died in November 1901, had realised that Russia's previous friendly policy had been solely motivated by its expansive intentions. Although China attempted to gain the support of the Great Powers (with Britain advising it not to compromise),³² during subsequent negotiations it was almost impossible

²⁸ TNA, PRO 30/33/16/4, Ernest Mason Satow diary, 25. 10. 1901; I. NISH, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, London – New York 1985, pp. 91–93.

²⁹ TNA, PRO 30/33/16/4, Ernest Mason Satow diary, 25. 11. 1901.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ MALOZEMOFF, p. 175.

³² TNA, PRO 30/33/16/5, Ernest Mason Satow diary, 11. 1. 1902.

to resist Russian pressure. This allowed St Petersburg to force the inclusion of a clause in the withdrawal agreement which stated that withdrawal would only occur if there was no disorder or if it was not prevented from doing so by the measures of other Great Powers, something which essentially made the agreement redundant.³³

In the mean time, Russia's position not just in Manchuria, but also in Korea, was fundamentally boosted. Not just Britain, but also Japan which perceived Korea as key for its interests and security, were significantly disturbed by the activities of the Russian company headed by Yulii Mikhailovich Briner which acquired the right to mine in the basin of the Yalu River forming the border between Manchuria and Korea.³⁴ This measure was then linked to the placement of 2,000 soldiers on the Chinese side of the border with Korea.³⁵ Russia had thus evidently set out on a path to further territorial expansion in the Far East. Russian Finance Minister Sergei Yulyevich Witte's opinion cautioning Tsar Nicholas II and promoting economic penetration of the region was suppressed by a pressure group around the Tsar's key advisor, Aleksandr Mikhailovich Bezobrazov.³⁶ The success of this reckless political adventurer³⁷ can be explained by Tsar Nicholas II's dwindling willingness to listen to Witte, who had been a key figure in Russian politics for a whole decade. It was Bezobrazov who managed to convince the Tsar of the economic benefits of logging in the Yalu river valley. His influence led Nicholas II and a number of leading members of the Russian nobility to invest a few million roubles in the business. As such, Briner's company was then also easily able to serve as pretext for Russia's military presence in the region.³⁸

Besides Great Britain, it was Japan which felt its interests were most threatened, considering Korea a potential "dagger pointing at Japan's

³³ WHITE, p. 10.

³⁴ MALOZEMOFF, p. 181.

³⁵ WHITE, p. 44.

³⁶ MALOZEMOFF, p. 177.

³⁷ For more on this figure and the policy of his clique at the imperial court, see I. V. LUKOIANOV, "The Bezobrazovtsy", in: J. W. STEINBERG – B. W. MENNING – D. SCHIMMELPENNINCK VAND DER OYE, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective. World War Zero*, Leiden – Boston 2005, pp. 65–86.

³⁸ Y. PARK, *Korea and the Imperialists. In Search of a National Identity*, Bloomington 2009, p. 60.

heart".³⁹ Tokyo's attempts at reaching an agreement with Russia regarding Japanese interests in Korea and forcing it to limit any further expansion, however, collapsed to a certain extent through Russian intransigence. As such, the situation was perceived to be serious. The imperial government, however, was painfully aware of Japan's weaknesses and isolation. Its recollection of the Triple Intervention further clearly demonstrated what Japan's chances would be if it had to face the power's pressure alone. As such, Japan's Prime Minister, Itô Hirobumi, and his successor, Katsura Tarô (he held the role from 2 June 1901), came to the conclusion that Japan on the one hand would have to continue in its negotiations with Russia, but at the same time would have to secure strong support from another Great Power which could help it resist St Petersburg. Due to France and Germany's limited interests in the region and their long-term support of Russian policy, only Great Britain and the United States seemed possible partners, and they welcomed Japan's proclamation regarding support for the Open Door Policy.⁴⁰

Of these two options, a connection with Great Britain appeared most hopeful, a country which had long been a model for Meiji era statesmen. In this regard, the situation was favourable for Japan. Like Japan, Britain felt itself in the defence, and it perceived Russia's penetration as a threat to its vital interests. At the same time, it regarded the method which St Petersburg exploited its problems in South Africa very negatively. Also important was the fact that Britain had begun to realise that if it did not activate its policy and provide Japan with support, then the island empire would have to come to an agreement with Russia at any price.⁴¹ This, however, would mean Britain remaining essentially isolated in the Far East.⁴² Britain's long-term sympathy towards Japan also played an important role, Britain sharing similar interests and also being one of the key countries which had helped the Meiji government in implementing its reforms. As such, voices calling for closer co-operation between the two countries were nothing new.⁴³ In 1901, London was thus pleased to acknowledge Japan's pos-

³⁹ NISH, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, pp. 97ff.

⁴⁰ OTTE, *The China Question*, p. 286.

⁴¹ ROSENBAUM, p. 62.

⁴² OTTE, *The China Question*, p. 286.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

itive response to its probing on possible collaboration.⁴⁴ Despite divisions in Japan's government with some politicians supporting a link with Britain and a second section of the cabinet proposing compromises with Russia and an agreement with St Petersburg at any price, in April 1901 the Japanese envoy in London, Count Hayashi Tadasu, made a proposition to Britain's Foreign Secretary Lansdowne, "to make a permanent agreement for the maintenance of peace in the Far East".⁴⁵

Due to disputes within Japan's cabinet regarding the further direction of foreign policy, further convergence between the two countries did not occur until October 1901 when Japan's Foreign Minister, Komura Jutaró, outlined to British envoy, Sir Claude MacDonald, the opportunity for an agreement based on the principles of preserving Korea's integrity, an Open Door Policy in China and ensuring that should one of the parties get into conflict with a third country then no other power would intervene.⁴⁶ Japan hoped that Germany would also sign a similar agreement.⁴⁷ In the meantime, Britain was anxiously monitoring the discussions taking place between Japan and Russia. If they were to come to a successful conclusion before they themselves could reach agreement with Tokyo, then Britain would remain isolated in Asia, something which would have fundamental consequences for its further interests. As such, Envoy MacDonald informed Japan at the beginning of November that the British government agreed with the political framework outlined by Komura.⁴⁸ Britain, however, remained somewhat cool to the idea of Germany getting involved in the Anglo-Japanese agreement, as such an agreement would have had a fundamental impact on Britain's position in Europe. Although Anglo-German negotiations had been taking place since 1898 in which both Germany and Britain were attempting to create closer ties between the countries, their course had been interrupted by a number of fundamental factors. In particular, these included London's attempt to avoid overcommitments on the continent, the beginnings of Germany's arm-

⁴⁴ TNA, FO 46/563, Whitehead to Salisbury, 14. 8. 1901; cf. NISH, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, pp. 143ff.

⁴⁵ A. M. POLEY (ed.), *The Secret Memoirs of Count Tadasu Hayashi*, Vol. 2, New York 2002, p. 121.

⁴⁶ TNA, FO 46/563, MacDonald to Lansdowne, Tokyo, 24. 10. 1901.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ TNA, FO 46/563, MacDonald to Lansdowne, Tokyo, 6. 11. 1901.

ing of the navy and unfortunate statements made by Chancellor Bülow.⁴⁹ At the time when Japan was beginning to pursue relations with Britain, London began to lose interest in agreement with Germany. From their perspective, Japanese support in the Far East was much more useful than German support. As such, MacDonald informed Komura that Britain preferred negotiations with Japan only in that their two countries were closer to each other than Britain was with Germany.⁵⁰ As such, in the end, Japan had to abandon its idea of Germany joining the planned Anglo-Japanese Alliance.⁵¹

Lansdowne, however, was aware he needed to hurry. The situation in Tokyo was continuing to deteriorate through Russian pressure. Marquis Itó was known for preferring an agreement with Russia and at this time was visiting first Berlin, then in November 1901 also St Petersburg where Witte assured him that Russia had no special interests in Korea.⁵² Although these concurrent Japanese discussions aroused a certain suspicion in London, they did force Britain to make a final decision. The danger of isolation should Japan settle its disputes with Russia was a real one. As such, Britain submitted its proposal for a formal alliance to Hiyashi.⁵³ Katsura's new government did not discuss it, however, until the beginning of December. Since its negotiations in St Petersburg had become deadlocked, it seemed to government members that an alliance with Great Britain was the only way out of their difficult position. An alliance with Britain would strengthen Japan's negotiating position towards Russia. Should the disputes between the two countries grow into military conflict, the support of Britain and its loans would be key for its successful conduct.⁵⁴ In Britain, a number of British politicians wanted more of a loose tie with Japan, but they were aware that without adequate support it would be difficult for

⁴⁹ A. W. WRAD – G. P. GOOCH, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1783–1919*, Vol. 3, Cambridge 1923, pp. 276–286.

⁵⁰ TNA, FO 46/563, MacDonald to Lansdowne, Tokyo, 20. 11. 1901.

⁵¹ TNA, FO 46/563, Hayashi to Lansdowne, 19. 12. 1901.

⁵² KEENE, p. 579.

⁵³ TNA, FO 46/563, Draft treaty between the British and Japanese governments, November 1901.

⁵⁴ Britain had provided the first large loan to Japan in 1899, which was one of the measures which contributed to the rapprochement between the two countries. NISH, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, p. 77.

them to resist Russia alone.⁵⁵ As such, a shared resistance to Russian expansion was the catalyst which led Britain not just to abandoning its policy of “Splendid Isolation”, but also to concluding the first equal treaty of alliance with a non-European power.

Thus, on 10 December, Komura was able to inform MacDonald that the British proposal had received the support not just of the government, but also of the Emperor himself.⁵⁶ As such, discussions could move on to the next phase of negotiations over the details of the prepared treaty. One of these points, for example, was Japan’s demand that Britain maintain a sufficiently strong fleet in the Far East such that in the event of a wider conflict both countries would have a numerical advantage over Russia, France and Germany.⁵⁷ Britain, however, wanted to avoid such a commitment. They were nevertheless aware that Tokyo in particular worried of a possible French intervention should a war break out with Russia. As such, London was forced to take a clear position and accede to the Japanese proposal that the signatories would be required to come to their partner’s aid in the event of getting into conflict with two other powers.⁵⁸ Another of Britain’s concessions was to recognise Tokyo’s entitlement to reserve its right to act independently against Russia in Korea such that it could protect its interests.⁵⁹

As such, the first weeks of January 1902 saw the gradual finalising of the treaty between the two countries. Although Britain had to make concessions to Japan in a number of issues,⁶⁰ it did leave itself the freedom to act as it saw fit should war take place between Japan and Russia. This compromise definitively opened up a path to concluding this key treaty for both countries. 30 January 1902, when the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance took place in London, represented a real turning point which heralded the end of one era in the history of international relations. Because of the key position which

⁵⁵ TNA, PRO 30/33/16/5, Ernest Mason Satow diary, 12. 2. 1902.

⁵⁶ The final decision followed quite a long debate which was affected by the fact that Itó wanted to reach an agreement with Russia, and his supporters in the government perceived negotiations with Britain as breaching the policy of the former Prime Minister at a time when he could not speak out on the issue. KEENE, p. 575.

⁵⁷ TNA, FO 46/563, MacDonald to Lansdowne, Tokyo, 11. 12. 1901.

⁵⁸ TNA, FO 46/563, MacDonald to Lansdowne, Tokyo, 19. 12. 1901.

⁵⁹ TNA, FO 46/563, Lansdowne to MacDonald, London, 7. 1. 1902.

⁶⁰ TNA, FO 46/563, Lansdowne to MacDonald, London, 22. 1. 1902.

China still held within British policy and its imperial system, it is no surprise that it was the Chinese question which led the British cabinet to reassess its previous political course, one it had held continuously since the Congress of Vienna with the exception of the Crimean War. On the other hand, however, the little impact that the treaty had in regard to British interests in Europe has led a number of historians not to perceive it as the definitive end to Britain's policy of "Splendid Isolation", but rather as a matter of regional policy which had an impact only on the Far East, and not on the direction of Great Britain's foreign policy as a whole.⁶¹

What was, however, important from a practical perspective was the fact that although the treaty assured Britain of Japanese support against a third power (and vice-versa), it did not commit it to direct engagement should the disputes between Japan and Russia culminate in war. In this case, Britain would be obliged to maintain benevolent neutrality. Only if another country were to get involved in the conflict against Japan (which was not very likely) would Britain be obliged to intervene at the side of the island empire. Articles 1 and 4 of the treaty were also important points. In the first of these, Japan recognised Britain's "special" rights and interests in China, and Britain recognised Japanese interests in Korea. In Article 4, both countries undertook not to conclude any separate agreement with other powers which would breach the articles of the treaty of alliance being concluded.⁶² As such, not only had Britain managed to prevent any Japanese capitulation to Russian pressure which would lead to Russian dominance in northern China, and likely also Korea, but it had also got Tokyo on its side. Japan was thus to serve as a kind of barrier against Russian advance, its task being to protect Britain's interests in China. On the other hand, Japan had pierced its isolation and acquired a strong ally which would allow it to face up to Russian pressure much more vigorously than it had in recent years.⁶³

⁶¹ OTTE, *The China Question*, p. 325.

⁶² TNA, FO 46/563, Treaty between the governments of Great Britain and Japan, London, 30.1. 1902. The full wording of the treaty can be found at <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/anglojapanesealliance1902.htm> [2016-08-03]; cf. POLEY, p. 323an.

⁶³ WHITE, p. 94.

In terms of the international situation in the Far East, the treaty represented a marked change in the balance of power. Two countries which until then had been isolated and defensive, joined forces to defend their interests against new arrivals. Although the report on the agreement from London raised concerns in Russia, Russia's general approach to Japan did lead to an underestimation of the country. The Japanese were perceived essentially as distant barbarians, and the only information the public knew about them comprised second-hand realities and stories.⁶⁴ As such, few realised that the treaty which had been concluded would be one of the key moments which would help stop Russian expansion in Asia. The mood in Germany was more one of disappointment regarding the treaty, because it meant the end of hopes of co-operation with Britain. German policy subsequently focused on supporting Russia which through its engagement in Asia was meant to be kept outside of European affairs.⁶⁵

The Consequences of the Russo-Japanese War

Complex negotiations took place over the following two years between Tokyo and St Petersburg whose objective was to stop the Russian advance in Manchuria. Russia's intransigence and the further expansion of its military presence in Manchuria, however, meant that at the end of 1903 Tokyo came to the conclusion that war was unavoidable and if Japan was to have any hope of victory it would have to attack before Russia fortified its position any further.⁶⁶ The outcome was a severance of relations between the two countries⁶⁷ and the subsequent surprise attack by the Japanese navy on the Russian base in Port Arthur. The conflict which broke out was to permanently change the face of Far East politics. While Britain responded at the beginning of the war as if it was a necessity for Japan to defend its interests in Korea,⁶⁸ from the beginning of the war German diplomacy was more supportive of Russia.⁶⁹ This fact can be demonstrated in German's as-

⁶⁴ LENSEN, p. 464ff.

⁶⁵ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amtes, Berlin (further only PA AA), China No. 1, R 17677, Mumm von Schwarzenstein to Bülow, Peking, 31. 5. 1902.

⁶⁶ NISHI, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, p. 200.

⁶⁷ WHITE, p. 128.

⁶⁸ TNA, FO 46/577, MacDonald to Lansdowne, Tokyo, 6. 2. 1904.

⁶⁹ PA AA, Japan No. 20, R 18757, Arco Valley to Bülow, Tokyo, 7. 2. 1904.

sistance in supplying Russia's 2nd Pacific Fleet heading to battle in Tsushima and Emperor Wilhelm II's proposal to conclude an agreement on European affairs shortly before the end of the war.⁷⁰

Although a recap of the conflict cannot be given at this point, suffice it to say that the Russian advance southwards (to Manchuria and northern China) was ended for good. Thanks to its victory, Japan, despite its economic weakness, became the first non-Western country to join the group of world powers. This fact can indisputably be considered one of the fundamental outcomes of British policy in China, because there is no doubt that Japan's victory was dependent on British support in many regards. This support was seen both in British assistance in quickly building up an extensive Japanese fleet,⁷¹ and in particular generous loans from British bankers, who also became key "purchasers" of Japanese government bonds which Tokyo used to fund its war efforts.⁷² Without this British assistance, Japan would not have been in the position not just to win the war, but to wage it at all.

London considered these British investments in Japan's war efforts to be of great benefit, because besides the economic gains they ensured that Britain could eliminate its greatest rival in China without having to be involved in battle itself. But stopping Russia and supporting Japan also had its disadvantages: "Japan's victories over Russia at sea and in Manchuria had profound implications for Britain and the other Powers. Within the Far Eastern subsystem of international politics, Satow noted somewhat uneasily, 'the rise of Japan has so completely upset our equilibrium as a new planet the size of Mars would derange the solar system'; while Maurice Paléologue, sous-directeur for political affairs at the Quai d'Orsay, likened Tsushima to the defeat of Philip II's 'Invincible Armada' and 'a marque la fin de la domination russe en Asie'."⁷³ Thus Japan became one of the key factors in Far Eastern politics with whom the other powers would from now on have to calculate. Although Britain remained the

⁷⁰ D. WARNER – P. WARNER, *The Tide at Sunrise. A History of the Russo-Japanese War 1904–1905*, London – Portland 2002, pp. 403, 528.

⁷¹ D. C. EVANS – M. R. PEATTIE, *Kaigun. Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy 1887–1941*, Annapolis 1997, pp. 60–66.

⁷² E. S. MILLER, "Japan's Other Victory: Overseas Financing of the Russo-Japanese War", in: J. W. STEINBERG – B. W. MENNING – D. SCHIMMELPENNINCK VANDER OYE, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective. World War Zero*, Leiden – Boston 2005, pp. 470ff.

⁷³ OTTE, *The China Question*, p. 322.

dominant power in China, from now on it would be to some extent dependent on Japanese support. As such, London would have to endeavour to maintain the best possible relations with Tokyo. Its policy in China was thus heavily linked in with its stance on Japan. Following the Russo-Japanese War, Britain was forced to extend its alliance with Japan (originally agreed for five years) in order to ensure its position in China could be maintained.⁷⁴ Paradoxically, the outcome of Britain's attempts to stop Russia, leading to the Russo-Japanese War, thus transformed Britain's position in the Far East in a major way. Although it retained its interests in China, the era of its dominance was over for good despite the fact its principal rival had been fundamentally weakened. This paradoxical situation was a result of the fact that Britain helped Japan achieve the position of a Great Power, and accepted it as an equal participant in Chinese policy. Other factors limiting Britain's position in China were the deteriorating situation in Europe which averted Britain's attention from the Chinese issue, and the strengthening of Germany and the USA's economic interests in the Far East. Although to a certain extent London remained arbiter of Far Eastern politics, from now on it would have to accept limitations to its power which would bring it to make bigger concessions than it had done previously.

Japan's growing importance for British policy in the Far East meant that Britain's position in China depended on the Russo-Japanese settlement following the end of the Russo-Japanese War, and also on the earliest possible taking of profits from the conflict and their subsequent economic use.⁷⁵ The Treaty of Portsmouth, which forced Russia to recognise Japanese interests in Korea, evacuate Manchuria, return leased territories (Port Arthur and Dalian) to China and give Japan the southern part of Sakhalin, could not form a long-term basis for further relations between both powers. Beyond its effects on Japanese domestic policy where public dissatisfaction with the outcome of peace negotiations led to the fall of Katsura's government,⁷⁶ both countries had an understandable interest in securing their interests in the re-

⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 323.

⁷⁵ TNA, FO 405/171, General Report on China for the year 1906, pp. 10–11, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 1. 6. 1907.

⁷⁶ R. KOWNER, "The war as a Turning Point in Modern Japanese History", in: R. KOWNER (ed.), *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, New York 2007, pp. 39–41.

gion through mutual discussions. The British government supported this attempt to a certain extent, because it hoped that a contractual confirmation of the outcome of the Portsmouth peace treaty would lead to a definitive calming of the situation in Asia at a time when it had to concentrate its attention on Europe. This meant that during its negotiations with Russia, Tokyo could assume London's support. In exchange for this favourable approach, Japan accommodated Britain in regard to customs collection in Manchuria, as this issue fell within the competence of the Imperial Maritime Custom Service which was formally controlled by the Chinese government, but which was in fact controlled by Britain, represented by the Custom Service's Inspector-General, Sir Robert Hart.⁷⁷

Thus at the end of July 1907, an agreement was signed in which St Petersburg finally recognised Japan's special interests in Korea and southern Manchuria, while Japan did the same for Russia's status in northern Manchuria (where a major section of the Trans-Siberian Railway led) and in Outer Mongolia.⁷⁸ This agreement was meant to ensure that both countries would respect each other's territorial integrity and China's independence, although this did not really dissipate the suspicions of Beijing, which was observing at the same time how Japan was limiting the independence of Korea despite its prior guarantees.⁷⁹ This agreement was the first step towards a cautious co-operation between the two former enemies. Since Japan had also concluded an agreement recognising its interests with the French at the same time, its policy in China was perceived with marked suspicion. Beijing was afraid that this activity might be a precursor to the creation of a bloc of powers which would act as one and which would prevent it from exploiting disputes between powers to defend its own special interests. It was China's experience that it was much less dangerous to deal with one power than a combination of powers.⁸⁰ This could explain the rise in the popularity of Germany which it appeared found itself

⁷⁷ TNA, FO 405/175, Agreement on establishing an office for the collection of maritime custom in the Far East, Peking, 30. 5. 1907.

⁷⁸ M. MATSUI, "The Russo-Japanese Agreement of 1907: The Causes and the Progress of Negotiations", in: *Modern Asian Studies*, 6, 1, 1972, p. 33.

⁷⁹ TNA, FO 881/9229, General Report on China for the year 1907, p. 20, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 18. 4. 1908.

⁸⁰ TNA, FO 405/175, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 21. 8. 1907.

isolated in China. But because it was the only power (with the exception of the USA) not contractually bound to any other power, it kept open the opportunity for independent action in the eyes of China.⁸¹ German representatives in the Far East were well aware of this fact. Germany's ambassador in Japan, Alfons Mumm von Schwarzenstein, was at this time endeavouring to correct the damage which Germany had inflicted in the eyes of China through its actions during the Boxer Rebellion. On the other hand, however, it was bitterly aware that the agreement with Russia and France involved Japan in the nascent Agreement and markedly increased its status in the Middle Kingdom.⁸²

The deepening of this trend could be seen two years later when America's attempt to implement the Open Door Policy in Manchuria and neutralise the Manchurian railway (which the British envoy had termed shameless),⁸³ forced Tokyo and St Petersburg to debate on restricting American influence and securing their spheres of interest. In July 1910, a new convention was signed which confirmed most of the points in the previous agreement and bound both countries to maintain the status quo in Manchuria. This agreement, which was somewhat worrying from a British policy perspective, in contrast to the agreement of 1907 did not contain a clause stating that both powers recognised China's territorial integrity.⁸⁴ It was mainly China and America, however, which criticised this fact.⁸⁵ On the other hand, however, Britain recognised the interests of both countries in their

⁸¹ Ibidem.

⁸² PA AA, China No. 1, R 17693, Mumm von Schwarzenstein to Tschirschky, Tokyo, 5. 8. 1907; for more on the impact of the Russo-Japanese War and subsequent developing in German politics, see M. S. SELIGMANN, "Germany, the Russo-Japanese War, and the Road to the Great War", in: R. KOWNER (ed.), *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, New York 2007, pp. 109–123. The author here develops a theory that it was contempt for the performance of the Russian army that led the head of Prussia's General Staff, Alfred von Schlieffen to rework Germany's war plans. Ibidem, p. 120.

⁸³ TNA, FO 881/9867, General Report on China for the year 1910, pp. 37ff, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 5. 3. 1911; for American policy on the railway in Manchuria, see also TNA, FO 46/200, Bryce to Müller, 24. 7. 1910.

⁸⁴ TNA, FO 405/200, statement of the Chinese government on the Russo-Japanese Agreement, Peking, 21. 7. 1910; P. BERTON, "From Enemies to Allies: The War and Russo-Japanese Relations", in: R. KOWNER (ed.), *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, New York 2007, p. 80.

⁸⁵ TNA, FO 405/200, Müller to Grey, Peking, 27. 7. 1910.

spheres of influence and was more welcoming of the agreement as it fell within their long-term policy of maintaining an alliance with Japan and an entente with Russia, a policy whose objective was to maintain Germany's isolation even in the Far East, as Germany appeared to be an ever greater rival to British power.⁸⁶ The Germans were undoubtedly well aware of this fact. As such, German policy endeavoured to support American demands in Manchuria⁸⁷ and the Open Door Policy.⁸⁸ Berlin justifiably feared that conclusion of the agreement would allow Russia to pursue an active policy in the West.⁸⁹ Germany's attempt to keep Russia occupied in the Far East (which was entirely obvious before 1904) thus definitively collapsed at this moment. The impacts of the Russo-Japanese agreement on practical policy in the Far East, however, were almost immediate. It allowed Japan to declare its annexation of Korea. Russia then supported the establishment of an independent Mongolia⁹⁰ and in the next agreement with Japan divided up spheres of influence with it in Outer Mongolia. British policy's benign attitude meant that the United States remained alone in their attempt to force the other powers to maintain the Open Door Policy, and over the course of five years, a large part of East Asia was divided up between Russia and Japan.⁹¹

In no way, however, did conclusion of the Russo-Japanese agreement mean that all memories of the Russo-Japanese War had been buried for good. In Russia (and also in London), the agreement was perceived as quite unequivocally beneficial for Japan, allowing it to boost its influence in Manchuria and China. St Petersburg feared that Japan's next objective would be to acquire a dominant status in Manchuria, which would weaken its maritime defence significantly. Russia considered that the principal objective of any Japanese aggression would be Vladivostok. This is one reason why the presence of the

⁸⁶ A large section of the Chinese press saw the agreement in a similar way. TNA, FO 405/200, Appendix to the report of 27 July 1910, Peking, 27.7.1910.

⁸⁷ J. LEPSIUS – A. MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY – F. THIMME (eds.), *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette* (further only GP), Berlin 1926, von Treutler to Bethmann-Hollweg, Bergen, 13.7.1910, p. 123.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, Bethmann-Hollweg to Emperor Wilhelm II, Hohenfinow, 16.7.1910, p. 125.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, Pourtalès to Bethmann-Hollweg, St Petersburg, 19.7.1910, pp. 126–127.

⁹⁰ TNA, FO 881/10072, General Report on China for the year 1911, p. 31, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 27.3.1912.

⁹¹ BERTON, p. 81.

Russian armed forces in the area was again boosted around 1910. As such, Russian garrisons were heavily fortified.⁹² On the other hand, however, the actual situation forced St Petersburg to co-operate with Tokyo. As early as 1911, the two governments collaborated in blocking the American proposal for a loan to China, and their single voice was clear to see after the Chinese Revolution broke out when mutual support allowed both countries to strengthen their position in their spheres of interest.⁹³

This rise of Japan led to London paying great attention to its penetration of the Asian continent. Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War secured it a major sphere of influence in northern China, from whose hands it had definitively torn away any kind of influence in Korean affairs. It was likely for this reason that relations between Tokyo and Beijing were palpably tense, particularly when Beijing was forced to essentially watch powerless as Japan pursued its demands in Manchuria, which it was guaranteed in the agreement of both countries of December 1905.⁹⁴ The prevailing opinion in China's imperial court was that Japan was exploiting China's weak position and trying to acquire as many gains as possible on the continent before it reformed into a modern state.⁹⁵ China also resented the growing influence of its Asian neighbour in Manchuria, which furthermore had taken a certain paternalistic stance on Beijing when Japan's Foreign Minister, Count Hayashi, advised China to avoid Korea's fate and rather, "*to take a warning from Korea and set her house into order*".⁹⁶ Such statements from the Japanese minister, however, merely added fuel to the fire, as at this period there were disputes between the two countries over the railway in southern Manchuria, which was also fed by the scandal regarding Japan's Tatsu Maru boat which was seized by Chinese officials in Canton in February 1908 for allegedly smuggling weapons.⁹⁷ This

⁹² Just during 1910, the eighty-thousand strong Vladivostok garrison was enlarged by 50 %. TNA, FO 881/9867, General Report on China for the year 1910, p. 43, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 5. 3. 1911.

⁹³ BERTON, p. 81.

⁹⁴ TNA, FO 881/9229, General Report on China for the year 1907, pp. 17–18, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 18. 4. 1908.

⁹⁵ PA AA, China No. 1, R 17694, Rex to the Foreign Office, Peking, 31. 10. 1907.

⁹⁶ TNA, FO 881/9466, General Report on China for the year 1908, p. 17, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 26. 3. 1909.

⁹⁷ TNA, FO 405/182, Grey to Jordan, London, 22. 2. 1908.

resulted in a forceful Japanese protest, which then caused a retaliatory boycott of Japanese goods in southern Chinese towns.⁹⁸ Thus, the first half of 1908 was marked by ever deteriorating Sino-Japanese relations which didn't even improve after Hayashi was removed from his ministerial role and his successors, Terauchi Masatake and Komura Jutaró endeavoured to improve China's relations with Japan.

Britain's envoy in Beijing, Sir John Jordan, however, only noted drily of this attempt: *"but in spite of these demonstrations of friendliness Japan has still the misfortune to be regarded with suspicion by China, and it is a strange irony of fate that the only nation in the Far East which succeeded in working out its own salvation on modern lines should win the admiration of Western Powers and fail to gain the confidence and respect of its neighbours in the East"*.⁹⁹ Not even 1909 was to bring more fundamental change. Japan and China got into protracted disputes over Japan's entitlement to concessions which Tokyo was meant to receive on the basis of the Peace Treaty of Portsmouth which ended the Russo-Japanese War.¹⁰⁰ Although these disputes were solved at the end of 1909 by a Sino-Japanese agreement, Beijing's distrust of Tokyo's intentions had in no way disappeared.¹⁰¹

In contrast to the strengthening Japan, Russia was markedly weakened by its defeat in the war with the island empire, and its influence in China was significantly reduced. As such, it had to pursue a fairly conciliatory policy towards Beijing in an endeavour to protect what was left of its interests in northern China. As such, the St Petersburg government determined to take a step which it had long avoided before the war – to withdraw its military forces from Manchuria (which was logical under the chaos which had broken out in Russia as a result of the revolution). This compromise was received positively in China, and created space for the Russians to undertake successful negotiations on the mining concessions which its citizens had received pre-

⁹⁸ In the end, the dispute was resolved through British mediation. TNA, FO 405/182, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 17. 3. 1908.

⁹⁹ TNA, FO 881/9466, General Report on China for the year 1908, p. 17, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 6. 3. 1909.

¹⁰⁰ TNA, FO 881/9657, General Report on China for the year 1909, pp. 20–26, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 30. 1. 1910.

¹⁰¹ TNA, FO 881/9867, General Report on China for the year 1910, p. 37, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 5. 3. 1911.

viously.¹⁰² Subsequent to 1907, when Russia concluded its convention with Japan assuring the status quo in the Far East, St Petersburg's influence was essentially limited to northern Manchuria and Mongolia, where neither Great Britain nor its subjects, as Jordan noted, had any major interests.¹⁰³ As such, Britain essentially decided not to interfere in disputes between Russia and China over concessions in Russia's sphere of interests, and was basically satisfied with the palpable weakening of Russia's position in the Far East, which was demonstrated, for example, in the fact that in its endeavours to implement its railway concession in northern Manchuria, St Petersburg had had to rely on support from Tokyo.¹⁰⁴ At least to begin with, however, Japan came into conflict over Russian railway projects, as it feared they might serve as a front for future Russian expansion, as had happened before the Russo-Japanese War.¹⁰⁵ However, since it was mainly British companies which were to be involved in railway construction in northern China, supplying the necessary know-how and funding, Japanese resistance met with protest. On the other hand, it should be noted that Britain tried to accommodate Tokyo to preserve good relations, and blocked a number of Russian proposals.¹⁰⁶ As such, subsequent to 1905 Russia did not present a major threat for Britain in China, and this can be demonstrated in the fact that the volume of Russian trade with China came to just under half a percent of British trading with the Middle Kingdom (including British colonies and other dependent territories).¹⁰⁷

In this regard, one can state in conclusion that British policy proved an unqualified success in regard to its rivalry with Russia. Britain had managed to force its rival out of a large part of China, and ward off

¹⁰² TNA, FO 405/171, General Report on China for the year 1906, p. 11, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 1. 6. 1907.

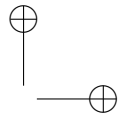
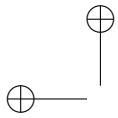
¹⁰³ TNA, FO 881/9466, General Report on China for the year 1908, p. 21, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 26. 3. 1909.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, FO 881/9657, General Report on China for the year 1909, p. 29, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 30. 1. 1910.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, FO 371/410, Memorandum on the Japanese Government's Protest against Construction of the Northern Railways, Peking, 8. 1. 1908.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, FO 371/410, Memorandum of the Pauling Company Limited, Peking, 4. 2. 1908.

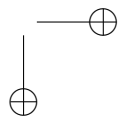
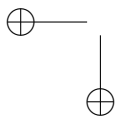
¹⁰⁷ TNA, FO 405/171, General Report on China for the year 1906, p. 21, Jordan to Grey, Peking, 1. 6. 1907.

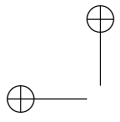


Russia's threat to its interests. On the other hand, however, from a long-term perspective this success was somewhat of a Pyrrhic victory, as a strengthened Japan was to become a significant rival to British interests in China. The requirement to rely on the support of the island empire meant for London that it often had to accept Japanese gains on the continent despite the fact the affected its special interests. The weakening of Britain's position at a global level as a result of the First World War, however, could not be anticipated at the time these events unfolded. As such, it can be stated that British diplomats' adept policy managed to effectively secure Britain's prominent position in the Far East prior to 1914.

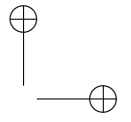
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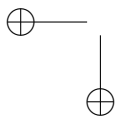


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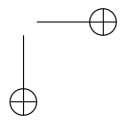


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Dominions, Great Britain and Questions Related to Imperial Foreign Policy Implementation and Direction in the 1920s and at the Beginning of the 1930s

*Jaroslav Valkoun**

The study focuses on the problems of British-Dominion relations with a special regard to the share of the Dominions in formation, execution and direction of the imperial foreign policy in the 1920s and at the beginning of the 1930s. In the post war period, it was expected that recognition of a formal independence and a new international status of the British Dominions would be take place. Concurrently with a wider conception of the Dominion autonomy, a more intensive cooperation was realised within the Empire, which gradually led to a bigger interest of the overseas autonomous units in the decision-making process concerning the direction of the imperial foreign policy. The observed problems concentrated on two main fronts, it means the measure of consultations among the mother country and the Dominions and individual foreign policy questions, crisis, incidents and events that, in reality, contributed to a discussion concerning the share of overseas autonomous units in the formation and execution of the Imperial foreign policy from the side of the British Foreign Office. Balfour Declaration adoption, increasing the importance of the Dominions, began the period that was significant with pacification of debates concerning execution of the imperial foreign policy and during which it was necessary to wait for next few years for this status legislative approval till the adoption of the Statute of Westminster in December 1931.

[imperial foreign policy; Dominions; British-Dominion relations; British Empire; Commonwealth; Imperial Conference]

The First World War,¹ without this being obvious for the first view, constituted an important milestone in perceiving the Dominions posi-

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¹ This study is one of the results of the grant project SGS-2016-070 "Vliv dominií na směřování Britského impéria na přelomu 20. a 30. let 20. století" on which the author

tion from the viewpoint of their mother country. Introducing the principle of permanent cabinet consultations via the Imperial War Cabinet and the vision of the empire federalisation final rejection led to the efforts to modify constitutional relationships among individual autonomous countries of the Commonwealth of that time. Newly, there should come about a full recognition of Dominions as self-governing nations of the imperial community. Participation of Dominions in the Paris Peace Conference, membership in a new international organisation – the League of Nations – and countersigning the Treaty of Versailles caused euphoria with overseas representatives that the moment arrived when their formal independence and new international status would be recognized. Despite everything, the First World War generally strengthened the idea that it is not possible to view the Dominions only as ordinary subordinate “colonies” or dependent territories and that they head towards a wider concept of autonomy and towards more intensive cooperation within the Empire. A joint responsibility for the imperial foreign policy was created among the mother country and Dominions during the war. Nations “originated” from Dominions, accentuating nationalism, and which gradually began to strive for so that they would obtain confirmation of a new constitutional position *de iure*, it means on the share rate in decision-making on the foreign policy of the British Empire heading.

* * *

In the year of 1921, the question of what the rate of Dominions in decision-making on the imperial foreign policy heading in connection with the question of British-Japanese treaty renewal rose for the first time in a more considerable way.² The Great War verified alliance with the Japanese which provided a certain degree of the security feeling to the Pacific Dominions,³ but the after-war naval weakness of the British Empire in the Far East and in the Pacific⁴ led to the situation over-estimation and intensive cooperation initiation with the

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² C. D. ALLIN, “Recent Developments in the Constitutional and International States of the British Dominions”, in: *Minnesota Law Review*, 10, 1925/1926, pp. 104–110.

³ H. N. CASSON, “The Significance of the Imperial Conference”, in: *Barron's*, 1, 10, 11th July, 1921, p. 5.

⁴ The British Admiralty, with respect to the naval force resolution, had to decide if it

United States of America in the Pacific issues.⁵ Dominion statesmen were fully aware of the fact, that the question of alliance with the Japanese means a very important foreign policy decision, which not only the form of relations with the United States of America will unfold from, but also the position of the British Empire in the Far East and in the Pacific, and therefore this issue was intensively discussed at the Empire conference in London during the summer months of 1921.⁶ With respect to the fact that it was not possible to reach an agreement due to overseas politicians' divergent approaches, the decision on the form of future relations with Japan and other controversial issues had been left for the dealings in Washington.

The Naval Conference or Disarmament Conference, which took place in Washington at the turn of years 1921–1922, established a new resolution of naval forces, preclusive renewal of the British-Japanese alliance.⁷ The Washington dealings represented the first great opportunity during which the Dominions took a considerable part in creating an imperial foreign political line what meant that it would have influenced the heading of the British foreign policy.⁸ Especially the

was going to maintain the two naval bases in the Pacific – Singapore and Hong-Kong. Due to strategic and financial reasons and with respect to Australia and New Zealand attitudes, they finally chose Singapore as the main base. Cf. "Britain's Navy", in: *Evening Post*, Vol. 101, Is. 48, 25th February, 1921, p. 2; The National Archive London, Kew (further only TNA), Cabinet Office (further only CAB) 34/1, S. S. – 2, A. J. Balfour, Committee of Imperial Defence: Standing Sub-Committee: Naval and Military Situation in the Far East, 3rd May, 1921, ff. [1]–5 [7–11]; TNA, CAB 34/1, S. S. – 6, Committee of Imperial Defence: Standing Sub-Committee: Empire Naval Policy and Cooperation: Summary of Admiralty Recommendations in Regard to Dominions Naval Policy, 26th May, 1921, ff. [21–22].

⁵ TNA, CAB 1/4, 122–C, Committee of Imperial Defence: Anglo-Japanese Alliance: Effect of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance upon Foreign Relations, 28th February, 1920, ff. 4–5 [245].

⁶ "The Anglo-Japanese Alliance", in: *Spectator*, Vol. 125, No. 4802, 10th July, 1920, p. 39; Cmd. 1474, Conference of the Prime Ministers and Representatives of the United Kingdom, the Dominions and India, Held in June, July, and August 1921: Summary of Proceedings and Documents, London 1921, p. 13; M. PRANG, "N. W. Rowell and Canada's External Policy, 1917–1921", in: *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association / Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada*, 39, 1, 1960, p. 101.

⁷ J. A. WILLIAMSON, *A Short History of British Expansion: The Modern Empire and Commonwealth*, London 1947, pp. 349–350.

⁸ J. B. BREBNER, "Canada, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Washington Conference", in: *Political Science Quarterly*, 40, 1, 1935, p. 57.

Canadian representatives legitimately assumed that their resolute attitudes contributed to their foreign political priorities enforcement.⁹ In this respect, the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George declared: “There was a time when Downing Street controlled the Empire; today the Empire gives orders to Downing Street.”¹⁰

After finishing the disarmament conference at the beginning of 1922, the position of Dominions in the international relationships still remained unsolved.¹¹ The problem with the Dominions international position had appeared sooner but it regained its topicality within the Chanak Crisis, sometimes also called the Chanak Incident, in September 1922, when not too “fast” response by the Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King had shown that some Dominions had different opinions on the imperial foreign policy management. Ottawa representatives perceived the British-Canadian divergences that accompanied the Chanak Crisis and subsequent treaties from Lausanne as a confirmation of the fact that the existing direction trying to determine itself against obligations of “automatic acceptance” that the mother country arranged “on their behalf”, is the correct one. Therefore, they came to a conclusion that it is inevitable to strive for so that they would be able to make independent decisions on some foreign political affairs which they regarded as their sovereign Canadian interests. Mackenzie King understood the presence of dominion representatives next to the British representatives at the Paris peace negotiations as a precedent which a new international position should have been unfolded from and which, from his view point, had not been observed during the conference in Lausanne. The prime Minister repeated the argument spoken several times in the past, that the reason for rejection to undersign “automatically” the submitted treaty had been rooted in the fact that his country neither had been represented in the negotiations with Turkey, nor consulted in a sufficient way.¹²

⁹ R. L. BORDEN, *Canada in the Commonwealth: From Conflict to Co-operation*, Oxford 1929, p. 118.

¹⁰ G. GLASGOW, “The British View”, in: H. D. CROLY, *Roads to Peace: A Hand-book to the Washington Conference*, New York 1921, pp. 30–31.

¹¹ N. MANSERGH, *The Commonwealth Experience: From British to Multiracial Commonwealth*, Vol. 2, London 1982, p. 3.

¹² A. G. DEWEY, *The Dominion and Diplomacy: The Canadian Contribution*, Vol. 2, London 1929, pp. 147–166.

Similar disappointment was also visible with the Australian representatives. The Australian Prime Minister William Morris "Billy" Hughes had tried to improve the rate of imperial foreign matters consultations with the help of the imperial communication system change proposal. He was not successful in his effort because the then Secretary of State for Colonies, Sir Winston Churchill, did not want to change the used communication processes. At the same time, the Australian politicians represented "true-blue" followers of unite imperial foreign policy line. Hughes remarked that during the Chanak Crisis the Australians had been prepared to go to war beside the mother country not because of the fact they had undersigned the Treaty of Sèvres, but due to the fact they belong to the countries of the British Empire. Hughes felt himself very disappointed: "*Plain speaking between friends and blood relations is the best. [...] In foreign affairs the Empire must speak in one voice [...]*".¹³ Hughes also critically viewed on non-conceptual imperial foreign policy which he compared to "*the footballs of British political parties*".¹⁴ The Australian politicians continually held the opinion that "*a true Empire foreign policy [is] acceptable to all the Dominions*".¹⁵

In the time of Chanak Crisis "*Australia was prepared to go to war – not because the Treaty of Sèvres had been signed by her, but because it was part of the Empire. [...] Although the decision] had not previously been consulted [...]*".¹⁶ The question of timely consultations and the possibility to take part in decision making on imperial and foreign issues was an important factor that influenced Australian approach in September 1922. "Vague" idea of joint imperial foreign policy proved itself as inapplicable in practice. Everything was underlined by Hughes' declaration: "*If [the Empire] is only another name for Britain, and the Dominions are to be told that things are done after they have been done, and that Britain has decided upon war, [...] the Dominions] have in fact no other alternative,*

¹³ TNA, Colonial Office (further only CO) 886/10/1, 54553/S, Commonwealth of Australia: The Governor-General to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 2nd November, 1922, Doc. No. 359, ff. 259–260.

¹⁴ TNA, CAB 24/139/98, C. P. 4298, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia to the Secretary of State for Colonies, 2nd November, 1922, f. 682.

¹⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, No. 30, 24th July, 1923, p. 1183.

¹⁶ TNA, CO 886/10/1, 54323/S, Commonwealth of Australia: The Governor-General to the Secretary of State, 2nd November, 1922, Doc. No. 359, ff. 259–260.

then [...] all talk about the Dominions having a real share in deciding foreign and Imperial policy is empty air."¹⁷

The Australian policy accepted imperial level of the international policy due to specific – economic and political – interests in different area. At that time Hughes' government hesitated whether to carry out independent policy, or to cooperate with other Dominions and to formulate unified approaches. After assigning a "Liaison Officer" in London, Major Richard Gardiner Casey in 1924, the Australian government received confidential information concerning especially imperial foreign policy, without intermediators. This step contributed to the fact that the Australians, as compared with the previous times, began to coordinate their political steps with the mother country.¹⁸ Unlike them, Mackenzie King came to a different opinion. Canada did not strive for a joint responsibility while carrying out the imperial policy but for the fact, so that the foreign policy, realised by individual Dominions, could be divided from a unified Empire line. The Canadians did not require equality in order to decide on general direction of the imperial foreign policy, but to be able to carry out their own one.¹⁹

Circumstances accompanying the Chanak Crisis and treaties conclusion in Lausanne, had confirmed the Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King that it was necessary to rid themselves of the obligations which resulted from the common policies and to enforce independent or, at least, autonomous form of Ottawa's foreign policy.²⁰ In 1923, due to this reason, he utilized completion of negotiations of so called the Halibut Treaty to show Canada's diplomatic independence.²¹ Mackenzie King estimated that British counter signature had been redundant, because the Canadians had concluded the treaty as

¹⁷ TNA, CO 886/10/1, 46974/S, Commonwealth of Australia: The Governor-General to the Secretary of State, 20th September, 1922, Doc. No. 318, ff. 238–239.

¹⁸ P. M. SALES, "W. M. Hughes and the Chanak Crisis of 1922", in: *Australian Journal of History and Politics*, 17, 3, 1971, p. 401; TNA, CO 886/10/4, D. 54369, Commonwealth of Australia: The Governor-General to the Secretary of State, 20th November, 1924, Doc. No. 113, f. 75.

¹⁹ R. M. DAWSON, *William Lyon Mackenzie King: A Political Biography: 1874–1923*, Vol. 1, London 1958, pp. 407–416; G. P. de T. GLAZEBROOK, *A History of Canadian External Relations*, London 1959, pp. 358–359; P. WIGLEY, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth: British-Canadian Relations, 1917–1926*, Cambridge 1977, p. 166.

²⁰ H. D. HALL, *Commonwealth: A History of the British Commonwealth of Nations*, London 1971, p. 500.

²¹ WIGLEY, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth*, p. 173.

for its contents on their own and therefore he let the treaty heading rewrite form "Great Britain" to "the Dominion of Canada".²² Despite the Foreign Office and the British Embassy employees strong disagreement he enforced that the concluded American-Canadian treaty would be undersigned by the Canadian Minister of Marine and Fisheries Ernest Lapointe himself, because it was dealt with a completely Canadian-American matter. In case it would not happen in this way he threatened with appointing a fully independent Canadian diplomatic representative in Washington.²³ Therefore the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs chose "minor evils". They agreed that the Canadian minister would confirm the treaty on his own as an authorised British representative without the presence of the Ambassador in Washington.²⁴ On the date of 2nd March 1923 Ernest Lapointe solemnly signed the Halibut Treaty with the American Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes.²⁵

With hindsight, the Canadian diplomatic success of March 1923 proves as a significant impulse to further independent steps of Canada. Almost immediately it proved only in formal and intensive conclusions of treaties in the relationship among the Dominions and the mother country.²⁶ The necessity of reevaluating the policy towards the Dominions arose. The British Foreign Office regarded the affairs ac-

²² "From His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington to the Governor-General, Washington, 12th February, 1923", in: R. M. DAWSON (ed.), *The Development of Dominion Status, 1900-1936*, London 1965, p. 254; TNA, CO 886/10/2, 4825, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 24th January, 1923, Encl. to Doc. No. 440, f. 303.

²³ The question of the Canadian representation in Washington had already been solved in 1920. The Canadians obtained a permanent member in the British Embassy, but due to unclear status the post occupation was not realised. TNA, CO 886/10/2, 9411, Canada: The Governor-General to the Secretary of State, 21st February, 1923, Doc. No. 447, f. 306; P. WIGLEY, "Whitehall and the 1923 Imperial Conference", in: *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1, 2, 1973, p. 225.

²⁴ Cf. TNA, CO 886/10/2, 11044, Foreign Office to Sir A. Geddes (Washington), 1st March, 1923, Doc. No. 450, f. 308; CO 886/10/2, Foreign Office to Sir A. Geddes (Washington), 1st March, 1923, Doc. No. 452, f. 308; CO 886/10/2, 12272, Sir A. Geddes (Washington) to Foreign Office, 2nd March, 1923, Doc. No. 454, f. 309.

²⁵ "Convention between the United States of America and Great Britain, Signed at Washington, 2nd March, 1923", in: *United States Department of State Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1923*, Vol. 1, Washington 1938, pp. 468-470.

²⁶ J. A. STEVENSON, "Canada's Halibut Treaty", in: *New Statesman*, 21, 524, 28th April, 1923, p. 73; P. W. WILSON, "The Imperial Conference", in: *North American Review*, 213, 1921, p. 730.

companying the conclusion of purely Canadian-American commercial treaty as a significant threat for the joint Empire diplomacy, because at one moment Lapointe had a geographically unlimited mandate at his disposal, representing not only the autonomous parts of the British Empire, but also the metropolis itself. There opened an opportunity for the Dominions to solve the foreign policy matters on their own and to rid of the role of the Foreign Office “sleeping” partner.²⁷

With respect to the circumstances accompanying the Chanak Crisis and negotiations in Lausanne, Mackenzie King came to the Imperial Conference in London in 1923 with the fundamental vision that the Dominions would have the right to execute their own foreign policy in order to avoid undesirable joint obligations. Simultaneously he assumed the diplomatic independency can be only proved when the Dominions obtain the possibility to conclude treaties with foreign states individually.²⁸ On 5th October 1923 there was a meeting held among the London and overseas representatives where the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs George Nathaniel Curzon, 1st Marquis Curzon of Kedleston, analysed in detail the development of the imperial policy in the last years and especially appealed on the sustenance of unified empire direction in the affairs that were of the Dominions and mother country joint interest.²⁹ In case of the joint imperial foreign policy he held the opinion that externally it is executed by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, because the British represent the whole Empire.³⁰

Then, the Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King remarked an extract from the speech of December 1921, where the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George said that “*the Dominions had been given equal rights with Great Britain in the control of the foreign policy of the Empire, that the instrument of this policy was, and must remain, the British*

²⁷ Cf. TNA, CO 886/10/2, 15576, House of Commons: Fishery Treaty, Canada and United States, 28th March, 1923, Encl. in Doc. No. 458, f. 311; A. L. LOWELL, “The Treaty Making Power of Canada”, in: *Foreign Affairs: An American Quarterly Review*, 2, 1/4, 1923/1924, p. 20; WIGLEY, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth*, pp. 178–179; G. M. WRONG, “The Evolution of the Foreign Relations of Canada”, in: *The Canadian Historical Review*, 5, 3, 1925, p. 14.

²⁸ WIGLEY, “Whitehall and the 1923 Imperial Conference”, p. 225.

²⁹ TNA, CAB 32/9, Imperial Conference, 1923: Stenographic Notes of the Third Meeting, Downing Street, 5th October, 1923, ff. 2–30 [25–40].

³⁰ DAWSON, *William Lyon Mackenzie King*, p. 458.

Foreign Office, and that the advantage to Britain was that such joint control involved joint responsibility".³¹ Mackenzie King subsequently criticized frequently used phrase of "foreign policy of the British Empire", where he pointed out the fact that "it may be that in using phrases such as 'foreign policy' there are different things in the minds of each of us" and each Dominion only takes care of the affairs which interest them. He also admitted the willingness to accept the fact that "the policy of Great Britain is the policy of the British Empire, but we want to know is how far the obligations arising out of that policy are material and how far they extend in reference to ourselves". He became aware of the fact that unified foreign policy in all spheres of interest of the Dominions and mother country is needful, but in practice he regarded it as unenforceable.³²

The Canadian Prime Minister, in a whole, represented nationalistic attitude and therefore he preferred complete autonomy of the Dominions.³³ Hence he held the opinion that self-governing overseas units have the right to solve home and geographically close foreign affairs which directly concern them, even though it would be dealt with a part of targeted Empire policy, and that the Dominion parliaments have the decisive executive power in these issues. He presumed that "if it is not possible or desirable that Great Britain or other Dominions should control these foreign affairs which are distinctly of primary concern to one Dominion, so it is equally impossible and undesirable for the Dominions to seek to control foreign affairs which primarily affect Great Britain".³⁴

The British, with respect to controversies from the past years, expected critical reactions by the Dominion representatives to the ways and frequency of consultancies from the mother country side, and therefore, in June 1923, they tried to prevent it by explaining all the binding processes that were valid with small modifications even at

³¹ Cf. TNA, CAB 32/9, Imperial Conference, 1923: Stenographic Notes of the Fourth Meeting, Downing Street, 8th October, 1923, ff. 11–12 [46–47].

³² "Foreign Relations: Statement by the Prime Minister [Mackenzie King], 8th October, 1923", in: L. C. CLARK (ed.), *Documents on Canadian External Relations: 1919–1925*, Vol. 3, Ottawa 1970, Doc. No. 234, pp. 240–243; TNA, CAB 32/9, Imperial Conference, 1923: Stenographic Notes of the Fourth Meeting, Downing Street, 8th October, 1923, ff. 12–15 [47–48].

³³ H. D. HALL, "The Genesis of the Balfour Declaration of 1926", in: *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 1, 3, 1962, p. 192.

³⁴ TNA, CAB 32/9, Imperial Conference, 1923: Stenographic Notes of the Fourth Meeting, Downing Street, 8th October, 1923, ff. 14–15 [48].

the beginning of the 1930s. Due to the reasons of clearness they divided the communication concerning foreign affairs with the dominion governments into five areas: (1) Imperial Conferences; (2) international conferences; (3) the League of Nations; (4) general questions concerning international relationships; and (5) commercial treaties. Foreign Office stated that overseas Prime Ministers receive copies of all important telegrams and news of the British ambassadors and other foreign representatives daily during the Imperial Conferences holding. At the time when there were not any negotiations held within the Imperial Conference, the Foreign Office held the opinion, that it is enough to send the common news only once a week and information on important events, such as was the conference in Lausanne, provide regularly.³⁵

According to the British Foreign Office, that from the very beginning the essential role in the matter of international conferences had played the fact if the Dominions took part in them individually or the British represented them. In case the overseas autonomous units took part in these negotiations, the British and Dominion members of the British Empire Delegation should have cooperated during the meetings and in the joint secretariat; the treaties should have been signed separately on behalf of the Dominions. At the time, when the overseas was represented only by the mother country, it usually continuously informed the Dominions on the development in negotiations and consulted directly with them only the final documents which were signed separately by the Dominion representatives or only by the British negotiators. As for the question of international conventions, which at least one Dominion was especially interested in, the process of ratification should have consequently been consulted with it. Consultations with the Dominions concerning the matters falling within the competence of the League of Nations should have been held continuously according to their relevance and during the General Assembly sessions by means of regular meetings among the British and overseas delegates. The British promised to inform the Dominions on the general international matters on a regular basis. As for the commercial treaties, the Foreign Office employees did not set the precision pro-

³⁵ TNA, CO 886/10/2, 31326, Note on Present Procedure as Regards Communication with the Governments of the Self-Governing Dominions on Foreign Affairs, 22nd June, 1923, Doc. No. 122, f. 77 [239].

cess and due to the problems extensiveness, they left the decision to be made by the Imperial Conference participants.³⁶

On 10th October 1923 Lord President of Council James Edward Hubert Gascoyne-Cecil, 4th Marquis of Salisbury, submitted to the British government members a memorandum that analysed the discussion on foreign relationships at the Imperial Conference and where he came to the conclusion that it would not be easy to balance different attitudes of the Dominions. According to Salisbury, it was dealt with two opposite conceptions which he characterised by the words as follows: "*Australia is trying to find how much common action is possible, and Canada tries to learn how much common action is desirable [...]*".³⁷ During the debates, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Lord Curzon gradually rejected the idea that it is suitable to define precisely the principals of the imperial foreign policy formation, because he was afraid of the fact this could limit him in execution of used British policy.³⁸ The discussions on foreign policy did not come to any revolutionary conclusions, but on the other hand they escalated personal animosities among the participants.³⁹

Thus, the final accepted resolution aimed at the general evaluation of actual European and world affairs, such as the Ruhr Crisis, relationship to the United States of America and Japan, the League of Nations activities and so on. It completely neglected the ratifications of Lausanne treaties. Only in the last part there appeared an indirect answer to requirements that were mentioned by the Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King: "*This Conference is a conference of representatives of the several Governments of the Empire; its views and conclusions on Foreign Policy [...] are necessarily subject to the action of the Governments and Parliaments of the various portions of the Empire, and it trusts that the results of its deliberations will meet their approval.*"⁴⁰ Therefore the conferring did not find any necessity to decentralize the foreign policy functioning.⁴¹

³⁶ Ibidem, f. 78 [240].

³⁷ TNA, CAB 24/162/8, C. P. 408 (23), Cabinet: The Discussion on Foreign Relations in the Imperial Conference, 8th October, 1923, ff. 1–5 [69–73].

³⁸ WIGLEY, "Whitehall and the 1923 Imperial Conference", p. 232.

³⁹ HALL, *Commonwealth*, p. 533.

⁴⁰ TNA, CAB 32/9, Imperial Conference, 1923: Stenographic Notes of the Sixteenth Meeting, Downing Street, 8th November, 1923, ff. 6–8 [204].

⁴¹ "Summary of Proceedings of the Imperial Conference and the Imperial Economic Conference", in: *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 14,

The conference participants also approved a binding process for negotiating, signing and ratification of international treaties which were undersigned by the authorised representatives and which were subject to the final approval. The Dominion representatives were able to negotiate conventions, but they were not allowed to omit any possible impacts on other autonomous governments or the Empire as a unit. Before the negotiations on conventions initialization they should have made sure that other Dominions are not interested in being informed on the proceedings in order to decide if they took part in the negotiations or not. In case of contractual arrangement negotiation at the international conferences by means of the British Empire Delegation, every participating party should have received information continuously. Bilateral agreements, which the obligations resulted from only for one Dominion, could have also been undersigned by a local authorized negotiator. At the moment, when the contractual stipulation bound more Dominions, these should have been undersigned by the appropriate number of delegates form the overseas autonomous units involved. The process of ratification should have been carried out in the same way.⁴²

The accepted resolution on the treaties conclusion, formally admitting different precedents from the past years, allowed resolving one of the problem points of imperial foreign policy execution and it contributed to the fact that the Dominions were partially acknowledged as individual states whose foreign policy is executed by the mother country which have to joint obligations to the Crown.⁴³ The British definitely waived from the control over the treaties conclusion which impinged on aspirations and constitutional attitudes of the Dominions on a long-term basis and which gained the right to negotiate and sign the treaties individually. Although they acknowledged superior position of the British Empire Delegation at the same time of the international conferences holding, the representatives of Dominions did not

53, 1923, p. 209.

⁴² TNA, CAB 32/22, E (T. C), Imperial Conference 1923: Committee on the Position of the Dominions and India in Relation to the Signature of Treaties and the Question of Territorial Waters: Conclusions of a Meeting of the above Committee, Foreign Office, 16th October, 1923, ff. i-iii.

⁴³ "Afterthoughts on the Imperial Conference", in: *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 14, 54, 1924, pp. 228-229; M. BELOFF, *Imperial Sunset: Dream of Commonwealth*, Vol. 2, London 1989, p. 85.

receives any guarantees that they will be adequately represented at them. There were specific discussions on the topic how to differentiate the obligations of one dominion resulting from bilateral contractual arrangements from the obligations of other Empire parts.⁴⁴

In the year of 1923, the basic difficulties of imperial foreign policy were rooted in the question what should be its form and who should execute it. When the Imperial Conference was finished, it was not possible to unify the opinions on the role of Dominion and British representative. The different attitudes lasted in the viewpoint of the Imperial Conferences role and of the dominion autonomy scope related to the imperial affairs where considerable responsibility and obligations resulted from. The discussion on imperial foreign policy showed that the Dominion Prime Ministers, especially of Canada and Australia, disagree in the view of the fact if the British Empire should be decentralized due to nationalistic tendencies or to keep a traditional centralised role of London.⁴⁵

In the first half of year 1924, the Dominion and British representatives negotiated on the draft of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance, based on the Covenant of the League of Nations solving security guarantees, respectively naval and military sanctions.⁴⁶ The overseas politicians perceived the proposed vision of collective safety as the Empire endangering and therefore MacDonald's government finally refused it in September 1924.⁴⁷ From the beginning of October 1924 to March 1925, the Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes (also called the Geneva Protocol) was discussed in a similar way. The negotiations on the Protocol represented another test of Empire unity in the field of international policy and that is why no wonder that the Australian Prime Minister Stanley Melbourne Bruce appealed to the fact so that in "difficult and delicate matter the Empire should have single policy and speak with single voice".⁴⁸

⁴⁴ DEWEY, pp. 171–174; Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The British Empire: A Report on Its Structure and Problems*, London 1939, p. 217.

⁴⁵ WIGLEY, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth*, p. 199.

⁴⁶ W. H. MOORE, "The Dominions of the British Commonwealth in the League of Nations", in: *International Affairs*, 10, 3, 1931, p. 383.

⁴⁷ L. NOVOTNÝ, "Postoj britských dominií k Locarnskému paktu", in: *Acta Fakulty filozofické Západočeské univerzity v Plzni*, 3, 2, 2011, pp. 20–21; P. J. YEARWOOD, *Guarantee of Peace: The League of Nations in British Policy 1914–1925*, Oxford 2009, pp. 282–303.

⁴⁸ The Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governors-General of Canada, the Com-

With respect to the course of Chanak Crisis, circumstances accompanying the Halibut Treaty and negotiations in Lausanne it might appear at first glance that the Geneva Protocol finished an era when the British had to face inconsistent opinions of the Dominion representatives and Leopold Amery's entrance in the position of the Secretary of State for Colonies started the era of "harmonic" relationships among the mother country and self-governing parts of the Commonwealth. But the opposite was true. The British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Austin Chamberlain began, with the declaration of a new British principal of collective security, the way leading to Locarno treaties conclusion, which shocked the unified imperial foreign policy in its basis.⁴⁹

Already at the beginning of April 1925 there appeared "warning signals", indicating that the Dominions do not completely agree with the ongoing negotiations on the European Safety Protocol and that there is a threat of refusal from their side.⁵⁰ Austin Chamberlain did not feel the need to organize a meeting of the Dominion representatives in London and he did not admit any discussions on the foreign policy direction finding. According to his opinion, the British Islands defence should have been of the same Empire importance as the protection of Australian coast or guarding of Canadian borders had against invasions.⁵¹ The British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presumed that "if the Dominions would admit that Britain's defence was an imperial interest, then they must also understand that the first line of that defence was now on the Rhine".⁵² The Dominions expected that this would be consulted with them but this was not realised in practice.⁵³

monwealth of Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, and the Governor of Newfoundland, 15th January, 1925, in: Cmd. 2458, Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes: Correspondence Relating to the Position of the Dominions, London 1925, [Doc.] No. 4, pp. 7–8.

⁴⁹ WIGLEY, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth*, p. 240.

⁵⁰ University of Cambridge: Churchill College: Churchill Archives Centre (further only CAC), Amery Papers (further only AP), AMEL 2/1/10, Lambert to L. S. Amery, 2nd April, 1925, [s. f.].

⁵¹ TNA, Foreign Office (further only FO) 800/257, A. Chamberlain to Kerr, 6th April, 1925, ff. [497–498].

⁵² WIGLEY, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth*, p. 243.

⁵³ G. GLASGOW, *From Dawes to Locarno: Being a Critical Record of an Important Achievement in European Diplomacy 1924–1925*, London 1926, p. 11.

Austin Chamberlain declared that “the Dominions will have the opportunity to decide freely whether they undersign the document or not”.⁵⁴ He held the opinion that the Dominions should be left completely free in approving.⁵⁵ At the same time this step meant breach of the existing doctrine of the united imperial policy and therefore, in this respect, the Foreign Office came to the conclusion there is no obligation of the Dominions according to the International, British or local Laws to help the mother country in case of war; just a moral obligation.⁵⁶

When the Locarno conference finished, it was decided that the Locarno treaties ceremonial signing would be held on 1st December 1925 in London.⁵⁷ Canadian advisor on external relations Oscar Skelton and his ancestor Loring Christie viewed on the Locarno protocol with a relentless “nationalistic logic”. The question of continental security guarantees always had represented a burning problem for the traditional joint imperial diplomacy. Skelton and Christie held the opinion that Britain disturbed the imperial unity by accepting long-term strategic obligations what, according to their opinion, should justify Canadian effort to obtain the possibility of executing independent foreign policy which would be sometimes determined against some steps made by the mother country.⁵⁸

The fear of the Dominion reactions was well-founded. On 12th October 1925, *The Times* published South African General Jan Christian (Christiaan) Smuts’ opinions which criticised the Locarno Pact and concluding it he considered as a big foreign political mistake; according to his opinion the imperial foreign policy should not be automatically shifted for the policy of Great Britain. He warned the British politician forcefully that “there can come a day when the Dominions feel they have nearly nothing in common with similar policy and will start their

⁵⁴ L. NOVOTNÝ – R. KODET, *Velká Británie a konference v Locarnu: Příspěvek ke studiu kolektivní bezpečnosti ve 20. letech 20. století*, Plzeň 2013, pp. 201–202.

⁵⁵ CAC, AP, AMEL 2/1/10, A. Chamberlain to L. S. Amery, 6th August, 1925, [s. f.].

⁵⁶ R. F. HOLLAND, *Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance, 1918–1939*, London 1981, p. 48.

⁵⁷ E. MAISEL, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1919–1926*, London 1994, p. 181.

⁵⁸ N. HILLMER, “The Anglo-Canadian Neurosis: The Case of O. D. Skelton”, in: P. LYON (ed.), *Britain and Canada: Survey of a Changing Relationship*, London 1976, p. 76; C. P. STACEY, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, 1921–1948, The Mackenzie King Era*, Vol. 2, Toronto 1981, p. 79; WIGLEY, *Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth*, pp. 246–247.

own foreign policy in their own interest".⁵⁹ At the same time he expressed his opinion that the Dominions will most likely avoid security protocol and an unpleasant situation can occur and they will consider it as a precedent that can result in an indifference to Great Britain foreign policy in the future.⁶⁰

Although the British Parliament finally approved the he Rhineland Pact discussions related to European obligations acceptance confirmed a long-term trend from the Dominion side which had been started by the Chanak Crisis in 1922, it means that the Dominion and British politicians do not often agree in the matter that should be the subject of a joint interest. Due to this reason the united imperial foreign policy was not executed and enforced successfully. Therefore, the British politicians placed their hopes in the Imperial Conference convocation in 1926 and they expected it will help to renew the Empire unity that was shaken by a number of crisis and disagreements in the years of 1922–1925.

On 19th October 1926 the British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin inaugurated the Imperial Conference with a speech where he summarized successes of past meeting of the London and overseas politicians on one hand, and indicated the future direction of the Empire on the hand.⁶¹ The conference took place at the time when the imperial foreign policy "visibly found" its limits when most of the Dominions refused to accept the Treaty of Locarno⁶² due to lack of consul-tancies and way of communication among the British and overseas politicians. The British Empire found itself in a situation when it was

⁵⁹ NOVOTNÝ – KODET, p. 204.

⁶⁰ Cf. CAC, AP, AMEL 2/2/24, Smuts to L. S. Amery, Irene, 21st October, 1925, f. [s. p.]; CAC, AP, AMEL 2/2/24, Smuts to A. Chamberlain, Irene, 21st October, 1925, ff. [1]–3; TNA, FO 800/258, Smuts to A. Chamberlain, Irene, 21st October, 1925, ff. [588–589].

⁶¹ Cmd. 2769, Imperial Conference, 1926: Appendices to the Summary of Proceedings, London 1927, pp. 5–14; TNA, CAB 32/46, E. (1926), Imperial Conference, 1926: Stenographic Notes of the First Meeting, Downing Street, 19th October, 1926, ff. [2–6].

⁶² To the question concerning the way of the communication and consultations system among Great Britain and the Dominions see TNA, FO 372/2197, P. A. Koppel, Memorandum on Consultation with and Communication to the British Dominions on Foreign Policy, 16th January, 1926, ff. [1]–12; TNA, FO 372/2197, Memorandum on the Existing Arrangements for Communication of Information Regarding Foreign Affairs to the Governments of the Dominions, 8th February, 1926, ff. [42–47].

nearly impossible for one country to control exclusively the imperial foreign policy.⁶³

The key document originating during the conference negotiations was Balfour declaration on the status of autonomous overseas units and the relations among the Dominions and the mother country which were defined as follows: "They are autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations." The equal status of Great Britain and the Dominions was emphasized by the fact the mother country ranked among the seven "autonomous communities"⁶⁴ which were the part of the Empire. The Dominions, next to Great Britain as the seventh self-governing unit, obtained full internal and external autonomy due to and under specific conditions enabling abandonment of the Commonwealth.⁶⁵

In the end of October 1926, the imperial foreign policy and Locarno Pact were discussed at the meeting of the Imperial Conference. There was held a discussion if they should strictly adhere to the joint foreign policy or if it was more suitable to introduce a principle of local external relations as another aspect of the imperial foreign policy. Though the Australians and New Zealanders finally decided to approve the Locarno Treaties, the South Africans, Irish and Canadians still remained adamant.⁶⁶ The fact, that had often been emphasized during the post-war period that especially the Union of South Africa and Canada never more wished to be included in the British policy on the European continent, was proved again and therefore they preferred political isolationism, but on the other hand the Pacific Dominions expressed their willingness to support the mother country in its policy and to accept the guarantees and obligations resulting from the

⁶³ TNA, FO 372/2197, Percy A. Koppel, Memorandum on Consultation with and Communication of Information to the British Dominions on Foreign Policy, [16th January, 1926, f. 1].

⁶⁴ TNA, CAB 32/46, E. (1926), Imperial Conference, 1926: Committee of Inter-Imperial Relations: Minutes of the First Meeting of the Committee, 27th October, 1926, f. 2 [8].

⁶⁵ J. DARWIN, "Imperialism in Decline? Tendencies in British Imperial Policy between the Wars", in: *The Historical Journal*, 23, 3, 1980, p. 661.

⁶⁶ TNA, CAB 32/46, E. (1926), Imperial Conference, 1926: Stenographic Notes of the Eights Meeting, Downing Street, 25th October, 1926, ff. [84–97].

Rhineland Pact.⁶⁷ Despite all of this the British Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs Amery presumed that the Conference contributed to Empire unity and equality of its members strengthening.⁶⁸ In the years of 1926–1939 the Dominion representatives gradually admitted that the part of the imperial foreign policy was also the British foreign political line towards Europe.⁶⁹

With respect to the wording of Balfour declaration some partial modifications were also carried out in the process of treaties conclusion. Even though the appropriate resolution remained still valid from the conference in 1923, The Dominion status now defined and confirmed that negotiations, signing and ratification of treaties were executed exclusively on behalf of the whole British Empire which Dominions are united under a special relation to the Crown. The Dominion negotiators authorised by their governments disposed of the power of attorney to sign the negotiated international treaties.⁷⁰ Two articles of the final report were devoted to the questions of communication and the way of consultations in the framework of the Empire and their titles were the “System of Communication and Consultation” and “Position of Governors-General”. The Committee of Inter-Imperial Relations members evaluated the situation and they came to a conclusion that “*the Governor-General is no longer the representative of His Majesty’s Government in Great Britain; there is no one therefore in the Dominion capitals in a position to represent with authority the views of His Majesty’s Government in Great Britain*”.⁷¹ It was dealt with a wider consensual conception which the Dominion politicians agreed with.⁷²

⁶⁷ S. R. ASHTON – S. E. STOCKWELL (eds.), *British Documents on the End of Empire Series: Imperial Policy and Colonial Practice, 1925–45, Serie A, Vol. 1*, London 1997, p. xxxiii; CAC, AP, AMEL 5/39, The Times: Cooperation in the Empire: Mr. Bruce on Future Problems, 22nd December, 1926, f. [51].

⁶⁸ CAC, AP, AMEL 5/39, The Times: Results of the Imperial Conference: Unity Strengthened, 20th November, 1926, f. [29]; CAC, AP, AMEL 5/39, Canada: Equality and Unity, 4th December, 1926, f. [35].

⁶⁹ N. MANSERGH, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of External Policy 1931–1939*, London 1952, p. 67.

⁷⁰ Ibidem.

⁷¹ TNA, CAB 32/56, Doc. E 129, Imperial Conference, 1926: Inter-Imperial Relations Committee: Report, 18th November, 1926, f. 10.

⁷² BORDEN, *Canada in the Commonwealth*, pp. 125–126; R. L. BORDEN, “The Imperial Conference”, in: *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, 6, 4, 1927, pp. 204–205; CAC, AP, AMEL 2/4/2, Bruce to L. S. Amery, 11th November, 1926, ff. [1]–4;

The originated compact system of communication and the way of consultations by means of High Commissioners in the period between the Imperial Conferences represented a new challenge not only for the Dominions, but for the mother country as well. The Committee of Inter-Imperial Relations, preparing the conference agendas, admitted in June 1926 that it is desirable to develop closer personal contacts with the Dominion representatives in the way which they had been established in case of Australian "Liaison Officer" Major Casey in 1924.⁷³ The idea of High Commissioners scheme from the year of 1926 consisted of the fact that each Dominion would have one British High Commissioner in the Capital who would fulfil quasi diplomatic task and consult actual tasks on a bilateral level.⁷⁴ The system of communication by means of the High Commissioners who represented their government began to be fully developed in the end of 1920s and it was expected to be more effective than the previous information transmission by means of Governor-Generals.⁷⁵ As for the questions of organisation and frequency of the Empire conference sessions they did not come to a full agreement because the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs Leopold Amery required so that there would be held a "smaller session" of the British and Dominion representatives in parallel to the League of Nations negotiations each year in October, and once a three years enlarged for the Prime Ministers, while the fixed date did not suit to the Dominion Prime Ministers due to frequent complex home affairs.⁷⁶

CAC, AP, AMEL 2/4/2, Bruce to L. S. Amery, 23rd November, 1926, ff. [1]–4; CAC, AP, AMEL 2/4/7, Athlone to L. S. Amery, Pretoria, 9th November, 1926, ff. 3–4; R. M. DAWSON, *The Government of Canada*, 5th Ed., Toronto 1970, pp. 144–145; TNA, CO 886/10/4, D. 53845, New Zealand: House of Representatives: Dominions' Status in Foreign Policy of Empire, 1st September, 1925, Doc. No. 128, f. 92 [465]; TNA, CO 886/10/4, D. 430/27, Extracts from a Speech Made by the Right Honourable W. L. Mackenzie King, 13th December, 1926, Doc. No. 140, ff. 113–117 [475–477].

⁷³ CAC, AP, AMEL 2/4/6, [L. S. Amery] to Coates, 10th March, 1926, f. 4; TNA, CAB 24/180/77, E (B) 13, Cabinet: Imperial Conference, 1926: Report No. 3 of Committee on Questions Affecting Inter-Imperial Relations, 22nd June, 1926, ff. 1–4 [461–462].

⁷⁴ BELOFF, p. 95; HALL, *Commonwealth*, pp. 589–590, 596–597; H. G. SKILLING, *Canadian Representation Abroad*, Toronto 1945, pp. 115–116.

⁷⁵ See N. HILLMER, "A British High Commissioner for Canada, 1927–1928", in: *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1, 3, 1973, pp. 339–356.

⁷⁶ TNA, CAB 24/180/77, C. P. 276 (26), Cabinet: Imperial Conference, 1926 (Documents) Committee: Second Report, 20th July, 1926, ff. 3–4 [456–457]; TNA, CAB

Especially Dominion politicians held the opinion that the Balfour Declaration of 1926 consists of the fact there should be balance between the principals of joint imperial foreign policy and cooperation in the framework of the Empire on one hand and between the equal status and autonomy on another hand. Despite all these circumstances the Dominion representatives were of different opinions concerning the closer connections and solution of constitutional anomalies. The South Africans and Irish rather preferred equality to self-government, while especially the Australians insisted on the importance of keeping the Empire unity.⁷⁷ In spite of everything Arthur Balfour and Leopold Amery held the opinion that they were successful in bringing more unity in the relations among the mother country and Dominions.⁷⁸ After the year of 1926 the question of Empire doctrine *inter se* was plentifully discussed and its basis consisted of the fact that the relations among the Commonwealth members were not of an ordinary character because they were not observed from the view point of international law as of foreign countries. Therefore, the mutual misunderstandings or even disputes were not of the international incidents or crisis character, but they were solved in the intentions of internal rules, or jurisdiction. This special relation together with the joint obligations to the Crown helped to maintain the diplomatic unity of the British Commonwealth of Nations. From another point of view, the *inter se* doctrine endangered recognition of Dominions as independent countries by the international community because of the specific relations the members of the Commonwealth they hardly could be sovereign states. In the course of time the doctrine became the basis for the Imperial preference tariffs, because it was not dealt with commercial relation with foreign countries.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, ambiguities in the *inter se* doctrine application persisted on the level of multilateral treaties even at the beginning of the 1930s.⁸⁰

24/180/77, E (B) 13, Cabinet: Imperial Conference, 1926: Report No. 3 of Committee on Questions Affecting Inter-Imperial Relations, 22nd June, 1926, ff. 1–4 [461–462].

⁷⁷ See HALL, *Commonwealth*, p. 696; HOLLAND, pp. 116–117; M. OLLIVIER (ed.), *The Colonial and Imperial Conferences from 1887 to 1937*, Vol. 3, Ottawa 1954, p. 295.

⁷⁸ DARWIN, p. 661.

⁷⁹ See J. E. S. FAWCETT, *The Inter se Doctrine of Commonwealth Relations*, London 1958, pp. 5–48; L. LLOYD, “Loosening the Apron Strings: The Dominions and Britain in the Interwar Years”, in: *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 92, 369, 2003, pp. 282–285.

At the beginning of January 1930, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs Sidney James Webb, 1st Baron Passfield, suggested with respect to the planned special Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa (1932) so that imperial economic matters would be also discussed during the meeting of London and overseas representatives in 1930 so that it would not be necessary to organize the Imperial Economic Conference in the same way as this was in 1923. It was dealt with the first and, at the same time, last meeting where the Dominion and British representatives did not broadly discussed the direction of the Imperial foreign and defensive policy or constitutional questions and where most of the time was spent by debates about economic questions and steps that should be done for the Commonwealth economic recovery due to the Great Depression outbreak.⁸¹ Considering the fact that they were not successful to reach any conclusions in the economic sphere, especially concerning the Imperial Preferences, nor closed imperial economic union, it was regarded as less successful.⁸² After a long period, this was the first meeting of the British and overseas politicians in this new form because, for nearly all Prime Ministers, this was the first meeting in their new positions at; restrain concerning some questions was thus on the spot.

As for the question of the communication system and consultations concerning the imperial foreign policy, the previous Imperial Conference in 1926 defined a lot of recommendations especially in the field of the information communication and coordination of steps within the treaty negotiations and execution of the foreign political line. The conferring pointed out the necessity of continuing in existing recommendations and in deepening mutual awareness at government level within the negotiations of issues that would another autonomous part of the British Empire be interested in. Simultaneously, the British and Dominion politicians pointed out the efficient system

⁸⁰ TNA, 32/83, E. (B) (30) 2, Cabinet: Imperial Conference, 1930: G. Mounsey, First Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Inter-Imperial Relations: Encl. No. 2, 4th June, 1930, ff. [17]–20.

⁸¹ TNA, CAB 24/209/9, C. P. 9 (30), Cabinet: Imperial Conference and Economic Conference: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Dominions Affairs, 9th January, 1930, ff. [1]–3 [45–46].

⁸² Cf. CAC, AMEL 1/5/3, L. S. AMERY, "Imperial Conference Ends in Failure: Socialist Rebuff to the Dominions", in: *Home and Empire*, December 1930, f. 5; CAC, AMEL 1/5/3, Hints for Speakers, 11th December, 1930, ff. 19–20.

of appointing His Majesty's diplomatic representatives who represent the interests of the British Commonwealth countries.⁸³ Likewise, the evaluated functioning and development of the communication in the framework of the Empire concerning the questions relating not only to foreign policy, but to common agenda as well, by means of the High Commissioners in London together with a traditional enlargement of personal contacts among the British Cabinet representatives and Dominion governments.⁸⁴ Despite the fact they were able to meet each other in person during the meetings of ministers and officers at the Imperial Conferences, or special meetings, to develop contacts within the visits with the High Commissioners in London, diplomatic representatives from other parts of the Empire in foreign cities and with the representatives in Geneva and at international conferences, from the view point of the British government nothing of this could fully substitute the system of official communication among the governments.⁸⁵

The participants of the Imperial Conference commented on the ways of communication among the Dominion and foreign governments. Especially the Irish delegation stated critical position to a lot of practical communication steps.⁸⁶ Even though the circumstances and rules of the third countries Dominion envoy accreditations had already been defined by the resolution from 1926, it was again improved; especially in the areas where the autonomous government had their specific interests and did not disturb the general imperial line.⁸⁷ The British Government had to be informed on everything and

⁸³ Cmd. 3717, Imperial Conference, 1930: Summary of Proceedings, London 1930, pp. 27–29.

⁸⁴ TNA, CAB 32/88, Imperial Conference, 1930: Committee on Inter-Imperial Relations: Conclusions of the 7th Meeting of the Committee, House of Lords, 20th October, 1930, f. 6.

⁸⁵ TNA, 32/83, E. (B) (30) 13, Cabinet: Imperial Conference, 1930: G. Mounsey, The System of Communication and Consultation between His Majesty's Governments: Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Inter-Imperial Relations, 17th July, 1930, f. 3.

⁸⁶ TNA, 32/81, Imperial Conference, 1930: Certain Questions Raised by the Irish Free State, 12th September, 1930, ff. [1]–2.

⁸⁷ Cmd. 3717, pp. 29–30; TNA, CAB 32/88, Imperial Conference, 1930: Committee on Inter-Imperial Relations: Conclusions of the Fourth Meeting of the Committee, House of Lords, 14th October, 1930, f. 6.

to obtain a copy of negotiated documents.⁸⁸ There was a statement that commercial treaties negotiations with foreign countries, social telegram problems (congratulations, letters of condolence, etc.), presence in non-political conferences and other matters of civilian character are within the scope of the Dominion activities.⁸⁹

As for the High Commissioners status in London, the British Government, with respect to the importance and exclusivity or uniqueness of the Dominion representatives position in Great Britain, came to a conclusion that their position should have been emphasized in a number of cases by providing them the status of importance right after the Secretaries of State and before the Cabinet Ministers. Only in case of the Dominion Minister visit it was admitted that he was of higher status than the High Commissioners.⁹⁰ The High Commissioners, as well as the representatives of the British Commonwealth, were privileged to the envoys and foreign countries ambassadors, as the Dominions wished.⁹¹

At the turn of the 1920s and 1930s the imperial foreign policy concentrated on the four main problems: (1) To definitely solve political, financial and other problems related to the Great War and subsequent peaceful settlement; (2) to settle disputes among the nations on the basis of security, mutual assistance, the League of Nations covenant and other tools enabling the prevention of a war outbreak; (3) to support efforts of decreasing and limiting armament; and (4) to protect British interests abroad and develop friendly and fruitful relations with foreign countries. From the view point of the British diplomacy, less successful was the activity in the field of customs barrier decreasing be-

⁸⁸ TNA, CAB 32/88, Imperial Conference, 1930: Committee on Inter-Imperial Relations: Conclusions of the 7th Meeting of the Committee, House of Lords, 20th October, 1930, f. 2.

⁸⁹ TNA, 32/81, Imperial Conference, 1930: Status of High Commissioners: Memorandum prepared by His Majesty's Government in the Union of South Africa, Pretoria, 14th July, 1930, f. [1].

⁹⁰ Cmd. 3717, pp. 29–31; TNA, 32/81, Imperial Conference, 1930: Status of Dominion High Commissioners: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Dominions Office, 15th October, 1930, ff. [1]–2; TNA, 32/83, E. (B) (30) 21, Cabinet: Imperial Conference, 1930: Status of Dominion High Commissioners, Dominions Office, August, 1930, ff. [1]–4.

⁹¹ TNA, 32/81, Imperial Conference, 1930: The Channel of Communication between Dominion Governments and Foreign Governments: J[ames] H[enry] T[homas], Note by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 13th October, 1930, ff. [1]–2.

cause most European countries and the United States of America insisted upon the strict protectionist policy. At the same time, the representatives of the British Foreign Office submitted an important memorandum at the Conference, where they warned about the fact that the countries of the British Commonwealth were, together with the general obligations as the member of the League of Nations, bound with other regional obligations resulting from the special relations with Egypt, Sudan, Iraq and mandate territories, from the post-war treaties of 1919–1923, the Locarno Pact and the Four-Power Treaty in Washington, in 1921, concerning the island territories in the Pacific.⁹² In many respects, these were older treaty obligations which total number was twenty-one.⁹³

Foreign Office was still responsible for the imperial foreign policy execution even though the Dominions took important part in decision-making process of its direction. Nevertheless, all the Dominion Prime Ministers fully identified themselves with the formulations concerning the foreign policy line in Balfour declaration, and that is why there were quite often different explanations on the measure of joint liability among the “autonomous communities” for execution of the imperial foreign policy and a real version of their independent status.⁹⁴ For example, General James Barry Munnik Hertzog generally regarded the accepted constitutional declaration as the confirmation of a sovereign international status, *de facto* independence, of the South Africans in the

⁹² TNA, 32/81, Imperial Conference, 1930: The Foreign Policy of His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom Together with a List of Commitments Arising out of the Policy or the Foreign Policy of Other Nations, Foreign Office, 22nd September, 1930, ff. 3–5.

⁹³ HALL, *Commonwealth*, p. 693.

⁹⁴ TNA, CO 886/10/4, D. 12913/26/S, Stamfordham to Hankey, 29th November, 1926, Encl. in Doc. No. 149, f. 147 [492]; TNA, CO 886/10/4, Mr. L. S. Amery (Dominions Office) to Sir Sidney Low, 29th November, 1926, Doc. No. 150, f. 148 [493]; TNA, CO 886/10/4, D. 13330/26, Sir Sidney Low to Mr. L. S. Amery (Dominions Office), 4th December, 1926, Doc. No. 152, f. 150 [494]; TNA, CO 886/10/4, Mr. L. S. Amery (Dominions Office) to Sir Sidney Low, 15th December, 1926, Doc. No. 154, ff. 151–152 [494–495]; TNA, CO 886/10/4, Sir Sidney Low to Mr. L. S. Amery (Dominions Office), 17th December, 1926, Doc. No. 155, ff. 152–153 [495]; K. YOUNG, *Arthur James Balfour: The Happy Life of the Politician Prime Minister, Statesman and Philosopher 1848–1930*, London 1963, pp. 450–451; K. C. WHEARE, *The Statute of Westminster and Dominion Status*, 4th Ed., Oxford 1949, p. 28.

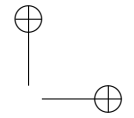
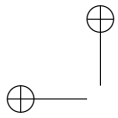
framework of the Empire.⁹⁵ This brought him to the fact that he accentuated the meaning of Balfour Declaration in many of his speeches on this aspect that under special circumstances it allows the South African Union to declare neutrality in case of a war conflict, it means to avoid joint obligations in the area of the imperial foreign policy.⁹⁶ For a change, the Australian representatives criticized incompatibility of equal status principles for the members of the British Commonwealth with the principle of joint loyalty.⁹⁷

Compared to the period before the year of 1926, the crisis situations or even mutual disputes in the area of the imperial foreign policy at the end of the 1920s and at the very beginning of the 1930s were as if they disappeared. Concerning the international relations, there was not more important crisis or events where the different opinions of the mother country and Dominions appeared in respect of practical execution or general direction of the imperial foreign policy. As if this dealt with different steps of the League of Nations, establishment of the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament, holding the Geneva Naval Conference in the summer months of 1927, British-French compromise negotiations or the course of the London Naval Conference in 1930. Partially this was due to the fact the overseas politicians accentuated the progress of constitutional relations within the Empire. This process was supported, and from a specific viewpoint preferred,

⁹⁵ Cf. University of Cambridge: Cambridge University Library (further only CUL), Smuts Papers (further only SP) Add MS 7917, Vol. 3, Smuts to Mr. and Mrs. Gillet, Irene, 30th November, 1926, Doc. No. 472, f. 386; CUL, SP, Add MS 7917, Smuts to Mr. and Mrs. Gillet, Irene, 13th December, 1926, Doc. No. 475, f. 388.

⁹⁶ See H. M. CLOKIE, "International Affairs: The British Dominions and Neutrality", in: *The American Political Science Review*, 34, 4, 1940, pp. 737–749; W. K. HANCOCK, *Smuts: The Fields of Force, 1919–1950*, Vol. 2, London 1968, pp. 205–206; TNA, DO 114/22, D. 3177/28, Union of South Africa: Speech by the Prime Minister (General J. B. Hertzog) in the House of Assembly, 8th March, 1928, Doc. No. 429, ff. 323–330; TNA, DO 114/22, Union of South Africa: Speech by the General J. C. Smuts in the House of Assembly, 8th and 15th March, 1928, Doc. No. 430, ff. 331–338; TNA, DO 114/22, D. 3492/28, Union of South Africa: Speech by the Minister of Defence (Mr. F. H. P. Creswell) in the House of Assembly, 15th March, 1928, Doc. No. 431, ff. 338–341; TNA, DO 114/22, D. 3909/28, Union of South Africa: Speech by Prime Minister (General J. B. Hertzog) in the House of Assembly, 19th and 26th March, 1928, Doc. No. 432, ff. 341–352.

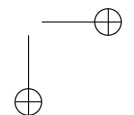
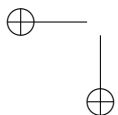
⁹⁷ TNA, 32/81, Imperial Conference, 1930: Committee on Certain Aspects of Inter-Imperial Relations: Memorandum Prepared by His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia, 24th October, 1930, f. [1].



because it “damped” a natural interest of the Dominion representatives in the imperial foreign policy, as they had to a newly negotiated “independence” defend with the British quite often, or to explain it in front of the local electors.

* * *

The problems of margin of choice concerning formation and direction and share in the execution of the imperial foreign policy represented two main key fronts in the 1920s and at the beginning of the 1930, it means the consultancy rate among the mother country and overseas autonomous units and individual foreign policy questions, crisis and events which, in practice, proved the dominion share in the imperial foreign policy execution. Since the Balfour Declaration acceptance at the Imperial Conference in autumn 1926, it was necessary to wait for other five years when the process of legislation, agreed later on at the Imperial Conference in 1930, reached the successful end in the form of the Statute of Westminster. A new front of the British-Dominion relations form reflected in a modified position of the autonomous overseas units and in a bigger interest in the margin of co-decision-making concerning the formation, direction and execution of the imperial foreign policy.



History of Construction of the New Building of the Museum of Art in Łódź in the Context of a Political Situation

Julia Sowińska-Heim*

In 1931, an international collection of modern art works was presented for the first time in Łódź, being then the second largest city in Poland and one of the most important industrial centres. It was a world-class event, since in the 1930s, Łódź museum was the only Polish and European museum presenting works of the most important avant-garde artists as a part of its permanent exhibition. In the post-war period considerable efforts were taken to erect a new building of the Museum of Art in Łódź. It was going to be an event on a national scale, since it would be the first modern multifunctional museum built from scratch during the period of People's Poland. Yet, the lack of perspective thinking and ideological entanglement of cultural institutions, as well as propaganda dictate and the lack of consistency in actions of communist authorities prevented Łódź from taking the chance of remaining in the very centre of pioneering museum activities. [socialist architecture; adaptive reuse; industrial heritage; urban politics; Museum of Art in Łódź]

In 1931 an international collection of modern art works was presented for the first time in Łódź, being then the second largest city in Poland and one of the most important industrial centres. It was a world-class event, since in the 1930s, Łódź museum was the only Polish and European museum presenting works of the most important avant-garde artists as a part of its permanent exhibition. The exhibits included works of such famous artists as Alexander Calder, Jean Arp, Fernand Léger, Max Ernst, Georges Vantongerloo or Theo van Doesburg.¹ History associated with creating the collection is unusual. These were the

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¹ P. SMOLIK, "Przedmowa", in: *Międzynarodowa Kolekcja Sztuki Nowoczesnej / Collection Internationale d'Art Nouveau*, Katalog nr 2, Łódź 1932 [catalogue].

artists themselves that launched an initiative of acquiring and depositing the works by Polish and foreign avant-garde painters and sculptors at the museum. This idea was developed and implemented by the artists from *a. r.* (an acronym is interpreted as: revolutionary artists, *Pol. artyści rewolucyjni*, or actual avant-garde, *Pol. awangarda rzeczywista*), one of the most famous and active Polish avant-garde artistic groups of the interwar period.² The collection was assembled mainly by Władysław Strzemiński, Katarzyna Kobro, Henryk Stażewski and Jan Brzękowski.³

The new museum did not have a strict nature of a modern art museum and the essential part of the collection consisted of works by renowned Polish painters of the 19th century, e. g. Jan Norblin, Wojciech Gerson and Juliusz Kossak, although it also included works by old masters, e. g. from the studio of Lucas Cranach.⁴ They came mainly from the legacy transferred to Łódź in 1928 by a Polish historian and publicist as well as art collector, Kazimierz Bartoszewicz.⁵ However, this collection of modern art, unusual for those times, shaped a nature and defined a future direction of museum development.

Thanks to Przemysław Smolik, a councillor in the Department of Education and Culture of Łódź City Hall, involved in creation of the Łódź museum and, at the same time, supporting modern art, the works belonging to the avant-garde trends immediately landed in the exhibition halls.⁶ Because of the tight economic situation as well as an am-

² *A. r.* functioned in 1929–1936.

³ The paintings were transferred to Łódź in batches both in 1931 and in 1932. P. KURC-MAJ, "Jakie muzeum? – uwagi na temat historii Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi do 1950 roku", in: A. JACH – K. SŁOBODA – J. SOKOŁOWSKA et al. (eds.), *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi. Monografia. Tom I*, Łódź 2015, pp. 124–175; J. OJRYZŃSKI, "Międzynarodowa Kolekcja Sztuki Nowoczesnej. Kalendarium 1931–1991", in: U. CZARTORYSKA (ed.), *Kolekcja sztuki XX wieku Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi*, Warszawa 1991, p. 9.

⁴ *Katalog Działu Sztuki nr 1*, Muzeum Miejskie Historii i Sztuki im. J. i K. Bartoszewiczów, Łódź 1930 [catalogue].

⁵ Due to a goodwill gesture of the donor, the museum was originally called Muzeum Miejskie Historii i Sztuki im. J. i K. Bartoszewiczów [J. and K. Bartoszewicz Municipal Museum of History and Art]. The collection included both art works and a collection of antique books, Polish 19th century newspapers and an archive containing various documents.

⁶ Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi (hereinafter: APŁ), Akta Miasta Łodzi (hereinafter: AMŁ), Wydział Oświaty i Kultury (hereinafter: WOiK), Announcement to the Editing Committee of the Guide to Poland of 16 September 1932, file No. 17091.

bivalent and sometimes even hostile attitude towards modern trends in art,⁷ construction of a building specifically designed for museum purposes, and thus providing appropriate exhibition space for the valuable collection, was out of question. The collection was displayed in rooms on the first floor of the former Łódź City Hall at 1 Plac Wolności,⁸ hastily converted for exhibition purposes. In the first years of museum functioning, this building was still partly used by city officials.

In the period between creation of the museum and outbreak of World War II, its collections were systematically expanded and enriched with new acquisitions.⁹ This process intensified significantly from 1935, when, because of a competition, management of the museum was taken over by Marian Minich. He got engaged in final establishment of the museum's profile and determination of its development direction, based on the potential resulting from the great possessed collection of international modern art.¹⁰

After a dramatic war period, Łódź Museum started to function again in February 1945 and its management was again taken over by Marian Minich¹¹ (who served this function until his death in 1965).

⁷ M. MINICH, *Szalona galeria*, Łódź 1963, pp. 243–244. Intense emotions were stirred up by, e. g., decision to give Władysław Strzemiński the Award of the City of Łódź in 1932. I. LUBA, "Paradoks sztuki narodowej i modernizmu. Władysław Strzemiński laureatem nagrody artystycznej miasta Łodzi w roku 1932", in: *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 3–4, 2012, pp. 707–730; Z. KARNICKA, "Kalendarium życia i twórczości", in: *Władysław Strzemiński. W setną rocznicę urodzin 1893–1952*, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi [the exhibition catalogue], Łódź 1993, pp. 76–77.

⁸ The issues concerning complicated history of location of the Museum of Art in Łódź, shown, however, primarily in the context of placing one of the branches of the museum in a nineteenth-century weaving mill, converted for this purpose, which is currently a part of a shopping and entertainment centre "Manufaktura", was presented in: J. SOWIŃSKA-HEIM, "Sztuka awangardowa w dziewiętnastowiecznej fabryce", in: A. PAWŁOWSKA – E. JEDLIŃSKA – K. STEFAŃSKI (eds.), *Acta Artis. Studia ofiarowane Profesor Wandzie Nowakowskiej*, Łódź 2016.

⁹ About history of the Museum of Art in Łódź in the 1940s, cf. J. SOWIŃSKA-HEIM – P. KURC-MAJ, "Awangardowa kolekcja w czasach socrealizmu. Polityka programowa Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi w latach 50. XX wieku", in: A. SUMOROK – T. ZAŁUSKI (eds.), *Socrealizmy i modernizacje*, Łódź 2016 (in print).

¹⁰ W. NOWAKOWSKA, "Wspomnienie o Marianie Minichu", in: *Odgłosy*, 27, 1966, p. 7.

¹¹ APŁ, AMŁ, Memoriał do Wydziału Kultury i Sztuki Zarządu Miejskiego w Łodzi of 11 January 1946, file No. 10.

First, the director faced an extremely difficult task of recovering a part of stolen or missing works, as well as organizing, from scratch, Museum activities. What proved to be an important challenge was finding a new seat. The works which had survived the war were temporarily stored at 14 Plac Wolności, where they had been placed by the Germans.¹² In a letter to the President of Łódź, Marian Minich argued that after the analysis of possibilities, so-called Poznański's Palace at today's Więckowskiego street was best suited for the purpose of the museum.¹³ It is a neo-renaissance building erected around 1900–1902¹⁴ according to a design by an architect, Adolf Zeligson, which used to belong to Maurycy Poznanski, the son of one of the most powerful factory owners, Izrael Kalmanowicz. Director's arguments in favour of this location concerned, among others, favourable location of the building in the city centre, many rooms, favourable natural lighting and even the right colour of walls. These features were to guarantee that the valuable exhibits would find a proper exhibition space.¹⁵ Marian Minich also put forward interesting arguments, pointing out "propaganda and representative" benefits. He tried to convince the city authorities that it was one of a few, if not the only Łódź building, which would provide appropriate setting for receiving foreign delegations; what is more "so-called Poznański's Palace" handed over as a museum seat was to become an important permanent monument to "democratic activities" of the Municipal Council of the City of Łódź.¹⁶ As Marian Minich mentioned, efforts to acquiring a separate, independent building for the Museum were hard.¹⁷ After a round of negotiations, thanks to favourable attitude of the City President, in 1946 the Museum received the building at its disposal. Then the struggle over the building, vividly described by Marian Minich, was waged with professors of the Faculty of Medicine of Łódź University.¹⁸

¹² APL, AMŁ, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, typescript, 1953, in: Historia założenia i działalności Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, file No. 320, pp. 7–8; MINICH, pp. 285, 287.

¹³ "M. Minich a letter to the President of Łódź of 25 June 1945", in: A. JACH – K. SŁOBODA – J. SOKOŁOWSKA et al. (eds.), *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi. Monografia. Tom I*, Łódź 2015 [unnumbered pages].

¹⁴ K. STEFAŃSKI, *Atlas architektury dawnej Łodzi*, Łódź 2008, pp. 138–139.

¹⁵ "M. Minich a letter to the President of Łódź of 25 June 1945."

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ MINICH, p. 291.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 292–294; the vice-chancellor T. Kotarbiński to M. Minich, a letter of 22

A festive vernissage of the first post-war exhibition of the City Museum of Art in Łódź,¹⁹ as the institution was called those days, was held on 13 June 1948,²⁰ already in the new seat. A design of building conversion for museum purposes, including adaptation of rich residential interiors to exhibition requirements, was made by a conservator, Jan Marksens.²¹

The works from different periods, ranging from Gothic to the 20th century, presented to the public in forty halls, according to the exhibition concept of Marian Minich, created the organic whole and thus illustrated existence of purposeful progress in the ways of artistic vision and thinking.²² A centre of museum exhibition was the works belonging to the International Collection of Modern Art handed over in the interwar period by the a. r. group and rescued in the war period.²³ An important place in the structure of the permanent exhibition was taken by the Neoplastic Room, which was designed by Władysław Strzemiński (an outstanding avant-garde artist, member of the a. r. group) at the request of director Marian Minich in 1947.²⁴ A year later the room was opened to the public.

The 1950s in Polish art and culture were marked by domination of the socialist realism doctrine and strong subordination of museums to the policy of communist authorities.²⁵ Museums were perceived as an

September 1945.

¹⁹ In 1948, the Łódź museum was given the name Miejskie Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi (The City Museum of Art in Łódź), while the name Museum of Art in Łódź, used up to these days, was introduced in 1950. APŁ, AMŁ, Statut organizacyjny Miejskiego Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, of 6 February 1948, file No. 1; M. MINICH, "Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi", in: M. MINICH – M. RUBCZYŃSKA – J. ŁADNOWSKA (eds.), *Rocznik Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi 1930–1962*, Łódź 1965, p. 24.

²⁰ APŁ, AMŁ, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, typescript, 1953, in: *Historia założenia i działalności Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi*, sygn. 320, p. 7–8.

²¹ MINICH, p. 295.

²² M. MINICH, *Szalona galeria*, Łódź 1963, p. 79; J. ŁADNOWSKA, "Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi", in: A. WOJCIECHOWSKI (ed.), *Polskie życie artystyczne w latach 1945–1960*, Warszawa – Wrocław – Kraków 1992, p. 321. See also: SOWIŃSKA-HEIM – KURCMAJ.

²³ Eighty-two works from the pre-war collection survived the war. J. ŁADNOWSKA – J. OJRYZŃSKI, "Historia Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi", in: U. CZARTORYSKA (ed.), *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi. Historia i wystawy*, Łódź 1998, p. 10.

²⁴ A detailed design of the Neoplastic Room made by Strzemiński has a date of 17 March 1947. APŁ, AMŁ, Księga inwentarzowa. Rok 1945–1947, file No. 25, p. 50.

²⁵ The first consequence of politicization of the museums was centralization of man-

important tool for building great work of social progress.²⁶ An important role, from the ideological perspective, was played primarily by propaganda and educational goals of art.²⁷ In 1949, the Łódź museum come under administration of the Ministry of Culture and Art.²⁸ Thus, the communist authorities were given the opportunity to directly control the institution and interfere in its exhibition program. In the post-war period the City Museum of Art in Łódź (later the Museum of Art in Łódź) was perceived as an important cultural institution, which could help to build a new image of workers' Łódź.²⁹ With the advent of new cultural policy, the director of the Museum had to revise previously conducted exhibition activities.³⁰ Implemented changes resulted primarily from a clear conflict between the socialist realism doctrine and modern art. The International Collection of Modern Art, determining a character of the Museum from 1950, could not be easily presented in the exhibition halls. Abstract art works, being too "imperialist", were tucked into the warehouse.³¹ While the Neoplastic Room was painted over.³² Avant-garde art, condemned in the socialist period

agement in the form of appointment of the Chief Directorate of Museums and Monument Protection as a body operating under the Ministry of Culture and Art and supervising state museums. P. KURC-MAJ, *Rola inicjatyw i kolekcji prywatnych w muzealnictwie polskim na przykładzie polityki budowania zbiorów w Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi w latach międzywojennych i bezpośrednio powojennych XX wieku*, 2015 (typescript, in print).

²⁶ H. KĘSZYCKA, "O muzealnej służbie społeczno-oświatowej", in: *Muzealnictwo*, 3, 1953, p. 9.

²⁷ J. BOGUCKI, *Sztuka Polski Ludowej*, Warszawa 1983, p. 76.

²⁸ Exactly on 14 December 1949. APŁ, AMŁ, Protokół zdawczo-odbiorczy z dnia 28 marca 1958 roku, in: Informacje dotyczące nieruchomości 1946–1968, file No. 676, p. 3. As a result of changes in the cultural policy museum institutions were reorganized, from 1945 they were gradually nationalized. As a result, in 1950 most institutions were already subject to the central authority.

²⁹ "Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi", in: *Przegląd Artystyczny*, 7–8–9, 1949.

³⁰ More details about the exhibition program: SOWIŃSKA-HEIM – KURC-MAJ.

³¹ "Cichy dramat Muzeum Sztuki...", in: *Głos Robotniczy*, August 19, 1957. Not all the paintings associated with modern art were removed from the exhibition halls, but their number was drastically reduced. OJRYZŃSKI, "Międzynarodowa Kolekcja Sztuki Nowoczesnej", p. 19.

³² J. ŁADNOWSKA, "Sala neoplastyczna – z dziejów kolekcji sztuki nowoczesnej w Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi", in: Zespół kustoszy Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi [Ed. A team of curators of the Museum of Art in Łódź], *Miejsce sztuki. Muzeum – Theatrum Sapientiae, Theatrum Animabile*, Łódź 1991, p. 78. In the early 1950s, Strzemiński himself was directly stigmatized. He was removed from the Association of Polish Visual Artists

for naturalism devoid of ideals and non-humanistic formalism,³³ did not return to the halls of the Museum of Art in Łódź until 1 January 1956,³⁴ with the advent of a political thaw. In the late 1950s, precisely in 1959, director Marian Minich also made successful efforts to reconstruct the Neoplastic Room.³⁵ At the same time, he began efforts to build a modern building designed for the Museum of Art in Łódź.³⁶ Despite worsening over the years, dramatic housing conditions, resulting primarily from insufficient exhibition³⁷ and warehouse space, as well as the inability to adapt the converted building for modern museum needs,³⁸ it was his successor, Ryszard Stanisławski,³⁹ who in 1973, after years of efforts and negotiations with the authorities, managed to bring about a nationwide competition for the conceptual architectural design of a building of the Museum of Art of Łódź.⁴⁰

In the rich archival documentation stored in the Museum of Art in Łódź, the first document in which the director clearly calls for the need to build a new museum building is a letter of October 1968 to the Department of Culture of the National Council of the City of Łódź. It outlines a difficult situation of the Museum, which must function in converted, too small rooms of the nineteenth-century former Poznański's

and also expelled from the Academy of Fine Arts, where he had taught in 1945–1949.

- ³³ Archiwum Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi (hereinafter MSŁ), J. PAWLAS, *Abc sztuki. Władysław Strzemiński*, Warszawa 1985 [typescript], pp. 25, 27.
- ³⁴ M. MINICH, [untitled], in: R. ZARĘBOWICZ (ed.), *Malarstwo polskie w galerii Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi*, Warszawa 1957, p. 9.
- ³⁵ MSŁ archives, Bolesław Utkin a letter to the Museum of Art in Łódź, July 28, 1959.
- ³⁶ J. OJRYZŃSKI, "Geneza i pierwsze lata muzeum", in: U. CZARTORYSKA (ed.), *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi. Historia i wystawy*, Łódź 1998, p. 22.
- ³⁷ Available exhibition space allowed for displaying only 9 % of the collection at a time. The Museum with the only world-famous international gallery of modern art in Poland in the building in Więckowskiego street had only 1,760 m² at its disposal.
- ³⁸ Serious difficulties resulted from the lack of appropriate facilities. The Museum did not have a proper screening and lecture room, a former Poznański's parlour was used for these purposes. This situation did not change until 2008, when new, large, modernized and adapted to the needs of a modern museum exhibition space of ms² (a branch of the Museum of Art in Łódź) were opened to the public in a 19th century converted weaving mill at 19 Gdańska street.
- ³⁹ M. Minich died in 1965, and Ryszard Stanisławski took over as a director in 1966.
- ⁴⁰ More: J. SOWIŃSKA-HEIM, "Regionalne ambicje a rzeczywistość centralnego planowania. Trudna historia budowy nowego gmachu Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi", in: P. GRYGLEWSKI – K. STEFAŃSKI – R. WRÓBEL (eds.), *Centrum, prowincje, peryferia – wzajemne relacje w dziejach sztuki*, Łódź 2013, pp. 209–228.

palace, and a poor-state outbuilding from the side of Gdańska street. As an important argument for accepting and supporting this project by the city was that it would be the first building of this type erected in the post-war Polish history. So its implementation would be a unique and important event in the whole country. The document ends with a suggestion that if a new museum building was not built in Łódź, while the idea of creating the Central Museum of Contemporary Art in Poland was implemented, probably in Warsaw, Łódź could lose its precious collections to the capital.⁴¹

Director Ryszard Stanislawski, negotiating with government officials, tried to speak to them in their own language. In a letter of 3 February 1969 to the Department of Culture of the National Council of the City of Łódź he wrote about Łódź as a city of deep tradition of revolutionary and workers' movements, where it was possible to create a Museum of Art, housing the works of the most progressive, avant-garde and revolutionary artists. Referring to the propaganda slogans, the director argued that creation of appropriate conditions for functioning and further development of the museum was particularly important for the city, which, while retaining its industrial character, at the same time, with its eight universities founded after the war, many scientific and research institutions, a newly erected building of the Grand Theatre, was a visible symbol of socialist achievements of the country. He also stressed that establishing the Museum housing the only gallery of modern art in Poland, but also, due to its pioneering nature, belonging to a few institutions of this kind in Europe would be of "*enormously propaganda and political importance*"⁴² for Łódź. The new museum building would be a permanent monument to the cultural aspirations of the city.⁴³

⁴¹ MSŁ archives, Director Ryszard Stanislawski to the Department of Culture of the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź of October 8, 1968, file No. M.Sz. II-0/35/68.

⁴² MSŁ archives, a letter of director Ryszard Stanislawski to the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź, Department of Culture, Dot. postulatów rozwojowych i potrzeb Muzeum Sztuki z dnia 3 lutego 1969 r., attachment 1, file No. M.Sz.I-0/2/69.

⁴³ MSŁ archives, the director of the Museum, Ryszard Stanislawski, to Comrade Sergiusz Kłaczek M. A. Editor-in-chief of "Głos Robotniczy" in Łódź of 27 July 1971, file No. AS/065/2297/71.

An important argument, convincing for government officials and in favour of construction of new seat for the Museum of Art, was also deteriorating conditions of the exhibits caused by air pollution. The only way to reduce this danger, according to the director, was change of location of the museum and its transfer to a less built-up area, not in immediate vicinity of the active factories.⁴⁴ Therefore, it was suggested that a new museum building should be erected around the park at Zdrowie, the largest park in Łódź (advertised as one of the largest parks in Europe).⁴⁵ To support this proposal, director Stanisławski argued that emerging modern museums were often localized outside the city centres, and placing them in the vicinity of recreational areas could increase attendance.⁴⁶ The analysis of attendance constituted at that time an important point to official ratings of cultural institutions functioning.⁴⁷

The subject was raised in May 1969, at a meeting of the Executive of Łódź Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR KŁ). After a long discussion, a resolution was passed about the urgent need to erect a new building of the Museum of Art in Łódź.⁴⁸ While on 3 June of the same year, at a meeting of the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź, a resolution was passed providing that by 1 October 1969 the Museum of Art should outline an initial program and financial conditions of the new building.⁴⁹ The official publication

⁴⁴ MSŁ archives a letter of director Ryszard Stanisławski to the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź, Department of Culture, Dot. postulatów rozwojowych i potrzeb Muzeum Sztuki z dnia 3 lutego 1969 r., attachment 2, file No. M.Sz.I-0/2/69, p. 10.

⁴⁵ Currently, J. Piłsudski park. It was created in the area of urban forests, which until World War I occupied here the area of approx. 400 ha, later it was reduced to 115 ha. The first proposals to create the park here were put forward in 1904, but preliminary works began only in the interwar period. In the 1930s, i. a. a stadium, game park and zoo were created in the area. Initially, the park was also to include a botanical garden, which, however, was created only in the 1960s and does not belong directly to the area of the park. Currently, Park at Zdrowie occupies the area of 172 ha.

⁴⁶ MSŁ archives, a letter of director Ryszard Stanisławski to the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź, Department of Culture, Dot. postulatów rozwojowych i potrzeb Muzeum Sztuki z dnia 3 lutego 1969 r., attachment 2, file No. M.Sz.I-0/2/69, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź, *Dotychczasowe osiągnięcia i dalsze kierunki polityki kulturalnej m. Łodzi, Łódź October 1969*, p. 14.

⁴⁸ MSŁ archives, File 1, a handmade note of 13 May 1969.

⁴⁹ MSŁ archives, A handmade note of 03.VI.1969; cf. MSŁ Archives, Ryszard

of the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź of October 1969 provided for construction of a new building for the Museum of Art in Łódź, as part of a program of development of cultural life in Łódź.⁵⁰ While it clearly highlighted a unique nature of the museum, which was the only one in Poland housing a gallery of modern art.⁵¹ Cooperation of the museum with important foreign institutions was also appreciated.⁵² These were not binding decisions yet, but a starting point, giving some hope.

In the same year, on 30 September 1969, the Department of Culture and Art of the City of Łódź was submitted preliminary guidelines on construction of the new building. A year later, exactly on 22 September 1970, they were approved by the Ministry of Culture and Art.⁵³ The Administration of Museums and Monument Protection of the Ministry of Culture and Art in Warsaw, expressing its opinion on the guidelines on construction of the new building, emphatically confirmed the urgent need for its construction. Supporting it with two main reasons which, moreover, confirmed the situation presented by director Ryszard Stanisławski, namely air pollution in the vicinity of the current location of the museum having a harmful effect on the collections and too small exhibition and storage space. It was pointed out that almost unbelievable cramped space prevented the museum from proper development of its activities on the scale which it was capable of due to importance of its collections as well as skills of its employees. At the same time, location of the museum within the park at Zdrowie was supported, away from the “factory centre” and well-connected with the city centre.⁵⁴

Unfortunately, general situation in the country and a decision to reduce construction projects in 1971–1972, including those related to cultural activities, adopted at the central level by the Presidium of the

Stanisławski, *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi w latach 1965–1968*, of 24 July 1969, p. 6.

⁵⁰ Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź, *Dotychczasowe osiągnięcia i dalsze kierunki polityki kulturalnej m. Łodzi*, Łódź October 1969, p. 28.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 14.

⁵³ MSŁ archives, Ministry of Culture and Art Administration of Museums and Monument Protection in Warsaw to the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź Culture Department, a letter of 22 September 1970, file No. MOZI 85-9/7/70.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

Government⁵⁵ in April 1970 did not foster commencing activities related to construction of the museum. After the Executive of KŁ PZPR and the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź had passed a resolution in 1969 on the necessity to build a new building for the Museum of Art, the institution paradoxically found itself in a stalemate. Since final decisions about construction were not taken, and therefore construction works were not undertaken, and, at the same time, a design of reconstruction and enlargement, if only temporary, of the existing Museum surface became outdated.

In 1971, the director asked contemporary editor-in-chief of *Głos Robotniczy*, being a popular newspaper giving a political direction to the party, for transfer of money raised during the raffle organized on the newspaper jubilee, as the first contribution to a fund for construction of the Museum of Art in Łódź. Creation of such a fund would make it possible to announce in "in the current five-year period" a competition for a design of the Museum. Starting a money collecting campaign by *Głos Robotniczy* would also be a form of legitimization of the project and allow for its more effective dissemination.⁵⁶

The guidelines on construction of a new building from 1969 (updated in 1972) assumed that an extensive museum complex would be erected with modern world-standard expositional rooms, an appropriately designed reading room and library, a screening and lecture room, café or even a room for children, where parents could leave their children under professional care to calmly devote themselves to communing with works of art. Director Ryszard Stanisławski clearly emphasized an educational role which the museum should serve and at the same time warned against giving it an elite character.⁵⁷ The museum's task was not only to present works of art, but also to carry out diverse activities, such as discussions, readings, children's education, engaging the audience in taking creative activities or their co-

⁵⁵ MSŁ archives, Council of Ministers RM 121-184/70, Decision No. 46/70 of the Presidium of the Government of 27 April 1970, file No. A/012/1453/70.

⁵⁶ MSŁ archives, the director of the Museum, Ryszard Stanisławski, to Comrade Sergiusz Kłaczko M.A. Editor-in-chief of "Głos Robotniczy" in Łódź of 27 July 1971 AS/065/2297/71.

⁵⁷ MSŁ archives, Ryszard Stanisławski, Założenia budowy gmachu Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, (typescript), p. 7. MSŁ archives, Memoriał nt: "Założeń budowy gmachu Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi", 1969 r., file No. K. 17.

participation in artistic activities.⁵⁸ In addition to facilities for visitors, a very strong emphasis was put on creating appropriate conditions for scientific and research work, as well as collector's activities.⁵⁹

Finally, after more than four years of effort, in February 1973, a nationwide⁶⁰ competition for a conceptual design of the building of the Museum of Art in Łódź was officially announced.⁶¹ The Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź commissioned the Łódź Branch of the Union of Polish Architects to conduct the competition (no. 515).⁶² The competition was planned as one of the most important events of celebrations of the 550th anniversary of granting Łódź municipal rights and the 150th anniversary of the industrial Łódź,⁶³ thus it was to express interest of the authorities of the workers' city in cultural issues.⁶⁴

The new museum building was to be located in the place already proposed by director Ryszard Stanisławski and approved by the Department of Construction, Urban Planning and Architecture of the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź,⁶⁵ namely the

⁵⁸ "Sukces czy porażka? Dyskusja pokonkursowa", in: *Architektura*, 4, 1974, p. 160.

⁵⁹ MSŁ archives, Teczka 1, Ryszard Stanisławski, Założenia budowy gmachu Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, (typescript), p. 10; MSŁ archives, Memoriał nt: "Założeń budowy gmachu Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi", 1969 r., file No. K. 17.

⁶⁰ Originally, an international competition was planned. F. DŁUŻAK, "Muzeum jakiego nie było", in: *Kurier Polski*, 56, 1972, p. 4; J. POTĘGA, "Gdzie i jakie powinno być Muzeum Sztuki? Specjaliści proponują Zdrowie", in: *Dziennik Łódzki*, No. 35, pp. 1-2; (k), "Z perspektywy jutra", in: *Życie Warszawy*, 112, 1972, p. 6.

⁶¹ MSŁ archives, SARP Oddział w Łodzi, Informacja o ogólnopolskim realizacyjnym, otwartym i powszechnym konkursie architektonicznym na koncepcyjny projekt wielofunkcyjnego gmachu Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi.

⁶² MSŁ archives, Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich SARP (Union of Polish Architects) Łódź Branch to the Director of Łódź Construction Association of June 8, 1972, file No. OB/236/72/T-41.

⁶³ MSŁ archives, SARP Łódź Branch, Informacja o ogólnopolskim realizacyjnym, otwartym i powszechnym konkursie architektonicznym na koncepcyjny projekt wielofunkcyjnego gmachu Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi.

⁶⁴ MSŁ archives, Deputy Chairman of Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich SARP Łódź Branch Zdzisław Lipski, to the Director of Łódź Construction Association of June 8, 1972 r. MSŁ archiwum, SARP Łódź Branch, Informacja o ogólnopolskim realizacyjnym, otwartym i powszechnym konkursie architektonicznym na koncepcyjny projekt wielofunkcyjnego gmachu Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi.

⁶⁵ This information gave rise to elaborating an implementation plan and, in consequence, establishing exact location. MSŁ archives, Chief Architect of the City of Łódź, Director of the Department of Construction, Urban Planning and Architecture of the

area within the Central Park of Culture and Recreation in Łódź.⁶⁶ Construction of the new building of the museum was to become a part of the project planned on a grand scale, strongly supported and promoted by the authorities and aiming at arrangement of Popular Park at Zdrowie and its transformation into Central Park of Culture and Recreation.⁶⁷ Even before commencement of works, the first secretary of Communist Party KD⁶⁸-Polesie, Marian Kwapisz, asserted that, given the atmosphere which had been created, all the employees of workplaces, institutions, design offices, members of youth organizations, students from Polesie, and even the soldiers would participate in social activities at Zdrowie in large numbers, and even other districts would also eagerly join in the work.⁶⁹ Planned changes to the park at Zdrowie were to turn it into an attractive place of “mass rest and active recreation” for the entire Łódź agglomeration. Not just local but also nationwide press informed about the project in a very positive tone.⁷⁰ The facilities were to include not only the Museum of Art, but, among others, an amusement park, a go-kart track, a sports centre, a summer theatre, exhibition outdoor event space, including summer cinema and circus, as well as a swimming pool complex.⁷¹ The project included construction of an astronomical observatory.⁷² A very important element of the Central Park of Culture and Recreation designed in the 70 form was a monument to Revolutionary Action in 1905 (unveiled in 1975). It is in its immediate vicinity that the new museum building was to be situated, being a modern arts centre designed according to the latest trends in the world’s museology.

Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź architect Jerzy Sadowski M. A. Eng., letter of 10 May 1972.

⁶⁶ A design of Centralny Park Kultury i Wypoczynku was made by architect Włodzisław Stępnik and engineer Kazimierz Chrabelski.

⁶⁷ “Ambitnie – dla siebie, Na Zdrowie po zdrowie”, in: *Głos Robotniczy*, 66, 1972, p. 3.

⁶⁸ KD – Komitet Dzielnicowy.

⁶⁹ “Czekamy tylko na front robót, Na Zdrowie po zdrowie”, in: *Głos Robotniczy*, 66, 1972, p. 3.

⁷⁰ “Na Zdrowie po zdrowie”, in: *Głos Robotniczy*, 66, 1972, p. 3; H. BATOROWICZY – I. KAMPINOWSKI, “Majowa opowieść dla Izy”, in: *Sztandar Młodych*, 103, 1972, p. 3; “Zdrowie’ – łódzka baza wypoczynku”, in: *Trybuna Ludu*, 156, 1972, p. 3.

⁷¹ Od strony Al. Unii.

⁷² MSŁ archives, A conceptual design of spatial arrangement of Centralny Park Kultury i Wypoczynku in Łódź of May 12, 1972.

In the competition for the design of the Museum of Art in Łódź, the jury awarded the first, second, and two fourths awards as well as five distinctions of the first degree and five of the second degree.⁷³ According to the opinion of the jury, the winning design prepared by an architect, Jan Fiszer, stood out due to a balanced and clear form well related to the building's function. The project was also considered to be economical and uncomplicated in technical terms, which in communist Poland of the 1970s was not insignificant.⁷⁴

By January 1976, around 30 % of works on drawing up a programme-planning study of the new building of the Museum of Art in Łódź had been completed.⁷⁵ However, the Voivodeship Planning Commission of the Łódź City Hall ordered to suspend the works. This was a consequence of decisions taken by the Regional Team of Review and Audit of Investment Project Documentation,⁷⁶ which, after having carried out an audit in Łódź design offices, negatively assessed concluding agreements on documentary work concerning tasks not covered by the current 5-year plan,⁷⁷ considering them to be activities resulting in economic losses.⁷⁸ And that was, unfortunately, the case of the new building of the Museum of Art in Łódź.

After unsuccessful attempts to appeal against the decision in March 1976, director Ryszard Stanisławski asked the President of Łódź to temporarily solve the problem of dramatic housing conditions of the Museum of Art by converting residential buildings adjacent to the current location.⁷⁹ Thus, the history had made a circle and despite in-

⁷³ MSŁ archives, Protokół z oficjalnego otwarcia kopert z nazwiskami autorów prac nagrodzonych i wyróżnionych, w Konkursie SARP Nr 515 na Muzeum Sztuki, of 28 July 1973, pp. 1–4.

⁷⁴ MSŁ archives, [Konkurs SARP nr 515. Propozycja zakwalifikowania prac do grupy "O" i N], Projekt 26, file No. k. 1–53.

⁷⁵ MSŁ archives, Protokół z posiedzenia dotyczącego przerwania opracowania projektu koncepcyjnego Muzeum Sztuki w Parku Kultury i Wypoczynku na Zdrowiu w m.Łodzi (studium programowo-przestrzennego), February 20, 1976.

⁷⁶ Letter Pl.VI-800/1/4/76 of January 31, 1976.

⁷⁷ MSŁ archives, A letter of the Department of Culture and Art of the City Office of Łódź to the Museum of Art of 18 February 1976, file No. Kl.II-0004aT/3/76.

⁷⁸ Archiwum MSŁ, Bolesław Pietrzykowski, Vice President of the City of Łódź, to the Director of the Museum of Art in Łódź of 31 March 1976, file No. PL.Va-200-4/76.

⁷⁹ Namely the buildings at Więckowskiego 38 and 40 street. MSŁ archives, Director Ryszard Stanisławski to the President of Łódź of March 16, 1976, file No. A/221/492/76.

volvement of many people in construction of the new building for the Museum as well as acceptance of this idea by local and central authorities, at the level of the Ministry of Culture and the Arts the situation returned to negotiations from years before.

Construction of the building of the Museum of Art in Łódź, was to become an event on a national scale: the first modern multifunctional museum built from scratch during the period of People's Poland. The city was going to have a building unrivalled in Europe,⁸⁰ a unique museum,⁸¹ the most modern one in the country.⁸²

Łódź already had what was the hardest to get, namely the valuable collections, but it lacked determination and consistent actions on the part of the city authorities to create an appropriate architectural setting for them. When in 1931 the latest avant-garde art work by European artists was presented to the audience in the Łódź Town Hall, it was the world's second permanent collection of modern art. It had absolutely pioneering character. When, after about forty years, in the late 1960s and 1970s, director Ryszard Stanisławski was struggling, unfortunately unsuccessfully as it turned out, for construction of the first modern museum building in post-war Poland, the United States alone founded during this period more than two hundred museums of modern art.⁸³ Due to the lack of perspective thinking, as well as consequences of the actions of communist authorities, Łódź, but also Poland, did not use the opportunities to stay in the centre of pioneering museum activities.⁸⁴

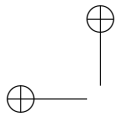
⁸⁰ "Sztuka – krótko – kultura – krótko", in: *Zwierciadło*, 36, 1973, p. 15.

⁸¹ "Jakie będziemy mieli Muzeum Sztuki", in: *Głos Robotniczy*, 180, 1973.

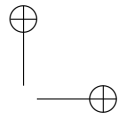
⁸² "Laserowe dziwy w nowym gmachu Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej", in: *Express Wieczorny*, 13, 1973, p. 3.

⁸³ MSŁ archives, a letter of director Ryszard Stanisławski to the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Łódź Department of Culture, Dot. postulatów rozwojowych i potrzeb Muzeum Sztuki z dnia 3 lutego 1969 r., attachment 1, file No. M.Sz.I-0/2/69.

⁸⁴ Currently, the Museum of Art in Łódź occupies three seats converted for museum purposes. In the Herbst Palace old art has been presented since 1990, while the main collection of modern and contemporary art has been displayed since 2008 in the former 19th century weaving mill within the entertainment and shopping complex "Manufaktura" (ms²), which, like the building in Więckowskiego street, used to belong to the Poznańskis. Ms¹ in Więckowskiego street is primarily used for holding experimental activities and presentations.

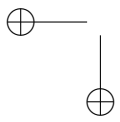


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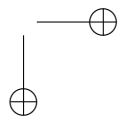


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Justice, Due Process and the Rule of Law in Nigeria: the Story of Constable Thomas Shorunke, 1940–1946

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In 1940, Nigeria was just one of the four British West African dependencies. Her legal system was still at its infancy and its criminal justice system had just begun to unfold under the watchful but dominant eyes of imperial Britain. Still, in that year, up to 1946, an event of great import to the universally acclaimed doctrine of rule of law happened in the case of a police constable, Thomas Shorunke, who, in the face of daunting challenges and awesomeness of His Majesty, George VI's (1936–1952) prosecutorial powers, clung to the doctrine to secure justice for himself and to chart a significant path for one of Nigeria's most profound cases involving questions of the due process of law and substantial justice. In this paper, we show not just the history of the contest between a police officer and the King but, in addition, discuss an aspect of the history of judge-made laws under Nigeria's criminal justice system and by so doing, document a major exercise in courage and tenacity demonstrated by a junior police officer under colonial rule.

[rule of law; due process; Nigeria Police; justice; Privy Council; Supreme Court Ordinance]

Introduction

By 1940, Nigeria was no longer a stranger to the British Legal system. She had been carved into a British Protectorate in the second half of the 19th century after a series of development which began with the annexation of Lagos in 1861 and climaxed in the total overrun of the whole

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of the country by British forces in 1903.¹ The country was however subdued differently as two separate Protectorates of the North and the South and a Colony in Lagos.² In 1914 however, both the Northern and Southern Protectorates and the Colony of Lagos were amalgamated and consolidated into one State under British hegemony with the British legal system imposed thereupon subject to minor exemptions in the areas of private customary law.³

Hence, by 1940, when the case of stealing and breaking which are the issues of this study came up at Ibadan, the English legal system especially those governing criminal matters were already 77 years old in Nigeria having been introduced and legitimised first in Lagos in 1863 under the Supreme Court Ordinance of 1863 and subsequently consolidated in the Protectorate Court Ordinance of 1933.⁴ In fact, by the start of World War I, a very crucial legislation called the *Supreme Court Ordinance* of 1914 had been promulgated to ensure that Nigeria was brought in a way unmistakable to anyone into the sphere of the Common Law applicable in England inclusive of the Statutes of General Application which were in force in England as at 1900. The law had provided: Subject to the terms or any other Ordinance, the Common law, the Doctrines of Equity and Statutes of General Application which were in force in England on January 1, 1909, shall be in force within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.⁵

This law was further reinforced in all material particular by the Protectorate Ordinance of 1933 which contained the same provision in its section 12, as those of section 14 of the Supreme Court Ordinance cited above. Under this kind of legal system, any law in Nigeria proving inadequate for matters of criminal and civil litigations was supplemented by those of England regulating similar issues.

Since the 1900s therefore, issues of criminal justice and litigation had fallen in Nigeria within the purview of English legal system or

¹ S. ABUBAKAR, "The Norther Provinces Under Colonial Rule", in: O. IKIME (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan 1980, pp. 447–481.

² T. TAMUNO, "British Colonial Administration in Nigeria", in: O. IKIME (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan 1980, pp. 393–409.

³ See T. O. ELIAS, *Nigeria: The Development of its Laws and Constitution*, London 1967, p. 24; A. O. OBILADE, *The Nigerian Legal System*, Ibadan 1979, p. 22.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 30; see also Nigeria Supreme Court Ordinance (No. 11) of 1863, Nigeria, Protectorate Court Ordinance (No. 45), 1933.

⁵ Supreme Court Ordinance, 1914: section 14.

British inspired legal codes. Specifically, the Criminal Code which was enacted in 1916 as a principal law for the regulation of criminal matters was of British origin.⁶ This was the applicable law in Nigeria as the time that Constable Thomas Shorunke was accused of stealing and breaking into a shop with a view to committing felony therein. The Criminal Code's counterpart law for the enforcement of the substantive law itself, the Criminal Procedure Ordinance was however not enacted until 1923 and consolidated in the Criminal Procedure act of 1 June, 1945. However recourse was had to relevant English laws and the Supreme Court Ordinance of 1914 or the Protectorate Court Ordinance of 1933 on the correct processes and procedures to follow in criminal litigations whenever there was need for it. The Criminal Code had outlawed the act of stealing when it provided thus: Any person who steals anything capable of being stolen is guilty of a felony, and is liable, if no other punishment is provided, to imprisonment for three years.⁷

Again, the same law had provided on unlawful breaking thus: Any person who breaks and enters a school house, or a building which is adjacent to a dwelling house and occupied with but is not part of it, and commits a felony therein; or having committed a felony in a school house, shop or warehouse, store office or counting house, or in any such other building as last mentioned, breaks out of the building, is guilty of a felony, and is liable for imprisonment for fourteen years.⁸

The severity of the punishment attached to the above offences leaves no one in doubt as to the seriousness of the legal battle which confronted Constable Thomas Shorunke particularly as a police officer who was expected to be at least, fairly above board in the display of the best attitude towards the law and orderly or honest conduct in social affairs. He was committed to trial first at the High court, Ibadan, in February, 1940, and was found guilty and subsequently sentenced to seven years imprisonment. He appealed to the West African Court of Appeal in April, 1940, which then sat in Sierra Leone and lost. Again, in 1944 via the Appeal No. 88 of that year, he filed an appeal against his conviction to the highest possible court in the British Commonwealth, the Privy Council, and the court found for him on the grounds

⁶ See Nigeria, Criminal Code (CAP 77), Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990.

⁷ Nigeria, Criminal Code, 1916: section 390.

⁸ Nigeria, Criminal Code, 1916: section 413(1) and (2).

that the processes and procedures leading to his conviction at the trial court were incurably flawed. That judgment established for Nigeria and, the indeed, the British Commonwealth, a judicial precedent of an especially momentous proportion on the trajectory of the due process of law in criminal litigation.

Constable Shorunke's gallant fight for the due process has become a reference point in Nigeria's judicial discourse today and is therefore deserving of a proper historical reconstruction to serve as a lesson to judicial and police officers in Nigeria. hence it is important to interrogate the matter by posing the pertinent questions: (i) what really could be said to be the propelling force for a very junior police officer of Shorunke's stature to take on the State (or the King) as at that time from the very foundations of legal intermediation in Nigeria to the highest court in England in proving his innocence?; (ii) was Shorunke's acquittal based only on legal technicality rather than on the equally important consideration of the justice of the matter?; (iii) since he had served his full sentence at the time the Privy Council found for him and quashed his conviction what necessary legal remedy was available to him to seek compensation for wrongful conviction and did he pursue it? It is to these and some other pertinent issues that this paper addresses itself.

History of the Case

In January 1940, a police Constable, together with three other policemen and three civilians, all adult males, were arrested and accused of committing the crime of breaking into a shop at Ogbomoso, entering into it without lawful authority and stealing therefrom, the sum of £300 being property of another with a view to permanently depriving its owner of the said sum. The location of the alleged crime, Ogbomoso, was a local community in the western part of Nigeria, which was about 200 kilometres north of the capital of that part, Ibadan. Ogbomoso in 1940 was by any descriptions a small town with a population of between 10,000–14,000 inhabitants. Criminal activities over there was not only significantly less than what was obtainable in a relatively more populated neighbouring areas as Oyo, Ilorin or even Osogbo, which were provincial headquarters of the Osun District in the Western part of Nigeria but the culture of honesty and hard work,

protection of family honour by ensuring good behaviour and reputation were hallowed values of the village.

Thomas Shorunke, the subject of our discourse was a Police Constable; a native of Abeokuta, a Yoruba town noted for its very accommodating pro-British stance. Although the independence of Abeokuta had been acknowledged and respected by the British colonial authorities, the town was nonetheless a sort of a British inspired modern African community. Hence, schools which taught European-style education, churches especially those patterned after those of England and Exeter as well as British trained artisans and “westernised” elite were integral features of Abeokuta as an emerging African modern city in the first part of the 20th century.⁹

The crimes for which Thomas Shorunke was accused were, by the rules of engagement of the Nigeria Police in the 1940s and the public office which he occupied as a law officer, grave.¹⁰ The crime of stealing was punishable under the then extant Criminal Code by imprisonment for a period not less than 3 years.¹¹ The second offence for which he was charged, illegal breaking into a property and committing felony thereon, to wit stealing, was also serious being an indictable offence which carried the sentence, on conviction, of 14 years imprisonment.¹² It is important to note that the alleged crimes were committed just a year after the beginning of the Second World War, a time in which public servants in Nigeria were required to face and bear the brunt of the frugality of British war economy during which salaries were paid irregularly to all categories of public servants in Nigeria. However, Thomas Shorunke was an adult with full capacity to apprehend the import and consequences of his alleged action and no evidence was led at his trial to show that he was not in full control of his mental faculty.

The chronology of the case was like this: on 1 February, 1940, Shorunke and the other co-accused were formally charged at the High

⁹ L. DAVIES, “The Rise and Fall of Egba Independence: A Review”, in: *Ife Journal of History*, 6, 1, 2013, pp. 1–24.

¹⁰ Thomas Shorunke v. The King (1946) Appeal Cases, in: *The Law Reports of the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting for England and Wales*, published by Butterworth & Co. 1974, pp. 316–327.

¹¹ Nigeria, Criminal Code 1916: section 390.

¹² Nigeria, Criminal Code 1916: section 413.

Court which sat in Ibadan to hear his case. This was after an initial investigation of the charges at the District Magistrate Court which sat in the same town, Ibadan. Evidence was given in the case by the Prosecution and Shorunke together with six other accused persons reserved his defence. Shorunke pleaded not guilty after which he told the court he would be represented by a counsel, by the name Mr. Wells Palmer, who was not in court on that day. Hence, the trial judge gave instructions that the said Mr Palmer be contacted by telegram to intimate him of what the accused said and of the need for him to appear in court to defend his supposed client. However, the judge also gave instructions to the Police to ensure that the accused got every facility he needed to get in touch with his counsel but that if this failed he should be assisted to secure one locally. Thereafter, he adjourned the matter to the following day.

It turned out that Mr. Palmer denied being the legal representative of the accused and he informed the court he would not be appearing. So, the trial proceeded on the 2nd of February against all the accused persons. However during the sitting on 2nd February, Thomas Shorunke handed over to the court a list of witnesses and documents that he wanted to call or tender in his own defence. But he did not give the reasons why he wanted the witnesses called or inkling into the testimony he would want them give in his favour. The learned judge (John Asst. J), at the end of the day's sitting warned Shorunke that he must give an idea of the testimony he would have the witnesses give in his defence and the contents of the documents contained in his list submitted to the court so that the court could determine whether the testimonies were relevant or not. The learned judge also told Shorunke that if the testimonies were relevant he would issue free subpoenas but not otherwise.

The following day, 3rd February, the Solicitor-General who appeared for the prosecution informed the court that he had tried to assist Shorunke arrange his witnesses and documents but that he refused him cooperation; he pleaded that the court relieved him of further responsibility to do this any further. At that point the learned judge rose to reconsider his earlier directive to the Police to give every necessary assistance to Shorunke by asking to see him in his chambers in the interest of justice and fair hearing so as to discover what witnesses he would have called and the documents he would require.

But in the course of proceedings on the same day and while Shorunke was cross-examining one of the prosecution witnesses, the Solicitor-General objected to one of the questions he put to one of the witnesses on the grounds that it was irrelevant and the objection was upheld by the court. Thereafter, Shorunke informed the court that he would no longer ask any further questions or tender any documents until he got a lawyer to defend him. He insisted that a lawyer was being sent to defend him. In the course of further proceedings in the matter he refused to say a word but remained mute throughout. However at the close of the day's sittings the learned judge asked to see Shorunke in his private office to again interview him as to the content of the documents he would like to tender and the gist of the testimony that his witnesses would be presenting in his defence and the reasons for presenting the documents he wished to present.

The learned judge was probably not convinced that the witnesses could give any material evidence especially that many of them were being called from Ondo, another town in south-western Nigeria far removed by more than 200 kilometres from the scene of the alleged crime. Still, Shorunke insisted he was not going to give the reasons why he wanted to call the witnesses or tender the documents he had proposed to tender and, at any rate, he said he would not be presenting any new list of witnesses and documents and that the one he had earlier presented to court on the 2nd of February would suffice. At that point the learned judge told Shorunke that he would no longer get any further assistance in his case and that if he needed to call any witnesses he would have to make his own private arrangement thenceforth.

On the 5th of February when the case continued, Shorunke objected to the learned judge sitting on the matter any further especially on the grounds of the interaction he had had with the judge some two days earlier. But the learned judge disregarded this protestation on the rationale that it was an attempt either to intimidate the court or delay the course of justice in the matter. Note that even as at that time, the accused had not yet had the opportunity of being defended by a lawyer. On the 13th of February, the court found Shorunke and all the other accused except one guilty of the charges preferred against them and sentenced them including Shorunke to 7 years imprisonment with hard labour.

After his conviction Shorunke obtained the services of a lawyer and he filed an appeal against the judgement of the lower court at the West African Court of Appeal (WACA) before their Lordships: Kingdon C. J (Nigeria), Petrides C. J (Gold Coast) and Paul C. J (Sierra Leone). He prayed the Court to set aside the judgement of the lower court on the grounds that his right to fair hearing had been imperilled by the refusal of that court to issue subpoenas denying him opportunity of defending himself. He claimed that his defence was an *alibi*. He therefore applied to the court to call him and his witnesses to give evidence. The court adjudicated on the matter in just about two months and dismissed on the 27th day of April, 1940, the application as lacking in merit. Accordingly, it affirmed the conviction of the accused by the lower.

Not done with the push for the justice of his case, Shorunke appealed to the Privy Council in London to avail him the opportunity of British Common Law rights on the issuance of subpoenas. The appeal came in 1944 by leave of WACA and their Lordships: Lord Porter (who later delivered the judgement in the case) together with Lord Du Parc and Sir John Beaumont presided over the matter. Mr. Elliot Gorst appeared for the appellant and Sir Patrick Hastings and F. Gahan for the Crown. The stage was thus set for a titanic legal battle in England which was destined to set a monumental precedent in the British Commonwealth and indeed, Nigeria's criminal jurisprudence on the due process of law. On Thursday, April 11, 1946, two years after the appeal was filed, Shorunke got the judgement he had so passionately sought after since his first committal for trial in Ibadan in February 1940. Lord Porter, on behalf of his other brother justices who agreed to his lead judgement wasted no time in upholding the rule of law and the justice in Shorunke's contention when he said with finality:

Having regard to the fact that in their Lordships' opinion, process ought to have issued at the request of the appellant without the imposition of the condition that he should disclose his reason for wishing to call the various witnesses set out in his list, they are unable to say that a grave miscarriage of justice has not occurred. They will accordingly humbly advise His Majesty that the appeal be allowed.¹³

¹³ The Law Reports (England) (1946) Appeal Cases, p. 327. The Incorporated council for Law Reporting for England and Wales 1946.

Issues of Law, the Rule of Law and the Due Process

For Thomas Shorunke, the issues of law in his contention were these: (i) denial of the right to fair hearing by the court as a result of its refusal to issue subpoena for the summoning of his witnesses; (ii) breach of the rule of the due process of procedural law under the common law rule for the summoning of witnesses by which the person asking for it needed not give reasons for requiring that the witnesses be summoned and; (iii) breach of the essential principles of justice by the court in convicting him only on the testimony of the prosecution witnesses. These were the three grounds of appeal in Thomas Shorunke's petition to the Privy Council which raised the fundamental and only question: did the learned judge act judicially and judiciously by refusing to issue subpoenas summoning the appellant's witnesses on the grounds that he did not give reasons why the witnesses should be summoned or the gist of the testimony they would give in his case during trial? Put differently ought the judge to have issued subpoenas without imposing conditions?

Thomas Shorunke contended that the learned judge should not have imposed any conditions on him before issuing subpoenas and that by demanding that he gave the gist of the testimony that the witnesses would likely give in his behalf so that he could judge whether they were relevant or not amounted to a denial of justice and the due process of the law. Shorunke's argument was that after the initial investigation of the matter at the Magistrate court in Ibadan, and his committal to trial at the High Court, the learned judge should have been led to accept that he was covered by the common law right for accused persons whereby subpoenas issued as of right without conditions and not as he had done, apply the Nigerian law – Criminal Procedure Ordinance which the judge claimed covered the field and prescribed that the accused person gave the gist of the testimony and the content of documents contained in the list of witnesses presented to court before subpoenas could be issued. Shorunke's position was that by virtue of the Supreme Court Ordinance of 1914, the criminal justice system in Nigeria had to follow the provisions of the common law rule at least, in so far as the issue of subpoenas was concerned.¹⁴ The relevant section of the law had provided, *inter alia*: "the Common

¹⁴ See CAP 3, Laws of Nigeria, 1923.

law, the Doctrines of Equity and Statutes of General Application which were in force in England on January 1, 1909, shall be in force within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Nigeria".¹⁵ It was therefore his opinion and contention before the Privy Council that even if the judge was to be in doubt as to the adequacy of the Nigerian legislation on the issue of subpoenas he could have made resort to the Common law principle by virtue of the above cited portion of the Supreme Court Ordinance and that by failing to do so, his conviction was unjust, at variance with the due process of law, malicious, and should be so declared by the Privy Council.

The prosecution countered this argument brilliantly by asserting that the situation and conditions of criminal proceedings applicable under the English Common Law system which was prayed for by Shorunke were different from what obtained under the Nigerian system. It averred that whereas under the English system wherein the common law developed, criminal laws had evolved from several traditions and judges-made laws over many centuries, many of which were not originally contained in statutes but under the Nigerian criminal justice system, subpoenas was governed not by judges-made laws but by codified statutes. It further averred that the relevant statutes for the issuing of *subpoena ad testificandum* was the Criminal Procedure Ordinance especially sections 66 and 67 of the law and that these sections of the law had stipulated that the accused person must fulfil certain conditions before a subpoena could be issued to summon his witnesses.¹⁶ For instance and as pointed out by the prosecution section 66 of the law had provided: Immediately after the accused shall so have had opportunity of making his answer to the charge, the court shall ask him whether he desires to call witnesses, and the deposition of such witnesses as the accused shall call and who shall appear on his behalf shall then be taken in the like manner as in the case of the witnesses for the prosecution.¹⁷

Furthermore, section 67 of the same Ordinance provided: If the accused person states he has witnesses to call but that they are not present in the court "and the court is satisfied that the absence of the witnesses is not due to any fault or neglect of the accused, and that there is a likelihood

¹⁵ Nigeria, Supreme Court Ordinance 1914: section 14.

¹⁶ Nigeria, Criminal Procedure Ordinance 1914: CAP C. 20 Laws of Nigeria, 1923.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, section 66.

that they could give material evidence on his behalf”, the court may adjourn the investigation and issue process or take other steps to compel the attendance of such witnesses.¹⁸

Thus, to the prosecution, the judge was entitled and bound to do what he did by simply applying the rules contained in the above provisions of the law which required that certain conditions be fulfilled by the accused, namely: (a) that it was not owing to the defendant (accused) that the witnesses desired to be called were not present in court; and (b) that if the witnesses were called they would be able to give material evidence. In the Shorunke’s matter, the prosecution concluded that the judge had to determine whether the application for subpoenas was not been made *malafide* and that the only way the learned judge could be satisfied that this was not the case was by the accused person answering the simple question as to the purpose/reason for which he wanted to call those witnesses or whether it was a case of attempting to delay the course of trial or intimidate the court. And, that even section 62 of the Supreme Court Ordinance which was also repeated in *pari material* in section 12 of the then extant Protectorate Court Ordinance of 1933 had ordained that certain conditions subject to some exceptions be levied before subpoena can be issued.¹⁹ The law provided: In any case or matter and at any stage thereof, the court either of its own motion or on the application of any party summon any person within the jurisdiction to attend to give evidence or to produce any document within his possession and *may examine* such person as witness and require him to produce any document in his possession or power, *subject to just exceptions*.²⁰

However, the Privy Council considered the position of the prosecution as set out above as mistaken. The law referred to, sections 66 and 67 of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance of 1914 applied not to the stage of trial of the accused person but to the “Preliminary Investigation” stage, not to “Summary Trial” as shown in Part II of the same law. Hence, that part (i. e. part II) which required conditions before subpoenas could be issued did not cover the whole field of criminal trial. Hence, the learned judge should have made recourse to the Supreme

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, section 67.

¹⁹ Nigeria, Protectorate Court Ordinance of 1933 (PCO 1933): section 12; Supreme Court Ordinance, 1914: section 62.

²⁰ Nigeria, Supreme Court Ordinance, 1914: section 62.

Court Ordinance of 1914 which would have availed him the opportunity of applying the common law rule on the issuance of subpoenas; his failure to do this in the opinion of the Privy Council irreparably injured the due process of the law in that matter.

Again, it was the opinion of the Privy Council that although section 62 of the Supreme Court Ordinance cited above had provided that “the Court may” examine a person and require him to produce evidence, the word “may” there should not be interpreted to mean that the right of the accused person to secure a subpoena was not an imperative of the law or that it was only subject to the discretion of the court; in fact, based on the strict requirement of fair hearing of the due process of the law it was actually mandatory. That section, according to the Council, only gave an additional powers to the Court to issue process at any stage either *suo motu* (by court’s own decision) or at the request of any party to a dispute.

This reading of the Nigerian Ordinance had its backing in the persuasive laws of the State of Madras – section 149 of Act VIII (1859) and section 159 of Act XIV (1882) and in the case, *Veerabadran Chetty v. Nataraja Desikar* in which the court held that an accused was entitled to obtain summons for the attendance of witnesses on application before the day fixed for judgement and that the judge could not under the sections referred to above refuse the application. In the case of *Veerabadran Chetty* the court had held that: “*It is not for him (i. e. the Judge) to assume or infer that such witness is not likely to know anything in the matter in dispute, or to be of any use to the party applying. That is a matter for the applicant himself to consider.*”²¹

In other words, the decision by the trial court to demand reasons why Shorunke wanted to call the witnesses he had applied to be subpoenaed was not only wrong, the judge also erred in law by inferring that those witnesses (even if they were to be summoned from Ondo or elsewhere that was not geographically contiguous to the place of the alleged crime (Ogbomoso) as the judge remarked in his judgment), could not give any material evidence that could substantiate the defence of the accused. The Council held that the learned judge ought to have issued the subpoena requested without such conditions. This

²¹ See The Law Reports (TLR) (England) (1946) Appeal Cases, 318; also, *Veerabadran Chetty v. Nataraja Desikar* (1904) T.L.R. 28, M., 28, 36.

position was further buttressed by the decision of court in an earlier case of *Muhammad Nawaz v. King Emperor* in which the court held *inter alia* that one of the grounds upon which an appellant might validly apply for a review of his case was if the accused “*was not allowed to call relevant witnesses*”.²² Hence in upholding Shorunke’s contention that the due process of the law had not been followed in his trial and that as a result he was denied fair trial and made to suffer unduly, the Privy Council said: The right of an accused person who is in custody to call witnesses and to the production of documents is vested in any prisoner and he should only be deprived of it by circumstances which render its reasonable enforcement impossible. It was the duty of the trial court both under Or. V. r. 1, of the Protectorate court Ordinance, 1933, and also as a matter of essential justice to issue the summons to witnesses to give evidence and to produce documents which the appellant requested, and the court had no discretion in the circumstances to refuse the application. It was not for the court to assume or infer that the witnesses asked for did not know anything material, and the only ground on which a summons to any such witness could have been lawfully refused was because it was evident that the witness was not being summoned *bona fide* and that the summons would therefore be an abuse of the process of the court. The appellant was unconditionally entitled to call such witnesses as he reasonable considered would help him in his defence, and refusal of witnesses’ summons made it impossible for him to put forward his defence to the charge made against him after the refusal to issue the subpoena, the conviction was unlawful and ought to be quashed. The refusal of the court of Appeal to admit before them the evidence which the appellant desired, or otherwise to cause such evidence to be considered amounted in the circumstances to a denial of justice.²³

No better decision as shown in the words of the court above, for the sake of justice and the due process of law could be made. The Privy Council recognised the need for justice and the due process of the law in the Shorunke’s case and made for Nigeria, a *locus classicus* in the annals of the country’s criminal justice system which has remained till

²² *Ibidem*; also, *Muhammad Nawaz v. King Emperor* (1941) L.R. 68, i.A. 126, 128.

²³ The Law Reports (England) (1946) Appeal Cases, 319.

today a reference point in how to conduct fair hearing and grant to the accused ample opportunity to defend himself.

Conclusions

The issue of justice, both legal and natural, transcends the mere adherence to the dictates of substantive law. Observance of the procedural law, which governs the process by which substantive laws are enforced, is very critical to reaching a just decision on any matter in litigation. Their Lordships have shown that in the case of Thomas Shorunke neglecting to follow the due process of law in reaching a decision can be fatal to the decision itself and would, if need be, be set aside by a higher court. In other words, while the truth of a matter is the object sought after by substantive laws, the justice of the process is the concern of procedural laws which was well proved in the dictates of the Supreme Court Ordinance of 1914. Note that the Privy Council did not rule that Thomas Shorunke did not break into and steal from a shop in Ogbomoso in 1940, it might well have been that after the due process of trying him had been followed that he might have been validly convicted on those charges, but that the process begun in Ibadan at the High Court to prove his guilt failed the litmus test of fair hearing, the due process of the law and the requirements of legal justice because the accused was denied the opportunity of calling his witnesses by the failure of the learned judge to issue subpoenas without imposing any conditions on the accused. Hence, what Shorunke got was legal justice on the manner he was convicted and not whether he broke into and committed felony in a shop or not. The lesson of history here is that a decision might be legally "correct" and still not be legally "just". And, since the purpose of the adjudicatory system in the commonwealth as at that time was to reach a "just" decision and not necessarily a "correct" decision, it can be validly claimed that the position taken and the decision reached by the Privy Council in 1946 on the Shorunke's case accorded well with the principles of legal justice and the due process of the law in every material particular.

Hungarian Dissent in Romania during the Ceaușescu Era

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The article aims to show a little-known chapter in the history of the Romanian communism, the anti-regime activities of dissidents from the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. It argues that the growing repressions of the Romanian authorities against ethnic Hungarians caused the protest activities of their representatives not only within the RCP structures, but also from the intellectual environment. The particular dissidents from the Hungarian community performed their opposition attitude in the beginning mainly at the domestic level. After they did not meet any constructive reaction from the Romanian state, they tried to draw attention on their situation abroad. However, none of these activities met any real success, especially because it was almost impossible to develop any form of organized and coordinated dissent in such a harsh political environment, like the one existing in Ceaușescu's Romania.

[Romania; Hungarian minority; Transylvania; repressions; dissent; opposition]

Situation of the Hungarian Minority in Romania until 1971

The critical attitude towards the communist regime in Romania from the side of members of the national minorities, especially during the 1970s and 1980s, went hand in hand with the deteriorating conditions of the Romanian population in general and, particularly, also with the striking violation of minority rights by the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu. In comparison with other minorities, ethnic Hungarians were the most active minority group regarding the manifestations against the communist regime.

During the troubled period after the World War II, the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party (henceforth RCP) came to an agreement with the Hungarian Popular Union (*Uniunea Populară Maghiară*

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– UPM), an organization representing the Hungarian minority with an open Marxist-Leninist orientation.¹ The main point of the agreement was that the UPM would support installation of the communist regime in Romania, whereas the RCP, in return for this, would recognize not only the individual, but also collective rights of the Hungarian minority.² Therefore, the UPM acted as a satellite formation of the RCP, whose main aim was to make the communist ideas attractive among members of the Hungarian minority. The Union existed until 1953, when it was dissolved by the state power.³

Meanwhile, the Hungarian Autonomous Region (*Regiunea Autonomă Maghiară* – RAM) was created in 1952, on the basis of the recommendation of the Soviet Union.⁴ The establishment of the RAM, with its capital in the Transylvanian city Târgu Mureș, was considered as a decisive step towards the final solution of the minority issue in Romania. The existence of RAM was officially incorporated into the new Constitution of the People's Republic of Romania, adopted in September 1952.⁵ The RAM was administrated by a Popular Council, which was, anyway, merely a façade. In practice, the region did not enjoy self-government of any kind and the only distinguishing features of

¹ UPM was established in October 1944 by transformation of the interwar leftist organization of ethnic Hungarians, so called Hungarian Workers Union (*Magyar Dolgozók Szövetsége* – MADOSZ). S. BOTTONI, *Transilvania roșie. Comunismul român și problema națională 1944–1956*. Cluj-Napoca 2010, pp. 68–73.

² *Comisia prezidențială pentru analiza dictaturii comuniste din România. Raport final*, București 2006, p. 525.

³ During the years 1952–1953, when the RCP seized an absolute power in Romania, it ordered a dissolution of all former satellite parties and groups, including the UPM. The leadership of ethnic Hungarians went on the way to integrate the entire minority into the RCP structures, based on the class criteria. *Ibidem*, p. 527.

⁴ In a memorandum sent to the Romanian leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej on September 7, 1952, Soviet advisors, who were responsible for the administrative problems, recommended a creation of the Hungarian Autonomous Region in Transylvania. It was established by uniting the districts (*raioanele*) Mureș, Sfântu Gheorghe, Toplița, Ciuc, Gheorgheni, Odorhei, Târgu Secuiesc, Reghin and Sângeorgiu de Pădure. However, other regions with a significant Hungarian population, like Cluj, were not incorporated into the newly established RAM. S. BOTTONI, “Înființarea regiunii autonome maghiare în anul 1952”, in: Á. OLTÍ – A. GIDÓ (eds.), *Minoritatea maghiară în perioadă comunistă*, Cluj-Napoca 2011, pp. 265–266.

⁵ *Constituția Republicii Populare Române 1952*, articole 18–20. Online see <http://legislatie.resurse-pentru-democratie.org/constitutie/constitutia-republicii-populare-romane-1952.php> [2016–11–29].

its existence were that most of its representatives were ethnic Hungarians at the official posts, that the Hungarian language could be used in the state institutions and in the court and that bilingual Hungarian and Romanian signs were put up on public buildings.⁶ However, the first period of existence of the RAM was characterized by a high degree of cultural autonomy of the Hungarian minority, where the cultivation of Hungarian cultural and language traditions was not only tolerated, but even officially promoted by the Romanian authorities through granting financial support to the minority education and cultural institutions.⁷

The Hungarian uprising in 1956 and its reflection among the ethnic Hungarians in Romania (especially the reception of the Hungarian events at the Transylvanian universities, such as Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara or Târgu Mureș) influenced negatively the policy of the Romanian state towards the minority. It had an impact especially on the education system, from the elementary schools to the universities, where the so-far-existing educational system in Hungarian was replaced by a bilingual one.⁸ This policy can be documented on particular measures, especially merging Hungarian schools with the Romanian ones, or the establishment of sections with instruction in Romanian language at the Hungarian schools. On these bases, no more instruction in Hungarian language has been performed at the Agronomical Institute in Cluj-Napoca since 1955.⁹

The most important step towards a radical restriction of the Hungarian education was undertaken in June 1959 in Cluj-Napoca, where the previous Vincențiu Babeș University with the instruction in Romanian was merged with the Hungarian János Bolyai University. Since then, the unified Babeș-Bolyai University has been existing. This event was preceded by a strong campaign in favor of unification, organized by the Ministry of Education, which began in early 1959. An opposition of part of the academic staff and of the leadership from the Hun-

⁶ R. KING, *Minorities under Communism. Nationalities as a Source of Tension among Balkan Communist States*, Cambridge 1973, p. 152.

⁷ BOTTONI, *Transilvania roșie*, pp. 179–189.

⁸ Hungarian language education was also seriously affected by dissolution and nationalization of religious schools in 1948, immediately after the communist régime definitely seized the power. A. CĂTĂNUȘ, *Vocația libertății. Forme de disidență în România anilor 1970–1980*, București 2014, p. 215.

⁹ *Comisia prezidențială...*, p. 533.

garian university did not bring any important results. Two members of the pedagogical community, Professor László Szabédi and Vice-Rector Zoltán Csendes, even committed suicide after a series of coercive measures introduced by the police organs against them.¹⁰

In 1960 a re-organization of the existing Hungarian Autonomous Region was carried out, in order to further weaken its “autonomy”. Two districts, Sfântu Gheorghe and Târgu Secuiesc, were extracted from the HAR and became part of the Braşov Region, which was predominantly Romanian from the ethnical point of view. The percentage of ethnic Hungarians within the region decreased from the original 77 % onto mere 61 % and from this moment the modified territory was called Mureş – Hungarian Autonomous Region (*Regiunea Mureş – Autonomă Maghiară*).¹¹

After his ascension to power, Nicolae Ceauşescu proceeded to the administrative reform in Romania in 1968. The up-to-now valid administrative division on regions (*raioane*), which was introduced in 1952 in accordance with the Soviet model, was dissolved and the original country’s division to counties (*judete*), used also during the inter-war period, was re-established. At the same time the Mureş – Hungarian Autonomous Region was dissolved in 1968 as well. This step necessarily met negative reactions within the Hungarian minority. In order to calm the situation, the Ceauşescu regime undertook several measures to keep the representation of Hungarians in the state administration, as well as maintaining the cultural autonomy of the minority.¹²

The Council of Workers of Hungarian Nationality (CWHN) was created in November 1968 with two main purposes: in order to integrate and mobilize the Hungarian minority in accordance with the official policy of state and the RCP, and for the consultative role when solving particular problems of ethnic Hungarians – right to use mother tongue on the local administration level, Hungarian language instruc-

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ BOTTONI, *Transilvania roşie*, pp. 275–289.

¹² Z. C. NOVÁK, “The Year of the ‘Liberalization’. The Impact of 1968 on the Hungarian Policy of the Romanian Communist Party”, in: A. G. HUNYADI (ed.), *State and Minority in Transylvania, 1918–1989. Studies on the History of the Hungarian Community*, New York 2012, pp. 612–613.

tion, publishing of books in Hungarian language, or representation of Hungarians in the state organs).¹³

Another evidence of the interest manifested by Romanian authorities in preserving the Hungarian cultural traditions was the creation of several Hungarian-language media. The *Kriterion* Publishing House, which publishes till nowadays books predominantly in the minority languages (most frequently in Hungarian), was founded in the end of 1969 in Bucharest under the leadership of writer Géza Domokos.¹⁴ The printing of the Hungarian weekly cultural revue *A Hét* (*The Week*) was launched in 1970. Its first editor-in-chief became Zsolt Gálfalvi, an important literary critic and essayist from the Hungarian minority. The Hungarian-language programs of Romanian television started to be broadcasted as well.¹⁵

However, together with the change of the general character of the Ceaușescu regime and introducing the so-called “small cultural revolution” in 1971 according to the Chinese pattern, the CWHN quickly lost its consultative role and became a mere propagandistic instrument and ideological mouthpiece of the RCP. The minority policy of the Romanian state changed step by step towards the planned assimilation of the “co-inhabiting nationalities”.¹⁶ This fact had a consequence in emerging different forms of dissent among the Hungarian population.

While dissidents from among the Hungarians in Romania advocated minority rights, the Romanian communist regime considered them as traitors manipulated from Budapest. The claims of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania represented a reaction to Ceaușescu’s policy of assimilation, which affected especially this community. However, Ceaușescu never acknowledged openly that he aimed at build-

¹³ F. ŠISLER, “On the Way to Liberalization: Policy of the Ceaușescu’s Regime towards the Hungarian Minority in Romania 1965–1968”, in: *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations*, 19, 2, 2015, pp. 139–141.

¹⁴ E. ILLYÉS, *National Minorities in Romania*, New York 1982, p. 255.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 244.

¹⁶ In Romanian: *naționalități conlocuitoare*. This notion indicated the subordination of national minorities to the Romanian founding nation. It was used almost during the entire period of the existence of the communist régime in Romania, in order to make the planned assimilation of national minorities in Romania easier. The term “co-inhabiting nationalities” appeared for the first time already in 1945, but officially it started to be used in documents issued by the RCP organs since 1948. B. KOVRIG, “The Magyars in Rumania: Problems of a ‘Co-inhabiting Nationality’”, in: R. SCHÖNFELD (ed.), *Nationalitätenprobleme in Südosteuropa*, München 1987, p. 213.

ing an ethnically homogenous nation using such measures. On the contrary, he continued to talk about the equality of all internal ethnic groups. This policy was of course perceived as assimilationist among the Hungarian minority, as it hindered its cultural development.¹⁷

The existence of the Hungarian dissident activities against the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu can be divided into two main phases: (1) phase of elaborating and sending memorandums of protest and disobedience to the Romanian authorities, which is characteristic for the period of 1970s; and (2) phase of printing samizdat publications and creation of different discussion circles and groups, typical for the 1980s.¹⁸

Activities of the Particular Hungarian Dissidents in Romania

The resistance against the coercive treatment of the Hungarian national minority in Romania took in the first phase a form of memoranda, reports or letters. These materials were often elaborated by persons who held important positions in the state administration or in the representative organs of national minorities. In general, all these documents openly contested the violation of rights of ethnic Hungarians, especially in the domains of education, language and culture. Moreover, they claimed granting a wider local autonomy to the territories inhabited predominantly by the Hungarian population. Basically, many different ways of protest were used, including appeals to the international organizations like UN or OSCE, in order to persuade them to denounce the repressive and assimilationist policy of Bucharest.¹⁹

Analyzing the documents submitted by dissidents, we may observe that when calling upon respecting minority rights from the side of the Romanian state, the level of the entire minority community is accentuated over the level of single persons. It is also necessary to emphasize the fact that, besides the different forms of dissent coming from the representatives of the Hungarian minority, the support of Kádárist Hungary towards the rights of Hungarian communities liv-

¹⁷ C. PETRESCU, *From Robin Hood to Don Quixote. Resistance and Dissent in Communist Romania*, București 2013, p. 183.

¹⁸ CĂTĂNUȘ, p. 218

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

ing in neighboring states sometimes also played an important role concerning this issue.²⁰

The first attempt to internationalize the problems faced by the Hungarian minority occurred in 1971, before the initiation of Helsinki process. Its author was Károly Király, the ethnic Hungarian, who was placed very well within the communist hierarchy because of his position as alternate member of the Political Executive Committee of the RCP, former chairman of the CWHN and the first secretary of the RCP in Covasna district. Király addressed to the Romanian communist leader a first memorandum, which enraged Ceaușescu, who had hitherto considered Király as one of his power pillars.²¹ This memorandum had absolutely no effect and its only consequence was the marginalization of Károly Király.

Another similar memorandum was composed by Károly Király in 1977. He addressed this document to three members of the supreme RCP leadership – Ilie Verdeț, János Fazekas and János Vincze. In its text he openly admits his dissatisfaction with the regime policy towards the Hungarian minority. He spoke about the purely symbolic role of the CWHN, about the restrictions regarding the access to the Hungarian-language education, replacing Hungarians working on the leading positions by ethnic Romanians, removing bilingual signs on the streets, roads and administrative buildings and the election of

²⁰ PETRESCU, p. 193.

²¹ Considering his close relation with Ceaușescu, Király might have hoped to negotiate this issue easily. However, the general secretary was shocked by his letter. While in institutions, such as army or the Securitate, and in the diplomatic corps no members of ethnic minorities could ever get to the highest positions, the ethnic composition of Romania was always carefully reflected in the party apparatus. Thus, the apparatchiks from non-Romanian ethnic groups, whom the leadership considered trustworthy, had much better chances of promotion within the party hierarchy. Király appeared as a prominent figure after his appointment in 1968 as local first secretary of the RCP in the Covasna district, one of two districts in Romania with an overwhelming Hungarian majority (over 90 %). According to the former high-ranking Securitate general Ion Mihai Pacepa, Ceaușescu was very satisfied with Király, who was a passionate hunter like himself and always managed to organize the hunts in his district in such a way, that the general secretary could return to Bucharest with impressive trophies. Király was therefore appointed as alternate member of the Political Executive Committee at the Tenth Party Congress in 1969, allegedly after Ceaușescu brought down the biggest bear he had ever shot. I. M. PACEPA, *Red Horizons*, Washington 1990, pp. 143–144.

Romanian mayors in the predominantly Hungarian cities of Târgu Mureş and Sovata, who, moreover, did not speak Hungarian at all.²²

Since the direct appeal to Ceauşescu or other members of the RCP leadership did not reach any success, Király decided to change his strategy through advocating the problems of his ethnic community by addressing it to relevant international institutions. In January 1978 he managed to transmit across the border a protest letter describing the discriminatory measures used against the Hungarian minority, which focused especially on disadvantages in education and employment. Although influential western newspaper, such as *The Times* or *The New York Times*, published articles commenting his letter, Király's protest had little long-term impact at the international level. In this time, Ceauşescu was still credited in western countries as a "black sheep" of the Soviet bloc due to his more independent foreign policy, and therefore his repressive and assimilationist domestic policy was silently overlooked. As a consequence of his conduct, Király had to face repressions from the side of regime. In February 1978 he and his family were forcibly moved to Caransebeş. But shortly after several months he was allowed to return back to his hometown Târgu Mureş.²³

Despite his limited success, Király remained a symbol of the Hungarian resistance to Ceauşescu's nationalist policy until the end of the communist regime. Worth mentioning is the private meeting between Király and Mikhail Gorbachev in May 1987, which took place when the Soviet leader visited Romania. After this meeting, the former Hungarian prominent and dissident at that time addressed another open letter to Nicolae Ceauşescu, in which he criticized not only the situation of the Hungarian minority, but also the character of the communist regime itself.²⁴ He accused Romanian leader of being responsible for the catastrophic economic and social situation of the country and he openly declared that Ceauşescu and the circle of his closest collaborators are "a group of careerists led only by their personal ambitions,

²² Arhivele Naţionale ale României (henceforth ANR), fond Anneli Ute Gabanyi, dosar 128. Romanian Situation Report of RFE/RL from July 22, 1980.

²³ D. DELETANT, *Ceauşescu and the Securitate. Coercion and Dissent in Romania 1965–1989*, Armonk 1995, p. 128.

²⁴ ANR, fond Anneli Ute Gabanyi, dosar 151. Gorbachev met with ethnic Hungarian dissident, June 11, 1987.

who completely lack any sense of duties and responsibility".²⁵ Concerning the Hungarian minority, Király appealed to Romanian authorities to immediately stop the forced assimilation. He tried to point on the similarity of defending minority rights of ethnic Hungarians with the manifested interest of the Romanian state in the Romanian-speaking population in Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. Király argued that these two issues needed to be considered in a close connection with one another.²⁶

Another consistent letter of protest was elaborated in 1977 by Lajos Takács, a lawyer, former rector of the János Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca between 1947 and 1952, and vice-chairman of the CWHN. From the perspective of the positions he shared, Lajos Takács wrote in his report about the real representation of Hungarians within the CWHN. He accentuated the fact that because of the structure and the actual role of this organ, the Hungarian members did not enjoy any respect among the population, and because of the RCP leadership they were slowly, but obviously losing confidence of masses.²⁷ The report of Lajos Takács set aside an important space for the education issue, when he pointed out the radical restrictions of the Hungarian-language instruction during the last six years. In order to prove his statements, he attached selected legislative acts regarding minority education, adopted by the Romanian government during several previous years.²⁸ Among the most important relevant documents Takács emphasized the Decree No. 278/1973, which determined, in order to establish a class with the minority language instruction, that it is necessary to get together at least 25 pupils at the elementary school and at least 36 students in case of secondary school. On the contrary, no such minimum number was requested for Romanian children. This decree also presupposed establishment of sections with the Romanian as language of instruction in all localities, where Hungarian schools existed.²⁹

²⁵ Ibidem, dosar 128. Romanian Situation Report of RFE/RL from July 22, 1980.

²⁶ CĂTĂNUȘ, p. 223.

²⁷ ANR, fond Anneli Ute Gabanyi, dosar 129. Translation of the letter of Lajos Takács, entitled "The state of the Hungarian nationality in Romania", May 19, 1978.

²⁸ G. SCHÖPFLIN – H. POULTON, *Romania's Ethnic Hungarians*, London 1990, p. 130.

²⁹ Decretul nr. 278/1973 privind stabilirea normelor unitare de structura pentru instituțiile de învățământ, Monitorul Oficial nr. 67, May 13, 1973, p. 818.

Lajos Takács also wanted to draw attention of Romanian authorities on grievances of Hungarian children and students about the insufficient cultural and professional training, caused by the absence of instructions in mother tongue.³⁰ In the same measure, his report dealt with the issue of higher education in Hungarian language, as well as restrictions over the cultural rights, especially over the very limited number of Hungarian publications.

Worth mentioning is also the letter of 62 intellectuals from Hungary, which was elaborated in May 1978 and subsequently addressed to their Romanian colleagues. In this document, they pointed on the discriminatory measures which were applied on the Hungarian minority in Transylvania.³¹

Western countries started to express their growing interest in the issue of Hungarian minority in Romania only in the late 1970s. During this time reports of different organizations defending human rights started to be published regularly, assessing inter alia the situation in Romania. Concerning this, the Amnesty International Report from 1977/1978 brought first particular examples of the violation of rights of members of the Hungarian minority.

The first protest against the treatment of the Hungarian minority in Romania, which emerged from outside the RCP structures, was initiated by three Hungarian intellectuals, namely writer and essayist Antal Károly Tóth, philosopher and journalist Attila Ara-Kovács and poet Géza Szócs. In December 1981 they launched a first samizdat journal in Romania, a Hungarian-language review *Ellenpontok* (*Counterpoints*). The review has been published in Oradea, a city close to the border with Hungary. The editors elaborated a memorandum that stressed the dismal situation of the Hungarian community in Romania and that was subsequently published in *Ellenpontok*. The authors spoke about the intensive effort of Romanian state to romanianize Transylvania and to suppress local Hungarian culture, particularly in the form of restrictions of the minority education and intentionally organized migration of Romanian population to the localities inhabited predominantly by ethnic Hungarians. Complaining about the fact that Hungarians were treated as citizens of second category, Tóth, Kovács

³⁰ DELETANT, p. 120.

³¹ ANR, fond Anneli Ute Gabanyi, dosar 130, Translation of the Letter of 62 Hungarian intellectuals, June 27, 1978.

and Szócs stated that the Hungarian community was deprived both of their individual and collective rights, which were perceived as inseparable and inalienable. Together with the memorandum, the authors sent a list of proposals how to improve the situation of the Hungarian minority and with the general requirement of granting equal rights to all ethnic groups in Romania.

The dissident group around *Ellenpontok* was the first which used the Helsinki framework to internationalize its program. In February 1982, they sent their memorandum to the meeting of CSCE in Madrid.³² The document epitomized the shift in approaching the problems of the Hungarian community, which the editors already announced in the journal. While previous generations advocated the preservation of the Hungarian cultural identity, but asserted at the same time their loyalty to the Romanian state, the authors of the memorandum considered the Hungarians in Transylvania as an integral part of the Hungarian ethnic corpus.³³ Therefore, the document stressed the importance of collective rights in the protection of identities of the minority groups and in the preservation of their cultural values. Based on this fact, they felt a strong need to develop close relations with Hungary, especially on the institutional and personal level, without any restrictions. They also required a need to establish an institution based on ethnicity, which should be responsible for the Hungarian culture and minority schools, controlling the policy of cadres associated with the minority problems and also protection of the Hungarian historical monuments in Transylvania.³⁴ More precisely, the memorandum asked for cultural autonomy, which should have been guaranteed by the constitution and the relevant legislation. This presupposed the establishment of a separate education system from kindergartens to universities, the development of Hungarian publishing houses in Romania, the liberty of

³² This was the second meeting of CSCE after signing the Final Act of Helsinki. Its negotiations took place in Madrid between November 1980 and September 1983. CĂTĂNUȘ, p. 221.

³³ George Schöpflin observed that this was a real turning point in the attitude of the Hungarian intellectuals in Transylvania, represented in a response to the Romanian intolerance and xenophobia, according to the editors of *Ellenpontok*. G. SCHÖPFLIN, "Transylvania: Hungarians under Romanian Rule", in: S. BORSODY (ed.), *The Hungarians: A Divided Nation*, New Haven 1988, p. 142.

³⁴ ANR, fond Anneli Ute Gabanyi, dosar 153. Memorandum of Hungarian dissidents from Romania sent to plenum of the CSCE meeting in Madrid, April 6, 1982.

the Hungarian media to deal with the real problems of the community and the autonomy for Hungarian churches.³⁵ The authors exceeded the cultural issue, when they demanded the re-establishment of the administrative autonomy for regions inhabited predominantly by the Hungarian population, and also ceasing the intentional migration of Romanian to these areas.³⁶

Based on the program of the editors of *Ellenpontok*, we can draw following conclusions. First, these requests were self-limiting, as most of dissident criticism, which did not deal with the communist system, but with the policies of the communist regimes. Second, these requests were strictly limited to particular problems characteristic to the Hungarian minority and failed to mention problems of more general concern. Because of the aforementioned facts, the immediate influence of these documents was limited, as it was obstructed by the representatives of Romanian at the Madrid conference and ignored by the Hungarian representatives at the same time. Maybe the greatest obstacles encountered by dissident groups, which attempted to address the Helsinki framework of international collaboration, were caused by the concept of this framework. It envisaged an inter-state dialogue, which took into consideration civil society groups only for the evaluation of human rights, but didn't allow them to participate actively in the official debates. Therefore, the rights of the Hungarian communities living abroad could have been regarded either by Hungary or by their homelands. Attempts of dissident groups to internationalize the problem of the Hungarian minorities finally met a very limited success on the international field.³⁷

Because the attempt of the *Ellenpontok* editors to find international support was not very successful, the Romanian authorities started persecution and harassment of Attila Ara-Kovács, Antal Károly Tóth and Géza Szócs. They were finally forced to leave Romania and all of them settled in neighboring Hungary.³⁸ Based on the initiative of Ara-

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ The eighth issue of *Ellenpontok*, published in October 1982, reproduced the memorandum which the editors addressed to the CSCE meeting in Madrid. Worth mentioning is that the re-establishment of the administrative autonomy in the majoritarian Hungarian regions was requested on the basis that a precedent had been created after the communist takeover. SCHÖPFLIN, pp. 148–150.

³⁷ PETRESCU, pp. 187–188.

³⁸ ANR, fond Anneli Ute Gabanyi, dosar 143. Report on treatment of Géza Szócs, Attila

Kovács, the Hungarian Press of Transylvania (*Erdélyi Magyar Hírügynökség*) was established in Budapest in 1983. During the six following years this bulletin supplied the western press agencies with the news and information regarding the situation of Hungarians in Ceaușescu's Romania. However, it did not cover only the problems of the Hungarian community, but reported also about issues which affected all people living in Romania, such as the gradual worsening of the economic and social situation. Moreover, it managed to distinguish between the Romanian communist regime and the Romanian ethnic community. Whereas *Ellenpontok* considered the traditional Romanian nationalism as the cause of Ceaușescu's assimilationist policy and implied that Romanians approved its xenophobic nature, the *Erdélyi Magyar Hírügynökség* avoided such views and left the door open for the inter-ethnic collaboration. This change of perspective might be justified by the fact that the second bulletin was addressed primarily to the western audience. However, it reflected a shift in the tactic of the Hungarian dissidents as well, as they understood that an alliance with Romanian dissidents would have brought them assets.³⁹

In 1988 another samizdat journal, *Kiáltó Szó* (*Desperate Cry*) appeared in Cluj-Napoca. Its editors renounced any claim to pursue a narrow group interest, aiming the journal for "bringing together Romanian and Hungarian goals" and serving as a forum for popularizing each other's artistic values. The target group of this journal were not ethnic Romanians but "majority forces which continue, both covertly and openly, to promote and assert discriminative and chauvinistic minority policy and fuel anti-Hungarian sentiments by misleading and turning otherwise honest Romanians against us".⁴⁰

In November 1984 Géza Szócs, one of the editors of *Ellenpontok*, send a memorandum to the Central Committee of the RCP, where he outlined several recommendations how to improve the situation of minorities in Romania. In this document he came with the require-

Ara-Kovács and Antal Károly Tóth, October 21, 1985.

³⁹ V. SOCOR, *Dissent in Romania: The Diversity of Voices*, Background Report of Radio Free Europe, June 5, 1987.

⁴⁰ Romanians realized more and more that the minorities' quest for freedom and rights should be shared by them. The first issue of *Kiáltó Szó* published an article entitled "Beyond the Ceaușescu era", with a long for such political system, in which individuals and ethnic minorities would "enjoy the fruit of democracy". DELETANT, p. 141.

ment to incorporate the collective rights of minorities into the constitution, together with recognition of Hungarians and Germans from Transylvania as an “ethnic historical groups”. Szőcs also suggested organizing a broad discussion forum with the aim to re-establish the dissolved Hungarian institutions and educational system and to stop the distortions of history.⁴¹

The first memorandum sent by Szőcs remained, however, without any response from the Romanian authorities. Therefore, he elaborated another letter during March 1985 and sent it to the CC of the RCP again. In this document Szőcs pointed on the striking underrepresentation of the ethnic Hungarians in the Great National Assembly,⁴² as well as on the level of local party councils. He also repeated the whole series of problems outlined by other dissidents: situation of the Hungarian-language education, expelling the Hungarians with higher education degree away from the Hungarian regions and replacing them by ethnic Romanians, or total ban of the Hungarian-language programs in the Romanian television in 1984. In the very end of this letter, Szőcs came with the proposal to establish an international organization for minorities under the auspices of the United Nations, which would contribute significantly to the growing prestige of Romania abroad.⁴³

Beside these two letters, Géza Szőcs also drafted a memorandum to the United Nations. Although this document did not meet greater success, it is worth mentioning because it represented the first petition drafted by a Hungarian intellectual from Romania, onto which also a

⁴¹ The second aim was the reaction on publishing of the essay entitled *Cuvânt despre Transilvania* (*Word on Transylvania*) written by novelist Ion Lăncrănjan in 1982. It represented an open offensive against Hungarians, accusing them of all evils and problematic moments of the history of Transylvanian region. ANR, fond Anneli Ute Gabanyi, dosar 146. Translation of the letter of Géza Szőcs to the CC of the RCP, February 14, 1985.

⁴² Name for the Parliament of the Romanian Socialist Republic.

⁴³ According to the proposal of Géza Szőcs, this organization should guarantee the “conceptual representation of minorities”, contributing hereby to the development of minority identities based on the awareness of equal rights. The organization should not adopt particular measures in order to penalize those countries that violated the minority rights, but it should play an important role in formation of public opinion and in accepting a system of laws leading to the diminishing of ethnic tensions within nationalities. ANR, fond Anneli Ute Gabanyi, dosar 151. Analysis of the second letter of Géza Szőcs to the CC of RCP, May 6, 1985.

Romanian dissident added his signature. Not only Szőcs, but also the important Romanian dissident Dorin Tudoran endorsed this memorandum. Unfortunately, this joint protest did not manage to create an alliance between Hungarian and Romanian dissidents and it remained only an individual, isolated event.⁴⁴

The last personality worth mentioning in this brief overview, which acted openly in favor of the Hungarian minority, was László Tőkés, pastor of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Timișoara. He published an article in *Ellenpontok* in 1982, which was dealing with the abuses of human rights in Romania. This led to the harassment against him, performed by the Securitate. In 1985 he initiated a wider campaign of Hungarian writers from Transylvania in order to gather statistics about education facilities with the Hungarian language of instruction. During the following years, Tőkés challenged his believers to oppose the “systemization” planes of the Bucharest government. Because of this activity, he was forcibly transferred into a small backward town in northern Transylvania.⁴⁵

László Tőkés gave an interview to the Hungarian television on July 24, 1989, where he denounced the “systemization” policy, which, according to him, would lead to the total eradication of Hungarian culture and traditions in Transylvania. After that he was interrogated by Securitate again and then released from his function. A group of members of his parish office tried to help him in his difficult situation by supplying him secretly with food and wood for heating. A decision to move Tőkés away from his hometown Timișoara gave rise to a general revolt of both Romanians and Hungarians in the city. The subsequent events finally led to massive protests and demonstrations against the oppressive regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu and eventually caused the fall of the communist dictatorship in Romania in December 1989.⁴⁶

Conclusion

Because of the very nature of the Ceaușescu’s regime, which was utterly harsh and restrictive towards its own population in comparison with other communist regimes in the Soviet bloc (with the sole exception of Albania) and which could reach almost total control over the

⁴⁴ PETRESCU, pp. 188–189.

⁴⁵ DELETANT, p. 145.

⁴⁶ CĂTĂNUȘ, p. 223.

Romanian population by the feared Securitate, the dissident movement lacked suitable conditions to develop any significant coordinated activity. The same thing is also valid for the dissent coming from the Hungarian minority in Transylvania, which was limited to single, isolated activities, without any chance for bigger success. Even the attempts of the Hungarian dissidents to transfer the minority issue to the international level and to draw attention of western countries on the joyless situation of the Hungarian minority in Romania, did not meet any considerable success. The only reaction usually came in a form of some collective denouncement of the repressive policy of the Romanian regime, but that was all. On several concrete examples, this article aimed to illustrate the activity of dissidents from the community of ethnic Hungarians, who tried to defend the interests of this nationality within Romanian state, striving for the gradual assimilation of all minorities and creating the ethnically homogenous Romanian nation. Despite the fact that in this measure of activities performed by the Hungarian dissidents there was a little chance to reverse the situation more in favor of ethnic Hungarians, the minority issue, together with the general dissatisfaction of the entire Romanian population with the terrible economic and social situation in the country, eventually contributed to the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu and collapse of his personal dictatorship.

Major Motives in South African Art in the First Decade of the 21st Century

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The aim of this article is to present an overview of changes which have taken place in Visual Arts in South Africa after the abolition of apartheid in 1994. The artistic issues are shown in a broader perspective of grave alterations which occurred in South African society and culture after the termination of apartheid. One of the most important aspects concerning contemporary South African Art is the problem of dealing with South Africa's traumatic past (this problem is the dominating theme of an artistic output of such diverse artists as Minnette Vári, William Kentridge, Sue Williamson, Judith Mason and Kendell Geers). Another extraordinary problem faced by South African present-day art is to find paths in order to construct links between South African art and modern and classical art from Europe. In order to analyze these problems, we take under scrutinous consideration such 21st century artists as Johannes Phokela, Wim Botha, Andrew Putter. [South Africa; contemporary art; apartheid; aesthetic; historical contexts]

"It is for the poet and the artist to tell us about the real Africa."
Herman Charles Bosman¹

Introduction

The history of South Africa is unusually colorful as a result of various strong influences provided by different and conflicting cultures. These opposing cultures come into direct contact with each other and collide with each other, e. g., traditional African cultures – the black majority and the Khoisan population versus the white foreign Boer culture and the English community. Additionally, the political history of South Africa is also characterized by domestic violence.² A similarly

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¹ Herman Charles Bosman (1905–1951) – South African short story writer.

² C. SAUNDERS (ed.), *Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story*, Cape Town 1994; L. THOMPSON, *A History of South Africa*, New Haven 2001.

complicated situation exists in South African art which has adopted varied forms in distinct historical contexts.

While many of the international trends broadly apply in the South African context, the visual arts system in South Africa largely evolved around the interests and aspirations of a minority of the population. As is the case in most other parts of the society and economy, the institutions, discourse, commercial activity and attendant networks of the visual arts zone have historically been dominated and shaped by the white population, with black artists and organizations being consigned to a largely marginal role in the development of the sector. During the apartheid period, black artists were accorded a secondary status in relation to mainstream practice, and – in the case of those artists that pursued an overtly politicized practice – actively suppressed and persecuted. The mainstream of creative practice was shaped by an aspiring white culture which sought to follow trends in Europe and North America, usually with a significant time lag.³ The visual arts nevertheless also served as an important domain for critical and dissident voices among both black and white artists, and while much of this work received some exposure internationally, the economic dimensions of the visual arts remained largely undeveloped domestically.

Art and Artists of South Africa during Late Apartheid Era

Until the mid-1980s the South African art world was largely divided along political lines.⁴ Government-funded institutions and organizations avoided production and exhibitions of overtly politically critical artworks that would antagonize these institutions' relationship with the apartheid government.⁵ State funded museums focused on the

³ E. BERMAN, *Art and Artists of South Africa: An Illustrated Biographical Dictionary and Historical Survey of Painters, Sculptors and Graphic Artists since 1875*, Cape Town – Rotterdam 1983, pp. 1–15.

⁴ S. WILLIAMSON, *Resistance Art in South Africa*, Cape Town 2004.

⁵ Apartheid – an Afrikaans word meaning “separateness”. It was a system of racial segregation in South Africa enforced through legislation by the National Party (NP), the governing party from 1948 to 1994. Under apartheid, the rights, associations, and movements of the majority black inhabitants and other ethnic groups were curtailed, and white minority rule was maintained. Apartheid was developed after World War II by the Afrikaner-dominated National Party and Broederbond organizations. To see more: THOMPSON, pp. 178–224.

works of white artists, often within the modernist idiom. Artists and organizations which aligned themselves with the democratic struggle defined the artist as a cultural worker, and focused on art treated as “a cultural weapon”.⁶ The African National Congress and the United Democratic Front successfully lobbied for an international boycott of South African art not supportive of the struggle, and for funding of struggle artists and organizations. One of the major hurdles and handicaps for ambitious young black artists was the inaccessibility of university training. As a result several arts centers, like the Polly Street Center, Community Art Workshop, Johannesburg Art Foundation, Katlehong Art Centre and the Community Arts Project, opened new avenues for the training of upcoming African artists, or a location for revolutionary production. Several organisations and projects evolved around the empowerment of black artists, e. g., the Thupelo International Artists’ Workshops and the Federated Union of Black Artists.⁷ During the latter part of the 1980s, a number of exhibition projects and publications were developed which sought to produce a richer picture of creative production in the country. Many black artists, including several rurally based artists, such as Jackson Hlungwane and Noria Mabasa, were included in the 1985 “Tributaries” exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, curated by Ricky Burnett, while the 1988/1989 exhibition and publication “The Neglected Tradition”, curated by Steven Sack, represented the first significant attempt to document the history of black artists’ production and reflected a dynamic arts world which sought to transcend boundaries of race and politics.⁸ Albie Sachs’s influential paper “Preparing Ourselves for Freedom”, sought to redraw the role of creative production in South African society in anticipation of political change.⁹ Although many cultural workers objected to Sachs’s seeming dissolution of the link between art and politics, the views in this paper sought to establish a new and independent ground for creative work in a post-apartheid context. In 1994, the international boycott was lifted and many artists

⁶ J. PEFFER, *Art and the End of Apartheid*, Minneapolis 2009, pp. 73–98.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 129–171.

⁸ S. SACK, *The Neglected Tradition: Towards a New History of South African Art (1930–1988)*, Johannesburg 1988.

⁹ A. SACHS, “Preparing Ourselves for Freedom”, in: E. DAVID (ed.), *Art from South Africa*, Oxford 1990, pp. 10–15.

in exile returned to South Africa, or cooperated in exhibitions that included their works.

Society and Culture after the End of Apartheid

Since 1995, a significant event was instigated in South Africa: the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC),¹⁰ which was constituted to investigate human rights violations committed during the apartheid era (1948–1994). Sceptics from various quarters of the South African society dismissed the commission as simply a witch hunt against the former adversaries or merely a show of pomp that would accomplish none of its objectives.

In this period, many South African artists, such as Minnette Vári, William Kentridge, Sue Williamson, Judith Mason and Kendell Geers, devised productive ways to deal with South Africa's traumatic past. The focus falls specifically on works that were produced in the mid to late 1990s, in the aftermath of apartheid, when white South Africa was forced in various ways to face up to the country it had partly created. Some artists of the younger generation (e. g., Minnette Vári, Kendell Geers, Lisa Brice, Jodi Bieber) had grown up during the final years of apartheid, and their works represent an act of witnessing as well as a performative response to the traumatic events that mark South Africa's history. It was performed in a climate where the horrors of apartheid were revealed and analyzed on a daily basis by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Many of these white artists found various ways to respond to these traumatic times in a productive manner trying actively to articulate and negotiate white responsibility in a new dispensation. In 1997, the second year of the TRC hearings, Minnette Vári produced a small sculpture of a rubber tire,

¹⁰ The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up by the Government of National Unity to help deal with what happened under apartheid. The conflict during this period resulted in violence and human rights abuses from all sides. The TRC was set up in terms of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, No. 34 of 1995, and was based in Cape Town. The hearings started in 1996 and ended in 2001. The TRC's emphasis on reconciliation is in sharp contrast to the approach taken by the Nuremberg Trials after World War II and other de-Nazification measures, because of the perceived success of the reconciliatory approach in dealing with human-rights violations after political change. To see more: E. DOXTADER – P.-J. SALAZAR, *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: the Fundamental Documents*, Claremont 2007.

molded in white porcelain. In South Africa rubber tires have become almost emblematic of the struggle against apartheid in their immediate reference to both protest and the practice of so-called necklacing murders, a notorious method employed in the black townships in the 1980s to kill blacks suspected of being police informers. A tire soaked in fuel was placed around the presumed traitor's body or neck and then put on fire. In the piece, entitled *Firestone*, Vári's employment of the name of a popular brand of rubber tires becomes piercingly ironic in the South African context. But it is her decision to mold the tire in white porcelain that makes this work conceptually so compelling. In a South African context, the radical revisualizing of this everyday object by using the white color becomes an icon resonating with racial allusions and implications. According to Liese Van Der Watt, a South African art historian: "*Vári has quite literally 'made whiteness strange' and the image speaks succinctly of white complicity in what was regarded and publicized as black-on-black violence in the black townships.*"¹¹

In the post-apartheid period, South African contemporary artists have increasingly participated in an international and continental arena for presentation and debate, fuelled by a global interest in the complex history and contemporary realities of the country. The contemporary art scene in the country has positioned itself increasingly as a leader rather than a follower in the international contemporary discourse on the visual arts, supported by the proliferation of a number of print and on-line art critical platforms that explore the philosophical and political complexities of contemporary art practice in a post-colonial and post-apartheid context. A significant number of major exhibitions and catalogues have been concerned with challenging and breaking down preconceptions about South African people and art, exploring the ambiguities, diversity and dynamics of this context, both in their form and content. In 1993, South Africa, after decades of cultural isolation, was invited to the Venice Biennale. This was followed by the first Johannesburg Biennale in 1995, which gave an overview of current trends of both South African and international art. As it was quoted in the letter of Biennale invitation, "*it will celebrate Africa's long overdue re-entry into the international visual art arena*".¹² In addition,

¹¹ L. van der WATT, "Witnessing Trauma in Post-Apartheid South Africa", in: *African Arts*, 38/3, 2005, pp. 26–35, 93.

¹² A. DANTO, *Mapping the Art World: 1 Johannesburg Biennale*, Johannesburg 1995, p. 24.

many South African art works have started to be acquired by collectors abroad,¹³ such as works done by Jodi Bieber, David Goldblatt, William Kentridge, Thabiso Sekgala and Sue Williamson, all of them featured in the exhibition “Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life” at the International Centre of Photography in New York.¹⁴

Within South Africa, exhibitions and conferences have also offered opportunities for reassessing almost two decades of renewal and assertion within the African context. For example, the Sessions eKapa project of the Cape Africa Platform brought galleries, artists, academics and writers together around a range of issues in contemporary African art practice.¹⁵ However, the latter event also demonstrated the persistence of the legacy of apartheid, and included heated debate on the slowness of transformation in the art world and the wider society.¹⁶ The post-apartheid period has also seen a new generation of largely university-trained young black artists, such as my favorite Mary Sibande (b. 1982), who questions the traditional role of black women in South Africa and other countries with a history of black servitude.¹⁷

New Challenges for South African Art in the 21st Century

Although many South African artists are certainly followed by aesthetic considerations, the understanding of art seems to be heavily influenced by social and political concerns. Or in other words the notion of art for art’s sake has a lesser tradition in South Africa.

In my article, I have decided to present some of the more important contemporary South African artists who are devoted to making links between modern and classical art and who employ various means to make use of recognizable Western visual art. Their borrowings present

¹³ S. WILLIAMSON, *South African Art Now*, New York 2009, pp. 16–20.

¹⁴ Curated by Okwui Enwezor with Rory Bester, September 14, 2012 – January 6, 2013.

¹⁵ K. GURNEY, “Relocating Contemporary African Art”, in: *Art South Africa*, 4/3, 2006, pp. 4–7.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ Mary Sibande is a South African artist based in Johannesburg. Her most interesting and ambitious series *Long Live the Dead Queen* was featured within Johannesburg on the side of buildings and other structures as large, photographic murals of black woman depicted wearing extravagant Victorian dresses in vivid colors. <http://www.africandigitalart.com/2010/11/mary-sibande> [2013–07–11].

viewers with the opportunity to reconsider, question, and revisit both the original works and their South African re-creations. These artists utilize the familiarity and visual power of the Western original images, while at the same time altering artistically these images in order to serve their own means, sometimes with regards to the political situation. Such intentions could be traced in the works of Wim Botha (b. 1977), Andrew Putter (b. 1965), Johannes Phokela (b. 1966), Minette Vári (b. 1968) and many others.

In the postmodern and post-apartheid era, some South African artists have utilized the Western canon of art history as a central theme in their work. These artists have borrowed a great deal of imagery from recognizable Western works, appropriating certain elements in order to serve their own critical purposes. Some of them re-fashion essential parts, others parody canonical works. Other artists create simulacra, others combine elements to create montage, while still others borrow recognizable styles while infusing works with contemporary resonances. These artists utilize the familiarity and visual power of the Western images, while altering the images to serve their own means. By changing certain aspects of the original works, the reimagined works' diverse meanings become quite clear.

Appropriation of Western Canon by Contemporary South African Artists

My exploration of contemporary African artists who use some elements of the Western canon seeks to document the stability of artistic principles guiding them and simultaneously to discern the diverse motivations for cultural exchanges between the West and Africa via the visual arts. I would like to prove how this selection of works of today's South African artists critique contemporary and historical understandings of the global relations, the art world, and show particular histories that reverberate and echo still today.

Personally for me one of the most intriguing of the 21st century South African artists is Wim Botha, a Johannesburg-based artist – I will analyze a selection of his works, which skillfully re-fashion well-known Renaissance religious sculptures. In a seminal and influential postliberation South African work, entitled *Commune: Suspension of Disbelief* (2001), Botha carved a crossless, crucified Christ from stacks of Bibles bolted together with a threaded bar. The Bibles are printed in

the eleven South African official languages.¹⁸ Despite the work's obvious iconoclasm, it in fact had deeper layers of meaning. Catholicism distinguishes itself from other strains of Christianity chiefly through its insistence on transubstantiation, the central belief that the wafer and wine in the Eucharist ceremony actually become the Body and Blood of Christ. In religion, as for creative endeavors, the notion of transubstantiation holds far more compelling possibilities than mere symbolism ever could.

Considering the notion of transubstantiation, Botha's *Commune* becomes an aesthetic paraphrase to the biblical sentence "*the Word made flesh*". Language is present yet muted in this work; the medium through which the Christian message is communicated, the printed Bible page, becomes the base unit for the sculpture. One form of existence gives way for another, as a very real transmutation takes place. Botha takes this idea a step further by setting up closed-circuit television cameras directed on the sculpture, progressively defocusing and cropping the images. In their now visually abstract state and thus drained of content, these images are shown on monitors elsewhere in space. The subversion of the Christian imperative of "*the Word made flesh*" is evident.

In a similar way, Botha's work *Mieliepap Pietà*¹⁹ from 2004 switches the very essence of Michelangelo's original, hallowed marble for a typical African maize meal mixed with epoxy resin. Maize is a staple food for much of South Africa's lower working class, and in Botha's work, the *Pietà* embodies the agony of deprivation and poverty in the wake of decades of social and political inequality. By choosing a material such as mieliepap, Botha also draws parallels to complex South African history. By changing the sculpture's medium, the artist accomplishes several things. First, Botha has replaced a durable, expensive, historical artistic medium with a cheap, local food source. In doing this, Botha has called for a reinterpretation of the artwork's meaning. Botha states: "*I was drawn to the material for its rich implications, and was pleasantly surprised at its effectiveness in simulating marble, for one, and the conceptual implications of using a staple food to simulate an expensive,*

¹⁸ D. BRODIE, "Wim Botha", in: S. PERRYER (ed.), *10 Years 100 Artists: Art in a Democratic South Africa*, Cape Town 2004, pp. 66–69.

¹⁹ Wim Botha uses the symbol of the Madonna also in the works entitled *Carbon Copy (Madonna del parto col bambino)* from 2001 and *Apocalumbilicus* from 2006.

elite material, of using something of essential value to simulate a medium that is largely useless apart from its decorative functions.”²⁰ Maize meal is very cheap to purchase but incredibly valuable, as it meets the basic dietary needs of millions of people every day. Marble, on the other hand, is expensive but quite frivolous in that its only use is superfluous decoration. And because marble occurs only in natural quarries, it is often only available at a great cost. Historically, this valuable stone has been reserved for elite patrons or projects, due to its expense. As far as meeting the everyday needs of the masses, marble is quite trivial. Maize meal, on the other hand, is inherently precious as a useful commodity, as it can physically nurture.

Although Botha conceived the work *Mieliepap Pietà* already in 1999, the sculpture was not realized until 2003. It was first displayed in the exhibition “Personal Affects: Power and Poetics in Contemporary South African Art” (2004).²¹ This exhibition was organized by the Museum for African Art and covered two venues: the Museum’s gallery space and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Botha chose to exhibit *Mieliepap Pietà* at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in order to demonstrate their similarities. First, the status of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine as the world’s largest Gothic cathedral rivals St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, where Michelangelo’s *Pietà* resides. Both *Pietàs* were housed in alcoves to the right of the entrance. Botha’s simulacrum parallels the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in that they are both “colossal fraud[s]”.²² Botha simulates a canonical Renaissance work of art and the Cathedral appropriates a style of architecture, Gothic, that derived several hundred years before the Cathedral’s construction. Both the cathedral and Botha’s *Pietà* are imperfect and unfinished and even possess scaffolding. In Botha’s comparison, “[i]n some

²⁰ M. MOON, *Art Appropriation: Contemporary African Artists’ Utilization of Canonical Western Art*, Masters dissertation, University of Florida 2008, p. 53.

²¹ The exhibition’s curators brought together the following artists: Jane Alexander, Wim Botha, Steven Cohen, Churchill Madikida, Mustafa Maluka, Thando Mama, Samson Mudzungu, Jay Father, Johannes Phokela, Robin Rhode, Claudette Schreuders, Berni Searle, Doreen Southwood, Clive van den Berg, Minette Vari, Diane Victor, and Sandile Zulu. Utilizing a variety of media, including drawing, video, sculpture, dance, and installation, these seventeen artists investigate subtle intricacies of identity and agency in a post-apartheid world.

²² D. BRODIE, “Wim Botha”, in: *Personal Affects: Power and Poetics in Contemporary South African Art*, Vol. 1, New York 2004, p. 12.

ways my Pietà perfectly aligns with the cathedral, both being imitations that have a more universal function, where St. Johns is multi-denominational in approach [...]”²³ The relation between Botha’s *Mieliepap Pietà* and its original exhibition location, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, can effectively be read in order to expose their mutual similarities.

In Michelangelo’s *Pietà*, Mary is holding the lifeless body of her son, Jesus, after crucifixion. This imagery echoes the iconic South African photograph of Hector Pieterse being carried away during the Soweto uprising. When considered in light of one another, *Mieliepap Pietà* begins to shed its specific religious context and becomes instead a universal icon for tragic human experiences. Mary’s son’s death represents a far greater cause; as did Hector Pieterse’s. These tragic and unjust deaths were both motivators in spurring change. It is thought that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and as a result, we have eternal life. After Hector Pieterse’s death in 1976, the apartheid system was finally dismantled in 1994. The image of his death is forever a symbol of what the brutal violence of the apartheid system can cause.

Significantly, Botha’s *Pietà* is not a direct copy of the original but a precise mirror image, a reversed reflection. Presented as it was at St. John’s Cathedral in New York for the 2004 “Contemporary South African Art” exhibition, it became a strange order of doppelgänger or a paranormal double. The work represents a quietly anarchic achievement, a subtly yet crucially altered version of one of Catholicism’s most revered works.

In his recent works Botha also reinterprets other Renaissance works to fit a local context. Botticelli’s *Portrait of Dante* (1495) reemerges as the *Generic Self-Portrait as an Exile* (2008), reflecting upon Dante’s thwarted desire to return gloriously from political exile. Again, books – this time, learners’ dictionaries in four local languages (a nod to the *Self-Portrait* in the title) – have been bolted together to make a carving block from which Dante’s beaky face and a laurel wreath emerge in sharply cut planes. The incised pages preclude any attempt at linguistic cross-pollination. South African art historian Liese van der Watt commented on the artist’s work in general: “It is this constant scrambling of givens, this interrogation of conventions that finally marks Botha’s practice as extraordinary.”²⁴

²³ MOON, p. 73.

Another artist, who like Botha employed the Virgin Mary/Madonna to engage with such diverse issues as personal identity, sexuality, patriarchal idealism, is Conrad Botes (b. 1969). Botes explains that he uses religious imagery and the Western canon of art because it is so easy to appropriate and manipulate. His interest is mostly in creating political allegories, and he notes that from his earliest memories politics and religion were intertwined due to his Calvinistic Afrikaans upbringing. This framework of patriarchal conservatism and religious morality gave him an appreciation for the ability of certain images to cause disruption and shock. As Botes says: “I definitely want to confront people, and combining certain things with religious imagery does that. That is why religious imagery is so powerful [although] I am not making a direct comment on religion.”²⁵

In 2007, Botes also parodies Michelangelo’s *Pietà*, by replacing the Madonna with a gorilla in his *Pietà*. The *Pietà* group is centrally set against painted curved blue lines that create a framework for irregularly placed and sized painted glass roundels, like vignettes or stained glass windows, that can be related in some way to the sorrowing “mother” and her son. The gorilla/Madonna is both humorous and darkly satirical as it could evoke the early colonial categorization of the African as the missing link between primates and human beings.

One of the most celebrated black South African artists, Johannes Phokela, was born in Soweto in 1966 and studied art at the Federated Union of Black Artists (FUBA) in Johannesburg during the turbulent 1980s. Phokela concluded his studies at the Royal College of Art in London and lived there for many years, returning to Johannesburg in 2007. Much like a satirist looking for material, Phokela consumes political and cultural imagery and iconography from a variety of sources and, though he replicates these signs and symbols, he places them within reconfigured contexts that destabilize their meaning. It is always a subtle subversion, one that can only be gleaned from a close study of his paintings and the art canon – said to be his favourite source. Up until now, local art critics have associated his aesthetic with the traditional Dutch genre of painting. He appropriates scenes from the Baroque masterpieces of Pieter Breugel, Peter Paul Rubens,

²⁴ WILLIAMSON, *South African Art Now*, p. 196.

²⁵ K. v. VEH, *Transgressive Christian Iconography in Post-Apartheid South African Art*, Vol. 1, Doctoral thesis, Rhodes University 2011, p. 132.

Jacob Jordeans, Jacob de Gheyn.²⁶ He pares down their palettes to that of an underpainting or inserts black figures or African masks into scenes. By doing so, he is more than thumbing his nose at the colonial master: Phokela often adds the very geometrical grid that underlies Cartesian logic and modernist notions of autonomy, precisely so as to undermine its imposition of order onto experience. In 2002, the influential art magazine *Absolute Arts* wrote on his art: “Phokela links these re-interpretations of Dutch Golden Age painting with the colonisation of the African continent. Whilst Phokela’s work weaves a personal history into the canon of Dutch and Flemish old master painting (masterpieces), his practice stands as an examination of the violent actions of the Dutch in South Africa, as much as an inquiry into the history of painting.”²⁷

In a conversation with Bruce Haines the artist stated: “I grew up thinking that the so-called Old Masters only existed as religious or iconic knick-knack prints, particularly those by the likes of Leonardo da Vinci or William Blake. They were or still are very popular and are often used domestically in Soweto. I have always been curious about what these prints were actually made for, apart from making money. Besides their religious or popular value, what possible effect can they have on those who own them? As for Dutch genre painting, they portrayed a certain European lifestyle coinciding with a period in history that saw the arrival of Europeans in South Africa. This was the only visual reference available, utopian in many ways, the harsh realities of war and famine left out. The subsequent cultural collusion is significant and becomes an essential source for my ideas.”²⁸

The most recognized of Phokela’s painting, *Apotheosis* of 2004, based on the style of Peter Paul Rubens, is characterized by voluptuous bodies, heightened emotion, dynamic compositions and dramatic color schemes. However, Phokela’s alterations charge this seemingly generic Rubenesque painting with contemporary allusions, such as portraying a Rubanesque female nude with a G-string tan-line. In *Apotheosis*, instead of Christ presiding over the frenzied scene, Phokela has

²⁶ One could easily find a similar approach in the works of Andrew Putter entitled *Hottentots Holland: Flora Capensis* (2008/9) and *African Hospitality* (2009/10).

²⁷ Anon., “Johannes Phokela Re-Working Iconic Images”, in: *Absolute Arts*, January 28, 2008, <http://www.absolutearts.com/artsnews/2002/05/15/29919.html> [2011–11–23].

²⁸ B. HAINES, “In Conversation with Johannes Phokela”, in: *Artthrob*, 71/7, 2003, <http://www.artthrob.co.za/03july/news/phokela.html> [2011–11–23].

depicted a male figure suspended in a glass box. Although rays of light radiate from the box, it does not overtly appear to be a figure of Christ. Instead, Phokela has identified the glass box as a contemporary allusion to the controversial American magician, David Blaine. In some ways, the ambiguous figure can be read in multiple ways, in light of many different situations. It can speak to society's tendency to idolize people, holding a person in great esteem, even for trivial reasons. It might speak to the perceived lack of any authentic saviour. In Phokela's words, "when you look at my work, there's no straightforward answer".²⁹

The composition of Phokela's *Apotheosis* resembles Rubens's *The Last Judgment*³⁰ rather than Rubens's *Apotheosis* (*Apotheosis of Henry IV*, *The Apotheosis of James I*, *The Apotheosis of the Duke of Buckingham*) or Rubens's *Assumption of the Virgin*. Phokela depicts a myriad of souls as if in a *Last Judgment* scene. Some are falling to their fate of an eternity in hell, while others are rescued by winged angels. The mass of painterly human forms falls away from the Christ-like figure, suspended at the top center of the composition, enclosed in a glass box. Rays of light radiate from this male figure, who raises his arms and surveys the scene before him.

Phokela has inserted an Italian inscription along the bottom of the canvas, which reads: "Tyrannidi Benevolae de Grata Clientela Triumphus." This phrase can roughly be translated as: "Due to grateful patronage, there is a triumph for the benevolent tyrant." However, if the phrase is loosely translated into modern English, then the phrase seems to describe an ironic occurrence, where the oxymoronic "benevolent tyrant" succeeds because of his indebted supporters. This peculiar phrase could describe the difficult political situations involving tyrant-like leaders which occur in some parts of Africa.

Aside from the artist's style, unlike many modern artists Phokela employs a traditional Western artistic medium: oil on canvas. Moreover, Phokela's *Apotheosis* is arched at the top, a shape that resembles some altarpieces. For example, Rubens's *Assumption of the Virgin* altarpiece from Antwerp's Cathedral of Our Lady also has an arched top.

²⁹ T. MURINIK, "Johannes Phokela", in: *Personal Affects: Power and Poetics in Contemporary South African Art*, Vol. 1, New York 2004, p. 120.

³⁰ Another painting by Phokela that directly utilizes the theme of the *Last Judgment* is *Fall of the Damned* (1993).

The painting itself is also quite large, measuring 270×241 cm. Both the size and shape of Phokela's work echo conventions of 17th century Flemish and Dutch altarpieces. But unlike finished monumental Baroque paintings, Phokela's *Apotheosis* resembles preparatory sketches or the style of Delft tiles. Phokela's works are represented not only in the South African National Gallery and the Smithsonian National Museum for African Art, but also at the South African High Commission in London, among other collections.

Through their works, contemporary South African artists, such as Minnette Vari or Yuill Damaso, often shock the public. Some artists re-motivate these images to refute Eurocentric fictions, while others complicate conventional notions and ideologies. The young design team from Johannesburg – "Strangelove" (Carlo Gibson and Ziemek Pater) – employs a particularly widespread image of a well-known Western work, such as Michelangelo's *David*, to challenge viewers to rethink the original work in light of this contemporary re-imagining. Some artists borrow elements, styles, narratives, or images from canonical works of Western art. This "borrowing" can be understood in terms of pastiche.

The most scandalizing artist, Yuill Damaso (b. 1968), in his painting dating from 2010 decided to shock the viewer by showing a figure of a half-naked dead Nelson Mandela (the beloved leader and former president of South Africa), lying on an autopsy table. Mandela's body on the table is surrounded by famous contemporaries, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President Jacob Zuma, former presidents F. W. de Klerk and Thabo Mbeki, and politicians Trevor Manuel and Helen Zille, all wearing 17th century costumes. South Africa's youngest AIDS activist, 12-year-old Nkosi Johnson who died in 2001, uses a scalpel to tear into the icon's lifeless body. This controversial picture is a direct quotation and reference to the Rembrandt masterpiece – *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*. Damaso's choice of subject matter is considered a taboo in South Africa, where depicting the death of a living person is considered disrespectful at best, and possibly even as an act of witchcraft. The ruling party, the African National Congress, said in a statement: "*In African society it is an act of ubuthakathi (witchcraft)*"³¹

³¹ See more: A. BERGLUND, *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism*, Uppsala 1976, pp. 266–276.

to kill a living person [...]. This so-called work of art [...] is also racist. It goes further by violating (Mandela's) dignity by stripping him naked in the glare of curious onlookers."³² However, Damaso stated in a BBC interview that he is trying to make people confront death, "Nelson Mandela is a great man, but he's just a man. The eventual passing of Mr. Mandela is something that we will have to face, as individuals, as a nation".³³

Conclusion: Does Rainbow Nation Art Really Exist?

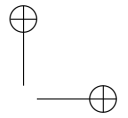
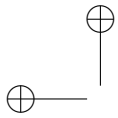
Some of the modern South African artists re-fashion essential parts, others parody canonical works; yet others create simulacra, while some combine elements to create montage. Still other artists borrow well-known styles infusing their works with contemporary resonances. In the wake of the Johannesburg Biennales, a new generation of contemporary South African artists has emerged, and many of these artists have shifted both their aesthetic criteria and artistic strategies from those prevalent during the early years of the post-apartheid system, when it seemed that the Mandela-inspired rainbow nation would become a bottomless mine from which to extract the ore that would ornament the various organs of the multiracial and multicultural worlds of contemporary South African culture.

Today, that model is slightly damaged, and the evident simplification that attended the reception of post-apartheid art has shifted to the skepticism of a new century. Younger artists, like Moshekwa Langa (b. 1975), Robin Rhode (b. 1975), and Mikhael Subotzky (b. 1982) – all three of whom have achieved in a relatively short time remarkable international visibility, are extracting a different sort of material from the debased mine that served to inoculate the mind with the empty pieties of the rainbow nation. Diane Victor (b. 1964) comments on this situation in a series of 16 small drawings called *Disasters of Peace*. She presents every horrendous perversion of South Africa: taxi violence; poverty; drought; street kids; woman abuse; Aids; government, court and prison corruption; family murders; hijacking; incestuous child abuse and baby rape.³⁴ There is no rainbow here, because

³² Anon., "Fury over Nelson Mandela autopsy painting", in: *Daily News*, 2010, http://articles.nydailynews.com/2010-07-10/news/27069608_1_nelson-mandela-painting-thabo-mbeki [2011–11–22].

³³ Ibidem.

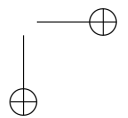
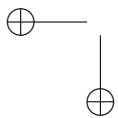
³⁴ M. MATTHEWS, "Diane Victor at the Goodman Gallery", in: *Artthrob*, 66/2, 2003,



today South Africa is riven by an internal struggle against both an emerging totalitarian democracy and a debilitating amnesia that seeks to return the country back to the comforts of segregated lives.



<http://www.artthrob.co.za/03feb/reviews/goodman.html> [2013-06-12].



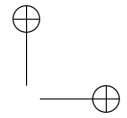
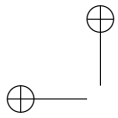
Zdeněk JINDRA – Ivan JAKUBEC et al.
Hospodářský vzestup českých zemí od poloviny
18. století do konce monarchie
Praha: Karolinum 2015, 2nd rev. ed.
ISBN 978-80-246-2945-2, 524 pages

Zdeněk Jindra and Ivan Jakubec, the professors working in the Institute of Economic and Social History of the Faculty of Arts at Charles University, belong amongst the famous Czech historians who are concerned with the economic history in the modern history with special attention to the Czech countries, respectively to the Czechoslovak Republic. As the high-level specialists in the economic history they have become editors a collective monography *Hospodářský vzestup českých zemí od poloviny 18. století do konce monarchie* (Economic Growth of the Czech Countries from the Half of 18th Century to the End of Monarchy), which a team of important Czech historians participated in, specializing in the Czech countries economic development in 18th and 19th centuries, and working in leading university, academic and scientific institutions in our country.

At the beginning, it is to be mentioned that a collective monography cannot be ranked among classical publications from the area of economic history, because authors' aim was to submit an extensive spe-

cialised work, having the character of synthesis and complementing the lack of university textbooks concerning this specific topic of the national history. The collective monography deals with economic, institutional, legal and social fundamentals of the economic history development. Analyses of an individual primary sector development resume to them where agriculture belongs to, and secondary sector, where manufacturing production and factory industry belong to, and tertiary one, where development of transport and communications, trade and monetary and credit systems are included in. Then follow an outline of the economics of the Czech countries in the Austro-Hungarian war economy in the years of 1914–1918 and a comprehensive analysis of preparations for the economic independence gaining of a newly originated Czechoslovak Republic.

Particularly, the individual authors proceed in their analyses from the published sources, especially concentrating on the most important moments of the economic history in 18th and 19th centuries, and rich spe-



cialised literature. Plenty of charts and graphs that are extended with maps and schemes of leading engineering factories established in the Czech countries contribute to the interpretation completion. Without any doubts the publication of *Hospodářský vzestup českých zemí od poloviny 18. století do konce monarchie* can be iden-

tified as a very quality work representing a valuable part of the Czech production in the field of economic history and can be highly recommended to the readers, who are interested in the economic history of that time.

Jaroslav Valkoun

