

*The Image of Great Britain in “Wiadomości Polskie” and “Polska Walcząca”
between 1940–1945*

KEY WORDS

World War II, exile journalism, Polish journalism, United Kingdom, stereotypes

ABSTRACT

The article explores the image of the United Kingdom constructed by Polish exile journalism during the period of World War II. Articles published in the weeklies “Wiadomości Polskie” (“Polish News”) and “Polska Walcząca” (“Fighting Poland”) between 1940 and 1945 are the example of the evolution of Polish attitudes towards the UK. The author draws attention to the creation of national stereotypes concerning the British society, its postulated role in the war order and the postwar reconstruction period. Furthermore, the text depicts British attitudes towards Poland and Poles, as well as the Germans and Soviets. The author tries to associate the content of articles with both political views of leading journalists and the changing international situation during the wartime, which affected the way Polish immigrants perceived Britain.

Polish exile journalism of the World War II period is a great source base to understand worldviews and attitudes of that society. Writing was a meaningful bond integrating the Polish community¹; they were communication channels by means of which ideas were created and distributed; a space for disputes and discussions, and the basic source of news about the world in a situation, where the exiles did not know the language of their host country to a sufficient degree². Journalism adequately reflects the attitudes of its group of readers, while on the other hand, it also creates them. Emigration magazine research could aid in answering many questions on the range of the social and political structure of the emigration, as well as familiarize the image of countries, in which Poles found refuge.

This article is dedicated to the image of the United Kingdom created in Polish exile journalism. The period analyzed extends from June 1940, with the evacuation of Polish authorities

¹ Compare: K. Lang, *Communications Research: Origins and Development*, [in:] *International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. by E. Barnouw and oth., New York–Oxford 1989, p. 369.

² J. Jarowiecki, J. Myśliński, A. Notkowski, *Prasa polska 1939–1945*, Warszawa 1980, p. 153.

to the UK, and ends in July 1945³ with revoking the authority of the Polish government in London. The aim of the article is presenting the most important discourse elements concerning British affairs.

Two press titles were chosen for the analysis, “Wiadomości Polskie” (“Polish News”) and “Polska Walcząca” (“Fighting Poland”). The choice of press was based on opinions in these magazines and the possibility of comparing worldviews presented in them. Both titles were weeklies published in France prior to June 1940 and reprinted in the United Kingdom in the summer of that year. The two titles were equally popular, had a relatively high circulation⁴ and kept a high standard. “Polska Walcząca” was the official press of the Polish Armed Forces, while “Wiadomości Polskie” was an independent, for a broad group of intellectuals and those opposing the government, at least from July 1941. Press analysis of the magazines provides an opportunity to acknowledge a wide range of political views.

The United Kingdom was for Polish emigrants a completely foreign country. Mid-war intellectuals had closer ties to France⁵, which is why compulsory travels to the UK were connected with a difficult adjustment to the new reality. Journalism was therefore in a way an emigration elementary book, both military and civilian. It was based on the knowledge of a small group of journalists who knew the United Kingdom already from the mid-war period, among them such prominent writers as Zbigniew Grabowski, a pre-war commentator for the “Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny” in London, and Florian Sokołów, correspondent of the “Kurier Poranny”⁶. “Wiadomości Polskie” and “Polska Walcząca” both used their services. In the following months and years of the war, articles on the United Kingdom and its society had more insight, overlooking some of its earlier clichés, while the weight of their creation was divided out on a wider group of journalists. They informed about and commented on the ongoing political affairs of the country and monitored the attitude of the British public opinion towards Polish issues.

England as an Empire. National character and political traditions

In both weeklies the grandness of the British Empire was often attributed with the national character of the English. Referring to them most likely meant choosing from a narrow range of national stereotypes. Typical, especially in 1940–1941, was comparing the British with the more familiar French. These were at the advantage of the Brits, due to the embitterment with the attitude of the

³ Due to the closing of “Wiadomości Polskie” [further on: “WP”] in February 1944 r., journalism of the last dozen months of the war was represented only by “Polska Walcząca” [further on: “PW”].

⁴ The circulation of “Wiadomości Polskie” in 1942 was over 7000 copies. After: R. Habielski, *Niezlomni, nieprzejednani. Emigracyjne „Wiadomości” i ich krąg 1940–1981*, Warszawa 1991, p. 42. From 1940 “Polska Walcząca” was published in 17 000 copies. After: T. Terlecki, *Trzylecie „PW” 1942*, No. 48, p. 1.

⁵ Compare: J. Wittlin, *Dlaczego jestem frankofilem*, “WP” 1940, No. 1, p. 3.

⁶ R. Habielski, *Niezlomni...*, p. 25.

French during the first few months of the war and *Blitzkrieg* in June 1940. After the capitulation of France, democratic Great Britain was the only European alternative to Hitler's Germany. Therefore, attempts were made to find traits allowing a hopeful gaze into the war future.

An example of this type of journalism is an article by Florian Sokołów *Kontrasty*⁷, published right after the French capitulation. The author holds the French responsible for grave mistakes in the first period of the war (“France was under the illusion it was safe behind the Maginot line”)⁸, while the English had a steadfast will to fight and determination. In August 1940 Czesław Poznański, comparing the French and English democracies⁹, clearly favored with the English model, placing freedom over equality. Ksawery Pruszyński in January 1941 stated¹⁰ that Polish emigrants are drawn to the culture, language and everything that is British much more than they do to the French, thus undermining the distinct francophile¹¹ orientation of Polish intellectuals. Searching for the cause of this state, Pruszyński referred to similarities in Polish and English history (federation of nations, tolerance, role of gentry), which brought the two nations together. In the mentioned works, the French were attributed with passive attitudes, while the British were active, and displayed courage and a mature attitude towards war.

Comparisons between the English and Germans were not omitted. Zbigniew Grabowski claimed¹², that the essence of the British nature is simplicity, *joie de vivre*, love of nature and sport. Germans however – in the opinion of the author – displayed detailed erudition and heartless pettiness, which fits science, but has pernicious outcomes in social life.

It was often underlined that during their residence in Great Britain, Poles should learn as much as possible about best practices of the public sphere. In July 1940 Antoni Sobański hoped that Poles learn from the English the true liberal-aristocratic spirit¹³, which combines self-esteem with the innate respect for other human beings. In the article entitled *Lata ciemnoty*¹⁴ England was depicted as a land of great freedom and open discussion, Poland however was burdened with (both before the war, and during emigration) a tendency to overreact, theatricalness, over-emotion in doing politics. The British were placed in the role of teachers of political ethics. In the article *Uratowane Ziarna*¹⁵ Arnold Jaskowski wrote about Polish youth, who due to the war landed in Great Britain: “Without doubt they will learn [...] character, an honest love of democracy, integrity

⁷ F. Sokołów, *Kontrasty*, “WP” 1940, No. 28/29, p. 2.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Cz. Poznański, *Demokracja angielska*, “PW” 1940, No. 22, p. 4.

¹⁰ K. Pruszyński, *Learn English!*, “WP” 1941, No. 4, p. 1.

¹¹ Compare: T. Terlecki, *Mimo wszystko jestem frankofilem*, “WP” 1940, No. 25, p. 1.

¹² Z. Grabowski, *Tradycja i instynkt*, “WP” 1940, No. 28/29, p. 2.

¹³ A. Sobański, *Anglomani i anglofile*, “WP” 1940, No. 19, p. 4.

¹⁴ [Z. Grabowski], *Politicus*, *Lata ciemnoty*, “WP” 1941, No. 7, p. 3.

¹⁵ A. Jaskowski, *Uratowane ziarna*, “PW” 1943, No. 2, p. 3.

and honesty and to respect whatever work they do and not hold it in contempt”¹⁶. Only other Poles could interfere in this. “As long as our influence – that of the twenty years of lying to ourselves – doesn't mutilate the savior, Western wind”¹⁷, claimed Jaskowski.

When it comes to character and human types, Melchior Wańkowicz¹⁸ wrote about the overwhelming differences between the humble, helpful English and the rude, stuck-up Sarmatians. He mentioned the Polish love of titles, modeled on the Germans or the Habsburg Empire, which had a distinctly Byzantine impression in comparison with the polite, yet simple and cordial forms of referring to others, even public figures, in Great Britain¹⁹. Karol Zbyszewski in the satirical series of articles *Polacy i Anglicy*²⁰, comparing the customs of both nations, pointed to a number of British virtues – among them temperance, good manners, sense of humor, politeness and legality – all of which Poles lacked.

Other great advantages of the English, apart from the above mentioned, were: modesty, not boasting and even striving to diminish their successes²¹, avoiding luxuries and publicity²², common sense and the ability to think in terms of political realism²³. Further qualities – civic courage and responsibility for public action²⁴ – were the result of long democratic traditions. An attachment to nature and animals²⁵ was expressed, love of wildlife was thought of as one of the basic pillars of the Empire greatness²⁶, sport spirit, love of games and competitiveness²⁷.

Mentioned was the crucial role of the monarchy in maintaining the cultural and political integrity of the British Empire and its significance during the war when it helped integrate society in a joint war effort. “Polska Walcząca” dedicated a special edition to the British monarchy in March 1941²⁸.

Enthusiastic descriptions of Great Britain dominated during the first few years of the war. Still in 1943 Zygmunt Nagórki Jr., an editor with a significantly English orientation, in a few program articles of “Polska Walcząca”²⁹ popularized the British socio-political solutions, describing England as, among others, “an island of freedom and happiness”³⁰. Ignacy Matuszewski, in a text

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ M. Wańkowicz, *O cypryjskich przyjaciolach Anglikach*, “WP” 1941, No. 45, p. 4.

¹⁹ [Z. Grabowski] A. Jawnuta, *O Anglii i Anglikach*, “PW” 1941, No. 8, p. 6.

²⁰ K. Zbyszewski, *Polacy i Anglicy*, “WP” 1943, No. 9, p. 4; ibidem 1943, No. 13, p. 4; ibidem 1943, No. 30, p. 3.

²¹ F. Sokołów, *Młodzież angielska zaprawia się do wojny*, “WP” 1940, No. 2, p. 4.

²² Z. Grabowski, *Co to jest Imperium Brytyjskie*, “PW” 1940, No. 20, p. 4.

²³ Idem, *To jest inna wojna*, “WP” 1940, No. 7, p. 1.

²⁴ H. Skarbek-Peretjatkowicz, *Polacy w Anglii*, “WP” 1940, No. 22, p. 4.

²⁵ Z. Nowakowski, *Basia, czyli Kopciuszek propagandy*, “WP” 1942, No. 29 p. 3.

²⁶ Z. Grabowski, *Tradycja i instynkt*, “WP” 1940, No. 28/29, p. 2.

²⁷ [A. Bregman] A. Boray, *Sportowcy contra gangsterzy*, “WP” 1940, No. 38, p. 4.

²⁸ “PW” 1941, No. 11.

²⁹ Compare: Z. Nagórski jr, *Dwieście tysięcy*, “PW” 1943, No. 7, p. 1; idem, *Potęga Imperium*, “PW” 1943, No. 21, p. 1; idem, *Ciągle żywe zadanie*, ibidem 1943, No. 33, p. 1.

³⁰ Z. Nagórski jr, *Dwieście tysięcy*, “PW” 1943, No. 7, p. 1.

entitled *O Imperium Brytyjskim*³¹, wrote that Great Britain “is the highest political being in Europe”, thanks to which European culture can resist the “invasion of the barbarians”³², German and Soviet.

In the fourth year of the war more negative economic aspects became visible. The British were charged with the inability to think in other categories than those of the Empire's interest³³. Exposed was their lack of empathy towards smaller nations, a consequence of focusing on one's own greatness, lack of historical knowledge (or, what's worse, ignoring it), being short-sighted in international politics³⁴. These tendencies began to dominate in the second half of 1943 and lasted until the end of the war.

The British Empire showed Polish journalist its other side – oddly enough, in light of the approaching victory of the anti-Nazi coalition. It was also a time when Poland's situation on the international arena became aggravating and the domination of the Big Three became clearly visible. This issue was rightly brought up in December 1942 by Zygmunt Nowakowski³⁵. According to him, the history of Polish war emigration was a Gulliver's tale, wondering among Giants and Lilliputs. “Polish Gulliver leaves the scheming Lilliputs [the French – M.B.], to venture the sea. Now we are again with the Giants. [...] Here, everything seems smarter, everything that is ours seems silly. [...] Compared with the hosts, we feel terribly small. [...] But that passes. We grow in our own eyes, as the hopeless *lull* continues, as we look, but don't see any initiative, after the defeats in Libya or the Far East.”³⁶

Winston Churchill and other British politicians

Current affairs of British politics were one of the most important issues discussed in Polish exile journalism, due to the role of Great Britain during the war and the possibility to observe English political life by Polish commentators.

In May 1940 “Wiadomości Polskie” wrote: “Churchill became one of the main figures of British public life. Next to apostle Chamberlain stands the statesman Churchill”³⁷, who was introduced as a perfect politician for the war times, compared with Neville Chamberlain, who gave Poland the British guarantee and a military alliance, but was also the symbol of the tragic political decision of appeasement, and the famous conference in Munich in September 1938.

Churchill as Prime Minister was enthusiastically accepted. In the article from May 14th 1940, Zbigniew Grabowski wrote that the decision is proof that “the war has started for good” in

³¹ I. Matuszewski, *O Imperjum Brytyjskiem*, “WP” 1943, No. 2, p. 4.

³² Ibidem.

³³ H. Tennenbaum, *Błędy i złudzenia profesora Carra*, “WP” 1943, No. 3, p. 3.

³⁴ Z. Grabowski, *Szkic sytuacyjny*, „PW” 1943, No. 11, p. 2.

³⁵ Z. Nowakowski, *Polski Guliwer*, “WP” 1942, No. 51/52, p. 1.

³⁶ Ibidem.

³⁷ [K. Syrop] NOKYS, *Nastroje londyńskie*, “WP” 1940, No. 1, p. 14.

England³⁸. The famous statement of the PM *exposé*: “I can promise you blood, sweat, toil and tears”³⁹ are from the Polish perspective a noticeable change from the politics of the “phony war” and the earlier Chamberlain appeasement. Grabowski stated even that the Churchill cabinet is the best one can dream of, capable of fixing the negligence of the former cabinet⁴⁰.

The new British Prime Minister became the protagonist of numerous articles in both titles. Different episodes from his life and offices he held were recalled⁴¹. Churchill was described as fantastic writer⁴², and speaker⁴³ “one of the most striking individualities in the world”⁴⁴. He was believed to be the initiator of the Atlantic Charter, creating the fundamental world order after WW II⁴⁵, a spokesperson for Polish issues⁴⁶ and a politician skeptical towards the Soviets⁴⁷.

The fascination with the British PM in the Polish emigration circle was summarized by Karol Zbyszewski, who wrote “A POLE: Thank God there is Churchill, the most genius statesman that the earth bore! ENGLISHMAN: Yes, I think we can assume that among those daubing in politics, Churchill is not the most utterly dull...”⁴⁸.

It was only Churchill's speech in the House of Lords from February 22nd 1944, in which he found just the Soviet territorial claims of Eastern Poland that changes the idealized picture. Tymon Terlecki wrote that Churchill's words were accepted with mixed feelings⁴⁹. Until that moment, the British leader was admired, yet “in parts of the speech that concerned Poland were words that deeply hurt us”⁵⁰. Wiktor Budzyński mentioned the great surprise and grudge of Polish soldiers after the appearance of the PM, who previously “grew in the soldier legend into the idea of the most just, responsible patron with a jovial smile and tender heart”⁵¹. In the last months of the war, due to the changing political situation, his figure was no longer talked about as much as before.

Winston Churchill was well-known and popular before he became PM, yet the British political arena of 1940 was as foreign to Polish emigrants as the English culture or history. From August 1940, Florian Sokołów began publishing a series of articles in “Wiadomości Polskie” which familiarized readers with the most important British politicians. The first one was about Churchill

³⁸ Z. Grabowski, *Churchill premierem*, “WP”1940, No. 11, p. 5.

³⁹ Ibidem.

⁴⁰ Z. Grabowski, *Mamy dyktaturę w Anglii*, “WP”1940, No. 14/15, p. 3.

⁴¹ D. Szczerbic, *Żywot Churchilla*, “PW” 1941, No. 22/23, p. 7; D. Szczerbic, *Churchill idzie od wojny do wojny*, ibidem 1941, No. 25, s. 3.

⁴² Z. Grabowski, *Szkic sytuacyjny*, “PW” 1943, No. 7, p. 2, No. 28, p. 4; F. Sokołów, *Ludzie i książki*, ibidem 1943, No. 12, p. 3.

⁴³ D. Szczerbic, *Mowy Churchilla*, “PW” 1941, No. 21, p. 3.

⁴⁴ F. Sokołów, *Winston Churchill*, “WP” 1941, No. 39, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Z. Grabowski, *Mowy i fakty*, “WP”1941, No. 36, p. 4.

⁴⁶ S. Żurowski, *Prawo do życia*, “PW” 1943, No. 15, p. 1.

⁴⁷ [W.A. Zbyszewski] K. Nienaski, *Biografia Churchilla*, “WP” 1942, No. 6, p. 5; Z. Grabowski, *Szkic sytuacyjny*, tamże 1943, No. 27, p. 2.

⁴⁸ K. Zbyszewski, *Polacy i Anglicy*, “WP” 1943, No. 9, p. 4.

⁴⁹ [T. Terlecki] A. Janowski, *Polski punkt widzenia*, “PW” 1944, No. 9, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ W. Budzyński, *Bez blackoutu*, “PW” 1944, No. 10, p. 7.

himself⁵². Next Sokołów took to members of his cabinet and closest coworkers. He described them as brave and responsible statesmen. In the series were the figures of Minister of Aircraft Production Lord Beaverbrook⁵³, socialist ministers Ernest Bevin and Herbert Morrison⁵⁴, and Foreign Secretary, Robert Anthony Eden⁵⁵. Describing other prominent politicians, Sokołów praised those who were, as Churchill, enthusiasts of waging an active war by Great Britain: Lord Halifax⁵⁶, Minister of Information Alfred Duff⁵⁷, and Secretary of State for Air, Archibald Sinclair⁵⁸.

Sokołów searched for allies of the Polish question among British MP's, singling out conservatist Alan Graham, an active author of pamphlets on Poland and an interpreter during Polish issues discussed in the House of Commons⁵⁹; Sir Patrick Dollan, Arthur Greenwood or Sir Archibald Southby⁶⁰. Catholic communities could also rely on favorable Polish press, especially those of "The Weekly Review", "Tablet", "Catholic Times", "Catholic Herald"⁶¹. Catholics underlined their solidarity with Poles and their reluctance towards the atheistic Soviet Union⁶², which became increasingly important after they joined the anti-German coalition.

Not all British politicians were described with such esteem. Two circles were thought of as especially dangerous from the point of view of Polish interests. The first were conservatives from the bourgeoisie London *City*, and "The Times", representing their views. The second were communists and pro-Soviet socialists, who had the "Daily Worker" as their chief press organ. They began to play a more important role after the Soviets joined the anti-German coalition, thorn in the flesh of Polish journalism, which reluctantly informed about the shift in British sympathy towards the left. One of the few attempts to describe this state was the article *Z frontu fabrycznego* by Dominika Szczerbica⁶³.

While a threat for the Polish question on the part of British political circles was taken seriously, then the same cannot be said about British fascists. Their movement in England, concentrating around Sir Oswald Mosley, was in no case treated as a threat to the democratic order, nor as an element of the Nazi fifth column, but rather as a political curiosity. According to "Wiadomości Polskie" from the beginning of the 1940s, Hyde Park observers acknowledged

⁵² F. Sokołów, *Churchill*, "WP" 1940, No. 24, p. 1.

⁵³ Idem, *Lord Beaverbrook*, "WP" 1940, No. 27, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Idem, *Socjaliści angielscy w rządzie. Ernest Bevin i Herbert Morrison*, „WP” 1940, No. 36, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Idem, *Anthony Eden*, "WP" 1941, No. 6, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Idem, *Lord Halifax*, "WP" 1941, No. 2, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Idem, *Duff Cooper*, "WP" 1941, No. 8, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Idem, *Sir Archibald Sinclair*, "WP" 1941, No. 13, p. 2.

⁵⁹ A. Graham, *O stosunkach polsko-angielskich*, "PW" 1942, No. 52/53, p. 3.

⁶⁰ W. Babiński, *Prasa angielska w sprawach polskich na przełomie lat 1943–1944*, „Zeszyty Literackie” (Paryż) Z. 20 (1971), p. 33.

⁶¹ W.T. Kowalski, *Walka dyplomatyczna o miejsce Polski w Europie (1939–1945)*, Warszawa 1979, p. 470.

⁶² *O granicach wschodnich Polski*, "WP" 1941, No. 34, p. 5.

⁶³ D. Szczerbic, *Z frontu fabrycznego*, "PW" 1943, No. 48, p. 4.

Mosley's arguments with a smirk⁶⁴. Florian Sokołów, who dedicated one of his articles on British politicians to Mosley, described him as a devoid of ideas political troublemaker, with no real support among the British⁶⁵.

Polish political sympathies in Great Britain narrowed down to attitudes presented by British politicians in a few crucial ideas (from the Polish point of view), which were: the future shape of the Polish Eastern border and the nature of the relations with the Soviets, the basic construction of the postwar order, the future of Germany, the knowledge of Poland and the attitude towards it. Opinions of British politicians and journalists in these issues were the core content of exile journalism.

Polish-Soviet relations and the Polish Eastern border from a British perspective

Polish journalists from nearly the beginning of the war were aware that the question of the Polish Eastern boarder after the war in not unambiguous for the British. In March 1940 Zbigniew Grabowski recalled⁶⁶ that the public opinion in Great Britain was not supportive of the border from before September 17th 1939. Arguments against it were, first and foremost, the right of Ukrainians to self-determination and the remembrance of overtaking the Vilnius Region by Poland in 1920. The British, negating the Riga boarder, turned to the project of the Curzon line.

The question of the Polish-Soviet boarder became meaningful after the Nazi German attack on the Soviet Union. Their joining the war on the side of the anti-German coalition changed the international scene: USSR became a central partner for the British. Gustaw Gazda [Gustaw Bocheński], reviewing for “Wiadomości Polskie” the British press from before the German aggression on USSR noticed that more and more articles about the Polish boarder suggested including the Eastern realms of Poland into the USSR⁶⁷, which he interpreted as a common in England hope for Soviet aid in the war with the Germans.

Similar claims must have been repeated in the following months. In October 1941, Ignacy Matuszewski, a politician associated with the Sanation movement, in a famed article *Wola Polski*⁶⁸ wrote that despite arguments in British journalism, like that of “The Times”, no Polish territorial compromise is possible. Socialist Adam Pragier⁶⁹ decided to answer the thesis of the British press, that the Curzon line is a just Polish-Russian border, satisfying the ethnic criterion. Trying to undermine the arguments of the British, he claimed that the southern part of the Curzon line was

⁶⁴ K. Syrop] NOKYS, *Nastroje...*

⁶⁵ F. Sokołów, *Sir Oswald Mosley*, “WP” 1941, No. 38, p. 3.

⁶⁶ Z. Grabowski, *Anglia patrzy na nas*, “WP” 1940, No. 3, p. 1.

⁶⁷ [G. Bocheński] G. Gazda, *Rzeczy polskie w prasie brytyjskiej*, “WP” 1941, No. 25, p. 4.

⁶⁸ I. Matuszewski, *Wola Polski*, “WP” 1941, No. 40, p. 1.

⁶⁹ A. Pragier, *Linia Curzona*, “WP” 1941, No. 49, p. 1. Pragier discussed the same subject also in the article: „*T. zw. linia Curzona*”, *ibidem* 1944, No. 4 p. 3.

never ultimately set, while on its eastern side were numerous and dense Polish settlements, and other Slavic people, by no means Russian. Henryk Tennenbaum further argued that moving the Polish border westward would be a mistake from the point of view of European security, also that of England⁷⁰. It was a statement against the opinion of the Soviets, who believed taking over the territory of eastern Poland in 1939 was crucial for the strategic safety of the USSR from the expected German invasion.

During talks preceding signing the Sikorski–Majewski pact in July 1941, the conservative “Times” underlined that an agreement with the Soviets should be more important for Poland than territory⁷¹. Lack of a final settlement of the border issue, in this case, led to a sharp crisis in the Polish emigration government and strong criticism from journalists of “Wiadomości Polskie”. At the same time, pro-Soviet socialists, such as Stafford Cripps, British ambassador in Moscow in 1940–1942⁷², or Robert R. Stokes⁷³, one of the Labour Party leaders, publicly expressed their discontent with Poland's reluctance towards the USSR, using arguments the Polish side believed to be inspired by Soviet propaganda. They reproached Poles for taking over Vilnius in 1920 and Zaolzie in 1938, maltreatment of national minorities during the between-war period (especially Ukrainians and Jews), searching for closer cooperation between the II RP and the III Reich in 1934–38.

Leftist British press, among them „New Statesman and Nation”, „Tribune” or „Daily Worker” were for satisfying Soviet territorial claims⁷⁴, in the conviction of English socialists quite just⁷⁵. Apart from ethnic justice, at hand were borders guaranteeing strategic security. Stafford Cripps argued on the need to use this point of view in the border issue with USSR⁷⁶.

The stand of the Polish emigration in terms of borders, inviolable both by law and from a moral point of view, had not changed, which only strengthened the criticism of British press and politicians. In the atmosphere of a growing political threat of their cause, “Wiadomości Polskie” looked for allies in the editor of the monthly „The Nineteenth Century and After” Frederick A. Voigt, who supported the Polish reason of state. From 1942, his statements and words were often referred to in the press⁷⁷.

Revealing the Katyn massacre and suspending diplomatic relations between Poland and the USSR opened a new chapter in the press discourse. The bitterness connected with the passive

⁷⁰ H. Tennenbaum, *O sugestii wielkich obszarów*, “WP” 1942, No. 7, p. 1.

⁷¹ Z. Grabowski, *Od Krebsa do Crippsa*, “WP” 1941, No. 30, p. 5.

⁷² F. Sokołów, *Sir Stafford Cripps*, “WP” 1941, No. 10, p. 3.

⁷³ [G. Bocheński] G. Gazda, *Rzeczy polskie w prasie brytyjskiej*, “WP” 1941, No. 13, p. 7.

⁷⁴ Z. Nowakowski, *Kiwerowa Górka*, “WP” 1941, No. 32, p. 4.

⁷⁵ *O granicach wschodnich Polski*, “WP” 1941, No. 34, p. 5.

⁷⁶ A. Ciołkosz, *Za wolność waszą i naszą*, “WP” 1942, No. 12, p. 1.

⁷⁷ Compare: S. Grabski, *List do F. A. Voigta*, “WP” 1942, No. 16, p. 1; *Zagadnienia wschodnioeuropejskie*, ibidem 1942, No. 21, p. 4; *F. A. Voigt o federacjach*, ibidem 1942, No. 26, p. 4; F.A. Voigt, *Anglia, Europa, Polska*, ibidem 1943, No. 34, p. 1.

attitude of Great Britain in the case of Katyn and the stand on the Polish eastern boarder resulted in a wave of criticism towards British politics. Zbigniew Grabowski in *Szkic sytuacyjny*⁷⁸ wrote that the Katyn issue became the moral gauge of the war, proving if smaller nations really do have a voice on the international arena.

The issue of the eastern boarder continued to return, like in the articles of Wiktor Budzyński who – similarly as the editor of “Polska Walcząca” Tymon Terlecki – came from Lvov and did not hide his emotional bond with the city. Budzyński dedicated a few of his feature articles *Bez Black-outu*⁷⁹, the poem *Targi wschodnie...*⁸⁰ and the “Bez black-outu Easter egg” *Na Przyjaciół*⁸¹. A necessity to explain the “plain human right to a home” was expressed by Tymon Terlecki⁸².

In the last months of 1943 statements concerning the Polish-Soviet issues were kept in a tone of disappointment with the unfavorable British stand towards Poland, even in the moderate “Polska Walcząca”. Grabowski, in a style unconventional for his usually objective *Szkice sytuacyjne*, wrote about the conference of the Big Three in Moscow: “Secret diplomacy is blooming; optimists promised us paradise, claiming, that we are entering a stage of straightforward diplomacy, rejecting secret treaties and deals. Another story to put back on the shelf”⁸³.

The beginning of 1944 in “Polska Walcząca” brought numerous articles underlining the Polish aspect of Lvov and Vilnius, cities where Polish heritage was being questioned⁸⁴. When on the 4th of January 1944 the Red Army crossed the pre-war boarder of Poland, Zygmunt Nowakowski noticed two weeks later⁸⁵, that the English, even those with a positive attitude to Poles, started talking about having crossed the “former Polish boarder” on January 4th.

Despite the unfavorable British stand, attempts were made to seek out a change in attitude of their press⁸⁶. Tymon Terlecki wrote that the British did not and would not acknowledge any “government” apart from the legal Polish government in London⁸⁷. The Yalta Conference, which sealed the shape of the eastern border, debunked that certainty, and “Polska Walcząca” wrote of a Polish tragedy greater than that suffered in September 1939 and June 1940⁸⁸. The shock with the provisions attempted to be compensated by reprinting voices supporting the Polish question, among

⁷⁸ Z. Grabowski, *Szkic sytuacyjny*, “PW” 1943, No. 18, p. 2.

⁷⁹ W. Budzyński, *Bez Black-outu*, “PW” 1943, No. 11, p. 6; idem, *Bez blackoutu*, ibidem 1944, No. 4, p. 7, No. 6, p. 7.

⁸⁰ Idem, *Targi wschodnie...*, “PW” 1943, No. 12, p. 6.

⁸¹ Idem, *Pisanki bez-blackoutowe*, “PW” 1943, No. 16/17, p. 10.

⁸² [T. Terlecki] A. Janowski, *Czas próby*, “PW” 1943, No. 18, p. 1.

⁸³ Z. Grabowski, *Szkic sytuacyjny*, “PW” 1943, No. 44, p. 7.

⁸⁴ [J. Cyrski] W. Markotny, *Miasto mile i zawsze wierne*, “PW” 1944, No. 5, p. 3; J. Rudnicki, *Ziemia zagrożona*, ibidem 1944, No. 9, p. 4; W. Markotny, „...Co w ostrej świecisz Bramie...”, ibidem 1944, No. 11, p. 5; Z. Nagórski Jr, *Bitwy o Wilno i Lwów*, ibidem 1944, No. 31, p. 1.

⁸⁵ Z. Nowakowski, *Pieje kur*, “WP” 1944, No. 4, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Z. Grabowski, *Nie tylko sprawa granicy*, “PW” 1944, No. 4, p. 1.

⁸⁷ [T. Terlecki] A. Janowski, *Wymowa dwu zdarzeń*, “PW” 1945, No. 2, p. 1.

⁸⁸ Idem, *Wbrew wszystkimu*, “PW” 1945, No. 8, p. 1.

the MP sir Patrick Dollan⁸⁹.

Very important, from the Polish point of view, was the parliamentary debate concerning the provisions of the Yalta Conference. Reporting on the debate, Witold Leitgeber divided British MPs into two groups⁹⁰. Those with favorable attitude towards Poland represented honor and justice, while the second group had faith in the honesty of the Soviets and the statement *Face the facts!*, which was an expression of pragmatism in the politics of accomplished facts. This attitude clearly won the debate – MPs voted for the Yalta resolutions according the wish of the government.

Tymon Terlecki, after the end of military action in July 1945, wrote what the “uncompromised” emigration thought: “We don't want to and will not return to a Poland with a non-Polish order”⁹¹. Poles chose leading their life on the Isles, assuming that despite the unjust policy of a compromise at all costs, the English still had the moral factor⁹².

Post-war order and the federation idea

From the beginning of the war, both politicians and journalists wondered what changes await Europe and the world in order to achieve stability and peace. They were well aware of the faultiness of the Treaty of Versailles, the inefficiency of the pre-war safety model based on the League of the Nations, and the mistakes of the appeasement policies, ending with the Munich Agreement. There was no longer belief that nations alone could defend themselves against external threats. Thus more and more popularity gained proposals of creating a federation or group of countries. The Polish government supported a Polish-Czechoslovakian federation, which was to be the basis for a larger agreement in the belt between the Baltic, Adriatic and Black Sea.

Early articles from “Wiadomości Polskie”, such as *Organizacja powojenna*⁹³ or *Pokój brytyjski*⁹⁴, confirmed that England supported the idea of a federation as a rule organizing the post-war order, but did not really state, what they understood under the term. It soon turned out that projects for the post-war organization, appearing in the press, were rather unsettling from the point of view of the Polish press.

The biggest response in Polish press had “The Times” article entitled *Peace and Power* from August 1st 1941. Its author, Edward H. Carr was believed to be close with Minister Eden⁹⁵, so it was suspected that the article was inspired by government elements. General Sosnkowski reacted to it in

⁸⁹ P. Dollan, *Głos szkockiego przyjaciela*, “PW” 1945, No. 8, p. 1.

⁹⁰ W. Leitgeber, *Po debacie*, “PW” 1945, No. 10, p. 1.

⁹¹ T. Terlecki] A. Janowski, *W nas żyje Polska*, “PW” 1945, No. 27, p. 1.

⁹² Idem, *Cień nad pokojem*, “PW” 1945, No. 19, p. 3.

⁹³ [W.M. Besterman] Observer, *Organizacja powojenna*, “WP” 1940, No. 9, p. 4.

⁹⁴ A. Pragier, *Pokój brytyjski*, “WP” 1941, No. 17, p. 3.

⁹⁵ W. Babiński, *Prasa angielska...*, p. 4.

an open letter published in the “Daily Telegraph”⁹⁶, while Zbigniew Grabowski expressed his opinion in “Wiadomości Polskie” from August 17th⁹⁷. “The Times” suggested that after the war, Central-Eastern Europe needed a strong leader and this could only be provided by the leadership of Russia (if one excludes the German hegemony). Grabowski alarmed that the idea is „Munich *à la russe*”⁹⁸. He found this logic dooming, the Soviets would not stop on Central Europe alone and would strive to communize the West. A clearly better solution would be a federation of Central-European countries, which should be supported by the British, in their own best interest⁹⁹. In “Polska Walcząca” Czesław Poznański regarded “The Times” article as an alarm for the Polish circle, who's duty was to inform the British opinion on the role of Poland and the need for its independent existence¹⁰⁰.

The article in the “The Times” caused a number of reactions in the UK and not just among Poles. The British themselves wondered how to interpret “leadership” mentioned in the article¹⁰¹. “The Times” explained that it had nothing to do with the idea of authoritarian leadership in the German sense (*Führerschaft*), yet this did not calm down emotions.

Almost simultaneously, on August 14th 1941, the Atlantic Charter was signed by Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt – a declaration, which was to be the basis of post-war international relations. It was enthusiastically accepted by the Polish press¹⁰². Journalists were satisfied with the point stating that signatories of the Charter do not agree to any territorial changes without the consent of the countries concerned. This meant, in their belief, not accepting territorial changes which took place in Poland after September 1st 1939, most of all, including the Eastern part of the country into the USSR.

The Atlantic Charter did not obscure the projects of the spheres of influence, created beyond smaller nations. In December 1942 Zygmunt Nagórski Jr critically addressed it in the article *O prawdziwy pokój*¹⁰³. Meanwhile, “The Times”, bringing up the post-war organizing of the world, postulated passing the issue of safety over to the three powers: the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union¹⁰⁴. It claimed that the Soviets should be responsible for the safety of Central-Eastern Europe: “If it is assumed that the security boarder of Great Britain is until the Rhine, then it should also be understood that the security boarder of Russia is on the Oder”¹⁰⁵.

Member of the editorial board of “The Times”, Professor Edward H. Carr, seen as a

⁹⁶ Ibidem.

⁹⁷ Z. Grabowski, *Teza Times'a*, “WP” 1941, No. 33, p. 4.

⁹⁸ Ibidem.

⁹⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁰ [Cz. Poznański] M. Prozor, *Cenne ostrzeżenie*, “PW” 1941, No. 33, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ *O Polsce i zagadnieniach wschodnich w prasie anglo-amerykańskiej*, “WP” 1941, No. 35, p. 5.

¹⁰² [Z. Grabowski] A. Jawnuta, *The Charter of the Atlantic*, “PW” 1941, No. 34, p. 1.

¹⁰³ Z. Nagórski jr, *O prawdziwy pokój*, “PW” 1942, No. 50, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ W.T. Kowalski, *Walka dyplomatyczna...*, p. 371.

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem.

spokesperson of the project, was highly criticized in Polish press¹⁰⁶ and deserved, along with Herbert George Wells, to be called one of the main adversaries of the Polish question on the British Isles. The project itself, of two European spheres of influence, was compared to the Holly Alliance¹⁰⁷ and to the idea of German imperialism, if only due to associating the ideas of leadership and *Führerschaft*¹⁰⁸. In one of the issues of “Polska Walcząca” from September 1943, Mieczysław Szerer indeed explained the semantic difference between leadership (democratic leadership) and *Führerschaft* (dictator leadership), however, he too expressed concern with these post-war plans popular in Great Britain¹⁰⁹. According to him, they were a sign of imperialistic inclinations, which lead to the outbreak of the previous two wars. The division of influence was also more harshly compared, as “imprisoning whole nations”¹¹⁰, and pointed to contradictions with the letter and spirit of Atlantic Charter¹¹¹.

Zbigniew Grabowski in the article *Ostrożnie z Europą*¹¹² doubted the British understanding of the international situation, claiming that after the war Europe will succumb to bolshevik instead of Nazi totalitarianism. He expected a clear and precise reassurance from Western allies that they will prevent the spread of communism in countries of the European culture circle.

In January 1944 Stanisław Stroński, former Minister of Information in the government of Władysław Sikorski, a well-known politician and journalist, joined the press discussion, He claimed that the idea of leadership, popular among the British, is in essence, no different from the German *Führung* and is contradictory to the declaration of United Nations¹¹³. The article appeared in one of the last issues of “Wiadomości”, closed by the British shortly after. At the same time, Adam Pragier¹¹⁴, writing about plans of the future post-war European order, claimed that as “The Times” created the policy of appeasement before the war, so now professor Carr searches for other doctrines that would allow the British to stand on the sideline of continental affairs. Pragier pointed out that these harmful ideas are supported not only by conservatists from the *City*, natural consumers of “The Times”, but also russophile, leftist circles, which were built around the illusion of peaceful intentions of the Soviets. It turned out that ordinarily rivaling political camps of conservatists and socialists have a common stand on one of Poland's most important issues in foreign policy.

¹⁰⁶ Z. Nagórski Jr, *O prawdziwy pokój*, “PW” 1942, No. 50, p. 1; H. Tennenbaum, *Błędy i złudzenia profesora Carra*, „WP” 1943, No. 3, p. 3; S. Żurowski, *Prawo do życia*, “PW” 1943, No. 15, p. 1; A. S. Dąbrowski, *Błędy i odpowiedzialność*, “WP” 1943, No. 14, p. 1; Z. Nowakowski, *Na początku było słowo*, ibidem 1942, No. 16, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ Z. Grabowski, *Pokos*, “WP” 1943, No. 47, p. 4; S. Zahorska, *Milczenie nad Polską*, ibidem 1943, No. 50, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ H. Strasburger, *Ideowy podkład wojny*, “PW” 1943, No. 22, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ M. Szerer, *Przewodnictwo w Europie*, “PW” 1942, No. 38, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ S. Żurowski, *Prawo do życia*, “PW” 1943, No. 15, p. 1.

¹¹¹ H. Strasburger, *Ideowy podkład wojny*, “PW” 1943, No. 22, p. 1.

¹¹² Z. Grabowski, *Ostrożnie z Europą*, “WP” 1943, No. 6, p. 1.

¹¹³ S. Stroński, *Leadership – Führung*, “WP” 1944, No. 5, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ A. Pragier, *Na rozdrożu*, “WP” 1944, No. 1, p. 2.

Searching for an alternative, “Polska Walcząca” once more brought to light articles by Voigt¹¹⁵, who postulated introducing a *Pax Britannica* in post-war Europe, British control over peace and democracy. As Władysław Stankiewicz claimed, the continent wanted such a model because it was connected with developing democracy and tolerance, hindering ideological fascism and invasive expansionism. The political reality did not give the project a chance to be introduced.

The war with the III Reich and the future of Germany

Conservative British circles were criticized by journalists also for their mild attitude towards Nazi Germany¹¹⁶. There was a fear that having large political and economic influences, the bourgeoisie could lead to repeating of the Treaty of Versailles, an agreement that would not eliminate German revisionist powers and attitudes after the war. The temperature of English-German relations was constantly monitored and commented in Polish press.

Great Britain had different than Poland traditions and experiences in waging wars. In earlier periods, isolationism and the balance of power in Europe were characteristic and a priority for Great Britain. Germany was not a natural enemy for the United Kingdom and allies changed according to immediate needs and power balance. That is why maintaining support for the war in the British society was a vital issue for Poles, especially after the capitulation of France – the second of the Western allies.

Creating the Winston Churchill cabinet brought hope to taking a more active attitude by Great Britain in the war. At the same time, there took place a reevaluation of public opinion on methods of waging it. After the capitulation of France, there ultimately disappeared the idea of repeating the Western front from the World War I. A long-term positional war was in the past and a prompt invasion of Great Britain by Nazi Germany was indeed feared¹¹⁷, with the growing conviction of the crucial role of air force and other modern military warfare technology. The height of interest in the air force took place of course during the Battle of Britain, a period of intense air combat between July and October of 1940. Stories of Polish and British pilots were in Polish press, alongside descriptions and illustration of raids on London¹¹⁸ and reports on bombing the city.

The bombing of London, Coventry and other British cities, in the opinion of Polish journalists, were supposed to evoke great changes in the English society¹¹⁹. In June 1940 Zbigniew Grabowski wrote that it would be good if England, like Poland, felt the conflagration, and didn't

¹¹⁵ W. Stankiewicz, *Pax Britannica*, “PW” 1944, No. 19, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ A. Pragier, *Pan W. H. Dawson urzędza Europę*, “WP” 1941, No. 26, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ F. Mally, *Obrona Anglii*, “PW” 1940, No. 20, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ F. Topolski, *Londyn wrzesień 1940*, “WP” 1940, No. 31, p. 4; Z. Frenkiel, *Anglia musi zwyciężyć*, “PW” 1940, No. 29, p. 2.

¹¹⁹ A. Słonimski, *Bombardowanie Londynu*, “WP” 1940, No. 32/33, p. 2.

forgive the Germans, like it took place in 1918¹²⁰. Zbyszewski had the same conclusions after the most demanding period of the Battle of Britain¹²¹. According to the author, Britain who wanted to stay on the sidelines of European issues, in light of the German invasion, realized the seriousness of the threat and took an active stand. After the war, during the peace conference, England should therefore not take on the role of defending Germany again.

In the following months, Polish press underlined the opinion that the period between the wars was only a prolonged armistice. British policies of the 1920s were criticized, like resigning from modernizing the army, the pacifistic attitude of Prime Minister Chamberlain¹²², and also the susceptibility towards the defensive concepts of the French¹²³. Praised was the political sense of the group led by Winston Churchill, who came to power in a moment of crisis.

The atmosphere in the Polish press from the second half of 1941 was mostly positive. Bocheński, reviewing British press, concluded with satisfaction that the distinction between the Nazi party and the rest of German society had disappeared¹²⁴. Adam Pragier underlined that the British understood that the period of *splendid isolation* is ultimately gone and an active part in building the European order is necessary¹²⁵. Zbigniew Grabowski wrote that the English openly admit to taking the German enemy for granted during the first period of the war¹²⁶, once more announcing war mobilization and beginning the war “for good”. Even if there appeared other voices, then they were only mildly concerned. He claimed that stable attitudes towards the Germans are not to be worried about, as they result from lack of knowledge of the facts¹²⁷. He called “dreamers” those British who wanted to get along well with the Germans after the war, as opposed to “realists” who know that was impossible – the Reich had to be neutralized once and for all. Frederick A. Voigt was considered a realist.

The same author, backed up by arguments from an article by Ryszard Brynicki from “Wiadomości Polskie”¹²⁸, claimed in May 1941¹²⁹ that the German emigration in Great Britain and the United States moved to the intellectual offensive in order to ensure better treatment of Germans after the war. These people forge reality, claims the author, create a false picture of oppositional anti-German circles in the III Reich, both before and after the war. Grabowski found this situation alarming and demanding more direct political and propaganda steps.

In the autumn of 1941, in “Wiadomości Polskie” there appeared word that England once

¹²⁰ Z. Grabowski, *Mamy dyktaturę w Anglii*, “WP” 1940, No. 14/15 p. 3.

¹²¹ [W.A. Zbyszewski] K. Nienaski, *Rewolucja angielska*, “WP” 1940, No. 36, p. 1.

¹²² [Z. Grabowski] Politicus, *Lata ciemnoty*, “WP” 1941, No. 7, p. 3.

¹²³ A. Boray, *Angielski styl wojny*, “WP” 1941, No. 7, p. 4.

¹²⁴ [G. Bocheński] G. Gazda, *Rzeczy polskie w prasie brytyjskiej*, “WP” 1941, No. 9, p. 5.

¹²⁵ A. Pragier, *Pokój brytyjski*, “WP” 1941, No. 17, p. 3.

¹²⁶ Z. Grabowski, *Nowy straszliwy świat*, “WP” 1941, No. 25, p. 3.

¹²⁷ [Idem] A. Jawnuta, *O Anglii i Anglikach*, “PW” 1941, No. 15/16, p. 8.

¹²⁸ R. Brynicki, *Zapędy p. Haffnera*, “WP” 1941, No. 15, p. 4.

¹²⁹ [Z. Grabowski] A. Jawnuta, *O Anglii i Anglikach*, “PW” 1941, No. 20, p. 3.

more began to distinguish the Nazi regime from the rest of German society¹³⁰. Germanophiles, because that was how people supporting this view were termed, were associated with both the *City*, as with the Labor Party. The motive of the first circle was to protect of future British interests in Germany. With the socialists, as Dominik Szczerbic wrote, the party grassroots were clearly anti-German, while some labor leaders, like Victor Gollancz, were prone to separating the “good” Germans from the Nazis¹³¹, searching for a natural antifascism among the German working class.

The problem grew in the opinion of journalists because the circle of “Wiadomości Polskie”, *a priori* rejected the existence of an anti-German opposition in the Reich, barely tolerating the political activity of German emigrants in Great Britain. At that point, diplomat Lord Vansittart, was the main ally, who actively fought English germanophiles¹³².

According to Zbigniew Grabowski¹³³ Germans were once able to show two sides: one for the West and one for the East of Europe, that is why it was so difficult to convince part of the English to the **real** [bold – M.B] character of the Germans. He claimed that making the British aware of the matter was slow, which was why efforts should not subside in propaganda serving intensifying change in the social conscience of the British. Stanisław Szurlej¹³⁴ noticed that especially unfavorable in this particular case is the English tendency towards compromise, here a clear drawback, which could hold them back from punishing the Germans adequately enough after war. Waław Szperber¹³⁵ informed on the London exposition of “the good Germans” that were the opposition against the Nazi regime. “One really has to have the British phlegm, gullibility and ignorance of other nations to steadily walk through this »exhibition«”¹³⁶ was the comment. At the same time, a play entitled *Wacht am Rhein*¹³⁷, about German antifascists was staged in London. Stefania Zahorska, who reviewed it, used the occasion to once more underline that German propaganda in Great Britain is more and more visible and influential, not only on the left but also in the *City*. The bitterness of the author was even greater because at the same time, the English press became indifferent or hostile, writing about Poland as a country of *landowners*, exploiting peasants, workers and national minorities.

In November 1944 Aleksander Boray [Aleksander Bregman] in a warm tone reviewed the brochure of Sir Walter Layton¹³⁸, who believed Germany should be weakened as much as possible to prevent any future tragic conflicts. As later events showed, it was not the dominating view among

¹³⁰ O „demokracji” w Niemczech, “WP” 1941, No. 36, p. 4.

¹³¹ D. Szczerbic, *Wymowa faktów*, “WP” 1942, No. 33, p. 4.

¹³² Por. „*Cæterum censeo*” Vansittarta, “WP” 1942, No. 24, p. 4; Lord R. Vansittart, *Moje doświadczenia życiowe*, ibidem 1942, No. 44, p. 1; W. Budzyński, *Bez Black-outu*, “PW” 1942, No. 10, [. 6.

¹³³ Z. Grabowski, *Oskarżenie narodu*, “PW” 1942, No. 6, p. 1.

¹³⁴ S. Szurlej, *Szkodliwe nalogi myślowe*, “PW” 1942, No. 31, p. 1.

¹³⁵ W. Szperber, „*The Wonderland for British People*” przy Regent Street, “WP” 1942, No. 34, p. 5.

¹³⁶ Ibidem.

¹³⁷ S. Zahorska, „*Wacht am Rhein*”, “WP” 1942, No. 45, p. 1.

¹³⁸ [A. Bregman] A. Boray, *Co zrobić z Niemcami*, “PW” 1944, No. 46, p. 1.

British political circles. When war actions were ceased, the division of Germany into four occupational zones was criticized in “Polska Walcząca” by Józef Winiewicz¹³⁹. He not only saw a threat in the equal treatment of Germans, but also expressed regret that an in-depth, reliable analysis of the German question, conducted by the Ministry of Congressional Work of the Polish government, was almost entirely ignored by Great Britain and other powers.

The conference in Potsdam in July and August 1945 showed that some of the Polish anxieties concerning Germans were justified. Due to the new international situation, Great Britain and the United States did not intend to have a weak post-war Germany and in the case of the Polish-German border, London was against moving it to Oder–Neisse line.

Knowledge of Poland and Poles

By the end of 1941, during the growing popularity of the Soviet Union and the “aggressive” German emigration in Great Britain, Poles began to wonder what the British knew about Poland and its contribution to the war. Dominik Szczerbic wrote that although the English were vividly interested in Poles, it mostly had a social or humanistic nature, rarely political¹⁴⁰. According to Zygmunt Nowakowski¹⁴¹, the British knew nearly nothing about the Polish air force, which during the Battle of Britain and later on, had many noticeable accomplishments. The source of such a state was seen in the malfunctioning of Polish propaganda on the British Isles, but also in the attitude of the English, who didn't want to understand Poland, content with stereotypes, congruent with Soviet propaganda.

In February 1942 “Wiadomości Polskie” published a front page article by British journalist Spencer Curtis Brown, who tried to explain why the current attitude of the English press towards Poland was modest or even unfriendly¹⁴². According to the author, this was due to the specific functioning of the press on the Isles. Tabloids were as biased to information as they were to entertainment, so it should not surprise they were only interested in the tragic fate of Poland and serious daily newspapers were concerned with current affairs. The author however saw no reason to panic. The English were raised in a climate unfavorable for Poles, which would soon change due to the popularity of their army in England and the rational choices of the emigration government, the agreements with Czechoslovakia and the USSR. The author advised Polish correspondents that when writing for the English public, they break off constant reminiscing and focus on the ongoing issues.

Optimistic conclusions of this exhausting analysis did not convince Polish journalists. In

¹³⁹ J. Winiewicz, *Kłopot z Niemcami*, “PW” 1945, No. 22, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ D. Szczerbic, „*You can help to build me a gun*”, “PW” 1941, No. 48, p. 4.

¹⁴¹ Z. Nowakowski, *Utopia*, “WP” 1942, No. 3, p. 2.

¹⁴² S.C. Brown, *Prasa angielska a Polska*, “WP” 1942, No. 8, p. 1.

1942 they often recalled the ignorance of the English. Antoni Mamrot entitled his review of Louis Fischer's book on Poland: *Jeszcze jeden spaczony obraz Polski*¹⁴³. Zygmunt Nowakowski returned to the problem in a column titled *Księżna Korwiński*¹⁴⁴. He pointed to a British tendency to present Poland as a country of landowners and aristocrats, and what follows, a land of great inequalities, underdevelopment and exploitation¹⁴⁵. This outlook on pre-war Poland was in line with the standings of Soviet propaganda, which especially annoyed Poles. The poem „*Lordowie*”¹⁴⁶ published in „*Polska Walcząca*” was dedicated to the issue.

The year 1943 brought more disappointments, most of all, with Great Britain favoring the USSR in the Polish-Soviet conflict. It was written that British hosts and allies still have a foggy idea of Poland and Poles, their mentality and political arguments. Optimists like Zygmunt Nagórski Jr. expressed great belief that during the war, Poles will stay in the memory and hearts of their ally, who “will not forget [...] in the moment of final reckoning”¹⁴⁷, but it could have been an expression of wishful thinking or a simple propaganda maneuver, the uncertainty of the knowledge of the English on Poland grew with the progress of events.

Prominent journalist of “*Wiadomości Polskie*”, Zygmunt Nowakowski¹⁴⁸ wrote on the lack of reliable information on Poland, suggesting that the Polish propaganda on the Isles needs all the help it can get, even if it meant appearing at Hyde Park. By the end of the year, in the article *Ludzie z innego świata pojęć*¹⁴⁹, it was noticed that the British public opinion became numb to the information on the suffering of nations conquered by the III Reich, among them Poles, which was consistent with the previous analysis of Spencer Brown. In the last holiday issue of “*Polska Walcząca*” in 1943, Stanisław Szurlej concluded: “Quiet about our Country”¹⁵⁰.

The knowledge the English had was connected with the long-term nature of the war, which in a natural way, decreased their level of sensitivity. The minimal engagement of the Polish forces (air force and navy) in war actions in 1943, thus a lack of such curtail, in Brown's opinion, current information, against a huge effort of the Red Army on the Eastern front, also contributed to the receding of the Polish question into the background¹⁵¹. In May 1944 Zygmunt Nagórski Jr admitted that for the first time (sic!) upon arriving in Great Britain, Poles were forced to explain their country and arguments to their hosts¹⁵².

In the last months of 1944 “*Polska Walcząca*” began a series of articles, *Sprawy polskie w*

¹⁴³ A. Mamrot, *Jeszcze jeden spaczony obraz Polski*, “WP” 1942, No. 19, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ Z. Nowakowski, *Księżna Korwiński*, “WP” 1942, No. 38, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ Por. W. Babiński, *Prasa angielska...*, p. 28.

¹⁴⁶ [M. Eizenman] Or-Si, „*Lordowie*”, “PW” 1942, No. 28, p. 6.

¹⁴⁷ Z. Nagórski jr, *W dalekim zasięgu*, “PW” 1943, No. 2, p. 1.

¹⁴⁸ Z. Nowakowski, *Tylko cztery punkty*, “WP” 1943, No. 22, p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ [J. Kisielewski] S. Zieliński, *Ludzie z innego świata pojęć*, “PW” 1943, No. 36, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ S. Szurlej, *Wiara i wola*, “PW” 1943, No. 51/52, p. 1.

¹⁵¹ S. Lewandowska. *Prasa polskiej emigracji...*, p. 218.

¹⁵² Z. Nagórski jr, *Osobliwa chwila*, “PW” 1944, No. 20, p. 1.

*książkach angielskich*¹⁵³ in which new books covering Polish issues were reviewed. As it turned out, the texts of *Scrutator* – host of the series Mieczysław Grydzewski, were different than the dull voices of the last two years. Examples of favorable political analyses appeared, such as alerting against the Soviet system or positive opinions on the then outdated project of a central-European federation. Even if the choice was non-representative, there were more than a few such entries.

Herbert George Wells as personification of Polish-phobia

It is worth noticing that the person who in all the above stated issues had an opinion contrary to Polish expectations was journalist and writer Herbert George Wells, who identified with socialist ideas. Because of this, from the very early period of the war, Wells was presented as a “longer than lately”¹⁵⁴, main foe the Polish question.

Wells was a supporter of federation of vast lands, suggesting including Poland in the Soviet sphere of power. He had a very gentle attitude towards Germans, clearly separating the Nazi regime from the rest of the German nation. He was unfavorable towards the pre-war Polish border, finding it unjust from an ethnic point of view and supported the Curzon line. He criticized Poles for their improper romanticism, calling the Polish post-war boarder project *map-dreaming*¹⁵⁵, unfavorable towards the period of Sanation government (half-fascist, total, aligned with Hitlerism) the pre-war Eastern policy (taking over the Vilnius region, accepting the Riga boarder), occupying the Zaolzie region, hatred and unexplained fear of the Russians¹⁵⁶.

As an answer, Stanisław Szurlej wrote that Wells must have got his information on Poland from German or Soviet sources and they must have seemed reliable to him¹⁵⁷. The person who dedicated the uttermost power to overthrow Well's arguments in “*Wiadomości Polskie*” was well-known pre-war socialist activist Adam Pragier, who many, many times, in an exhausting manner and in different forms (open letters, reviews, analysis), criticized the texts and statements of Wells¹⁵⁸.

Despite attempts to diminish Wells’ opinions as utopian and irrational, they were somewhat popular among the English. It was thus written that his opinions “mirror those of a large fraction of British intelligence of a radical tone”¹⁵⁹, trying to present the views of the writer as marginal.

¹⁵³ [M. Grydzewski] *Scrutator*, *Sprawy polskie w książkach angielskich*, “PW” 1944, No. 36, p. 7; No. 38, p. 7; No. 41, p. 7; No. 44, p. 7; No. 46, p. 7; No. 47, p. 7; No. 50, p. 7; 1945, No. 1, p. 7; No. 2, p. 7; No. 4, p. 7; No. 6, p. 7; No. 10, p. 7; No. 11, p. 7; No. 18, p. 6.

¹⁵⁴ *Wells o Polsce*, “WP” 1941, No. 34, p. 4.

¹⁵⁵ S. Szurlej, *Granice*, “PW” 1942, No. 44, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁷ *Idem*, *Błędy cudzie i własne*, “PW” 1941, No. 42, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ Compare: A. Pragier, *List otwarty do H. G. Wellsa*, “WP” 1940, No. 31, p. 1; *idem*, *H. G. Wells – kartograf przyszłego świata*, *idem* 1942, No. 32, p. 2; *idem*, *Wells a idea rewolucji*, *ibidem* 1942, No. 34, p. 2; *idem*, *H. G. Wells o wojnie i pokoju*, *idem* 1942, No. 42, p. 3; *idem*, *Wells w kręgu magii i złudzeń*, *idem* 1942, No. 44, p. 4.

¹⁵⁹ *Wells o Polsce*, “WP” 1941, No. 34, p. 4.

Nevertheless, on just how important a figure Herbert George Wells was in the UK proves a note from June 22nd 1941¹⁶⁰, reporting in detail the breakfast of PM Sikorski and Wells, during which they discussed the future issues of Poland and Europe, and general Sikorski presented the writer, a strong enthusiast of federation idea, a vision of the future Polish-Czechoslovak federation.

Everyday life, customs, traditions

During the first period of the war, the press encouraged Poles to get to know British customs, tradition, language and culture, especially since emigrants often had a hard time adjusting to basic, everyday situations like left-hand traffic or a different measurement and monetary system¹⁶¹. Press articles took on the function of guides, such titles like *Lewą Stroną!*¹⁶² by Zygmunt Nowakowski in „Polska Walcząca” or *Learn English!* by Ksawery Pruszyński in “Wiadomości Polskie”¹⁶³. Texts aimed at facilitating functioning on the Isles were the domain of the army-oriented “Polska Walcząca”, among whose readers were people with a lower education level and less sophisticated than in the case of the more traditionally intellectual “Wiadomości”. In August 1940 „Polska Walcząca” started the series *ABC angielsko-polskie*¹⁶⁴ and *Anglia i Anglicy*¹⁶⁵, familiarizing Polish readers with English customs. Articles dedicated to the issues of behaving in everyday situations also appeared¹⁶⁶.

Popular science articles on English history and culture were often published. Right after the evacuation of the Polish army, in July 1940 an illustrated history of the most spectacular victories of the British navy¹⁶⁷, and in August, also published, was the illustrated history of the British Parliament¹⁶⁸. In the same year, “Wiadomości Polskie” wrote about the history of London¹⁶⁹ and the British armed forces¹⁷⁰. In 1941 it published articles on the history of England by British writer Violet Mason¹⁷¹ and a special edition on Oxford, its history and traditions¹⁷². In “Polska Walcząca” articles concerned the tradition of English magazines¹⁷³ and the history of the English gentleman¹⁷⁴.

¹⁶⁰ *Spotkanie generała Sikorskiego z Wellsem*, “WP” 1941, No. 25, p. 5.

¹⁶¹ H. Skarbek-Peretiatkiewicz, *Oni i my*, “PW” 1940, No. 22, p. 7.

¹⁶² Transl. *Left Side!*; Z. Nowakowski, *Lewą stroną!*, “PW” 1940, No. 21, p. 6.

¹⁶³ K. Pruszyński, *Learn English!*, “WP” 1941, No. 4, p. 1.

¹⁶⁴ Z. Frenkiel, *ABC angielsko-polskie*, “PW” 1940, No. 22, p. 7, No. 23, p. 7, No. 25, p. 6, No. 27 p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ A. Grey, *Anglia i Anglicy*, “PW” 1940, No. 23, p. 7, No. 26, p. 7, No. 28, p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ S. Kleczkowski, *Jak zachować się w Anglii*, “PW” 1940, No. 29, p. 8.

¹⁶⁷ [J. Lewitt, J. Him] Lewitt i Him, *Dni chwały Wielkiej Brytanii*, “PW” 1940, No. 20, p. 5.

¹⁶⁸ [idem] Lewitt i Him, *Parlamentaryzm narodził się w Anglii*, “PW” 1940, No. 24, p. 5.

¹⁶⁹ B. Leitgeber, *Londyn i jego Tamiza*, “WP” 1940, No. 16/18, p. 3.

¹⁷⁰ Cz. Jeśman, *Armia brytyjska*, “WP” 1940, No. 35, p. 2.

¹⁷¹ V. Mason, *Dzieje Anglii*, “WP” 1941, No. 20, p. 1, No. 27, p. 2.

¹⁷² *Oxford city and the university*, “WP” 1941, No. 50, add. p. I-IV.

¹⁷³ [Z. Grabowski] A. Jawnuta, *O Anglii i Anglikach*, “PW” 1941, No. 5, p. 6.

¹⁷⁴ M. Krotowski, *Dżentelmen*, “PW” 1941, No. 15/16, p. 8, później także F. Sokołów, *Co to jest gentleman?*, ibidem 1942, No. 9, p. 3.

By 1942 “Wiadomości” wrote about the history and organization of BBC¹⁷⁵, famous English women¹⁷⁶, a series of articles by Tymon Terlecki on the history of London¹⁷⁷ and the English wars with Napoleon¹⁷⁸, while “Polska Walcząca” published another large article on the traditions of the British army¹⁷⁹. In the first year of their inhabiting the Isles, many similar press materials were published; in the last stage of the war, in connection with growing reader knowledge and the deepening chill in Polish-British relations, they became rare.

Strong Polish-Scottish relations were especially underlined. Scotland was the stationing point of Polish soldiers, while the Glasgow region was inhabited by a large catholic society, which was greatly integrating. Polish soldiers were familiarized with the history and culture of Scotland¹⁸⁰, “Polska Walcząca”, in its section *Z życia obozów*, regularly informed about parties organized by Polish soldiers for the Scottish public¹⁸¹. The cabaret group “Lwowska Fala”¹⁸², formed around the figure of Wiktor Budzyński, was often mentioned, continuing, in war conditions, the popular pre-war tradition of Lviv radio drama.

General Marian Kukiel, Minister of War Affairs assured of the friendship in an interview for “Polska Walcząca” in October 1942¹⁸³, ending it with the words: “The Polish-Scottish friendship [...] born during the war will pass the test of time and stay with the two nations”¹⁸⁴. Also in “Wiadomości Polskie” Scotland was not omitted, their hospitality praised like in the article by Paweł Miller *Na Szkockiej ziemi*¹⁸⁵.

In both magazines, mostly based on the experience of soldiers, distinct Scottish traits were pointed out, very different from the stereotypical English phlegm. The most often quoted trait was Scottish hospitality, close to the Polish understanding of Slavic cordiality¹⁸⁶. Apart from that, Scots made an impression of brave and ambitious people although – in comparison with Polish soldiers –

¹⁷⁵ K. Eydziatowicz, *Radiofonia angielska i BBC*, “WP” 1942, No. 9, p. 4.

¹⁷⁶ Z. Zwolińska, *Trzy angielskie postaci kobiece*, “WP” 1942, No. 18, p. 4.

¹⁷⁷ T. Terlecki, *Londyn średniowieczny*, “WP” 1942, No. 35, p. 2; idem, *Londyn w kręgu rozwoju i klęski*, ibidem 1942, No. 40, p. 3; idem, *Londyn wiktoriański i powiktoriański*, ibidem 1942, No. 43, p. 3; idem, *Nasz Londyn*, ibidem 1942, No. 48, p. 3.

¹⁷⁸ D. Szczerbic, *Jak Anglia walczyła z Napoleonem*, “WP” 1942, No. 51/52, p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ [A. Bregman] A. Boray, *Od Drake’a do Commandos czyli morskie zagony*, “PW” 1942, No. 3, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰ L. Meyer, *Szkocja i Szkoci*, “PW” 1940, No. 27, p. 4, No. 28, p. 4.

¹⁸¹ [J. Harasowska] J. z G., *Polski koncert w Glasgow*, “PW” 1940, No. 22, p. 8; [A. Słonimski] Nemo, *Kuplecik polsko-szkocki*, ibidem 1940, No. 22 p. 8; W. Czereśniewski, *Z życia obozów. Wycieczka do Glasgow*, ibidem 1940, No. 29, p. 7; Ł.B., A.J., *Św. Mikołaj i Gwiazdka dla dzieci szkockich*, ibidem 1941, No. 3, p. 7; L. Bojczuk, *Na Łyczkowie... w Szkocji*, ibidem 1941, No. 10, p. 7; B.K. Piekarski, *Polskość Edynburga*, ibidem 1941, No. 25, p. 4; M. Pawlikowski, *Z Polską po Szkocji*, ibidem 1941, No. 34, p. 7; *Przyjaźń polsko-szkocka*, ibidem 1941, No. 50, p. 4; Z. Nagórski jr, *Żołnierze polscy kochają dzieci*, ibidem 1943, No. 12, p. 7; L. Bojczuk, *Pozdrawiamy sztandary wolności*, tamże 1942, No. 27, p. 7.

¹⁸² L. Bojczuk, *Wiosenne wędrowki „Lwowskiej fali”*, “PW” 1941, No. 25, p. 7.

¹⁸³ [L. Rubel] L. Tyśmienicki, *O przyjaźni polsko-szkockiej*, “PW” 1942, No. 44, p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁸⁵ P. Miller, *Na szkockiej ziemi*, “WP” 1940, No. 23, p. 4.

¹⁸⁶ K. Pruszyński, *Zaprosimy wszystkich*, “WP” 1941, No. 46, p. 1; A. Bzowiecki, *Pół roku w Szkocji*, “PW” 1941, No. 5, p. 7.

rather simple and less keen¹⁸⁷. Their simplicity, a certain naivety and trustfulness, contrasted with the “continental stuck-ups” typical for Poles. It was mentioned in the article *Pół roku w Szkocji* published in “Polska Walcząca” at the beginning of 1941¹⁸⁸. On the other hand, Scottish precision and reliability in obeying the law contrasted with traditionally Polish insubordination – noticed writer Wiktor Budzyński¹⁸⁹.

The depiction of Scots – to a large extent based on the direct contact of Polish soldiers with their Scottish hosts – was much more lively and multi-dimensional than of the English, who were perceived through the prism of stereotypes and the context of politics and public life.

Conclusions

The analysis of journalism on British issues in “Wiadomości Polskie” and “Polska Walcząca” in the years 1940–1945 enables distinguishing factors that set the tone and dynamics of the discourse.

The first of them is connected with the passing of time and the prolonged stay of Poles in Great Britain. After the evacuation, the first few months were a time of intense discovering a new country and its culture, which were accompanied by fascination and amazement. The new place was compared to more familiar countries, attempts were made to grasp the British traits and first all-encompassing conclusions were made, mostly based on stereotypes and superficial observations. The positive impression was overblown by the fact that between June 1940–1941, Great Britain was the only sovereign country fighting the power of the Third Reich. At that time, articles on British culture, history and customs were published and journalists agreed that it was unknown and unappreciated in pre-war Poland. The necessary hospitality was used to catch up on culture and political education. In the following years of the war, Poles who managed to adjust to British reality, all the more vividly commented the current affairs of Britain. Feeling more at home made Polish journalists see some shortcomings of the British national character and their political mistakes. To use the terminology from an article written by Zygmunt Nowakowski, it was concluded, that the British were more lilliputs than giants. In the last two years of the war, a more pretentious attitude was assumed towards the hosts, reminding them of their political duties to Poles.

Underlining the Polish higher moral ground was connected with the second factor influencing the tone of the press, which was the condition of country relations. For a long time press opinion towards British politics was positive, as long as the Polish emigration had a conviction that Poland was a partner for England, not a menace. “Wiadomości Polskie” judged the attitudes of British public opinion with a stricter eye. The criticism was enhanced by killing Polish aspirations

¹⁸⁷ K. Pruszyński, *Opowiadanie podchorążego Nowaka o tym jak burmistrz miasteczka V. zamienił swój gród na warownię*, “WP” 1941, No. 37, p 1.

¹⁸⁸ A. Bzowiecki, *Pół roku w Szkocji*, “PW” 1941, No. 5, p. 7.

¹⁸⁹ W. Budzyński, *Bez Black-outu*, “PW” 1941, No. 48, p. 6.

in 1943 – suspending diplomatic relations by the Soviet Union and then the death of general Sikorski with its political consequences. These actions showed that Poland stopped being – if it ever was – an equal partner in the anti-German coalition. From that moment, many journalists, especially from “Wiadomości Polskie”, did not hide their irritation with British politics. “Wiadomości” was closed in February 1944, but when the final marginalization of the Polish emigration government took place – the Yalta conference – also “Polska Walcząca” took on a sharp and critical tone.

The third meaningful factor were political views of journalists. In both analyzed magazines, articles were published by authors with different political sympathies. Their opinion on British politics didn't match party division lines – it rather ran through the middle. The environment most critical of Polish and British government politics was focused around “Wiadomości Polskie”. It contained representatives of the conservative right (Cat-Mackiewicz), center-right (Stroński), center (Nowakowski) and Sanation (Matuszewski), as well as the socialist left (Pragier), and these also included the government coalition, which isolated only the Sanation circle. The tone of journalism was not set by party sympathies, but by the approach to the basic issues of Polish politics of the war. Those “uncompromisable” wrote about Polish issues and British politics, eagerly using the romantic-national symbolic universe. This tone was by 1943 present also in “Polska Walcząca” and its editor, Tymon Terlecki, became one of the preachers of those “uncompromisable” during and after the war.