

Svitlana Grela-Kravchenko



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**DOW**

**SKI!**

**JOURNALIST AND PUBLICIST IN THE  
FIGHT FOR A FREE AND UNITED EUROPE**



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WYDAWNICTWO  
UNIWERSYTETU  
ŁÓDZKIEGO

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“There is much that divides us; however, we share a common goal:  
to avoid being swallowed by the Russian-Soviet mire”

Józef Łobodowski



Józef Łobodowski, 1930s.  
From the Tomanek family archives

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## PREFACE

Józef Łobodowski (1909–1988) stands out as a unique and influential figure in twentieth-century Polish culture, with an impact that extended well beyond Poland, shaping intellectual and cultural discussions across Europe. Throughout his life, he proved to be a formidable political journalist, an innovative publisher and editor, a talented and unconventional poet and prose writer, a skilled translator, and a perceptive literary critic. Łobodowski left behind an exceptional body of work – both scholarly and journalistic – that smoothly wove together the traditions of multiple national cultures, including Polish, Ukrainian, Spanish, Russian, and other European influences, reflecting a cosmopolitan outlook and a deep engagement with Europe's broader intellectual landscape.

Józef Łobodowski is widely recognized as one of the leading advocates of Polish-Ukrainian understanding. Throughout his career, he devoted a significant portion of his journalistic and literary work to Ukraine and the complex dynamics of Polish-Ukrainian relations. He left behind a rich legacy of innovative, forward-looking ideas on interethnic dialogue, offering insights that continue to illuminate the path toward mutual understanding and the constructive development of relations among nations.

The first chapter of the monograph traces the key stages of the writer's life and the development of his worldview, highlighting in particular the most significant achievements of his literary work.

Chapters Two and Three focus on Józef Łobodowski's journalistic output, offering an analysis of his reflections on Europe's political landscape before and after the war, Poland's place in Europe, interethnic relations, the fate of Ukraine, and the complexities of Polish-Ukrainian relations.

Józef Łobodowski stands as a remarkable and singular figure in the history and culture of twentieth-century Poland. Endowed with

an extraordinary intellect, a vast reservoir of knowledge, and a mind of uncommon insight, he advanced ideas that were both original and pioneering. Yet these qualities represent only part of his creative individuality. He also distinguished himself by an unwavering life stance, a rebellious spirit, formidable willpower, and steadfast determination. Guided by a strict ethical code, he harbored a profound aversion to falsehood and hypocrisy, which made his voice and vision all the more enduring and compelling.

Józef Łobodowski's political journalism is profound, multifaceted, and strikingly prophetic. The ideas he articulated more than fifty years ago continue to impress with their clarity and relevance today. In both depth and scope, his thinking placed him far ahead of his time. Through his writings and creative output, he transcended the boundaries of Polish national culture, leaving a lasting mark on European civilization. Łobodowski belongs to that rare group of visionaries whose insights are fully recognized only long after their lifetime, often posthumously.

Józef Łobodowski entered the literary scene in the early 1930s, both as a poet and a publicist. From the very beginning, he actively participated in public debates with representatives of various political camps, addressing questions about the future of contemporary Poland, its domestic and foreign policies, and its relations and cooperation with other nations.

After the Second World War, Łobodowski was banned in the Communist People's Republic of Poland and across the Soviet-controlled Eastern European sphere because of his anti-communist stance and outspoken criticism of Soviet policies. It was only in the final decade of the twentieth century that his name and works began to be recognized in his homeland. During this period, his complete literary legacy was published; however, many of his journalistic writings, issued in European press outlets after the war, have not yet been thoroughly studied and remain largely unknown to the broader public. In Ukraine, a country to which he dedicated a significant part of his literary and journalistic work, he is still familiar only to a narrow circle of intellectuals.

Throughout his life, Łobodowski gained invaluable experience interacting with people of diverse nations, cultures, and political viewpoints. He was born in Lithuania, and his family later lived in Poland, Russia, and the Kuban region of the North Caucasus. His youth was

closely connected to Lublin, and he served in the military while working as a journalist in Volhynia (now part of Ukraine). He subsequently lived and worked in Warsaw. During the Second World War, he served in the Polish army in Eastern Galicia (now Ukraine), and later endured internment in camps in Hungary and France, as well as imprisonment in Spain. After the war, he settled in Madrid, where he worked for the Polish section of the Spanish national radio and collaborated with Polish political émigré communities in London and Paris.

Thanks to his wide-ranging life experiences, exceptional intellectual abilities, and innate curiosity, Józef Łobodowski possessed profound knowledge of the history and culture of diverse peoples. He navigated effortlessly across multiple disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. This extensive experience and accumulated knowledge formed the foundation of his worldview, whose defining feature was a cultural borderland perspective – a deep awareness of Polish history and culture, understood in connection with other European cultures, and framed within an ongoing existential intercultural dialogue.

Józef Łobodowski's work consistently existed at the intersection of multiple national cultures – Polish, Ukrainian, Spanish, and others. The cultural borderland became one of the defining features of his journalistic and literary thought, enabling him to approach social phenomena and events from diverse national perspectives. This approach produced reflections and conclusions that were ahead of their time, often prophetic in nature, highlighting potential consequences and threats for the future of Europe as a whole, and Poland in particular.

Józef Łobodowski was a man of high moral character, consistently acting in accordance with his convictions. The ideas and principles he expressed were genuinely his own, and the actions he urged others to undertake were those he was prepared to carry out himself or did so personally. He maintained a clearly defined hierarchy of values, his own “ethical decalogue,” which guided his life and formed the foundation for all his reflections and conclusions.

His openness and sincerity in communication, as well as his candid expression of personal assessments of people, events, and processes, and steadfast refusal to tolerate falseness or hypocrisy in human relationships earned him many genuine friends – but also numerous determined enemies, particularly among politicians.

The writer never demanded of others more than he demanded of himself. He could not tolerate injustice and consistently challenged circumstances that demeaned human dignity. A journalist by calling, he possessed an immense inner drive to improve the world and address its imperfections. From his school years in the gymnasium until the end of his life, he remained deeply connected to the press and radio, where he spoke, persuaded, debated, exposed lies and hypocrisy, protested blasphemy, and advocated dialogue and understanding between people and nations. Above all, he valued both his freedom and that of others. In his beliefs and actions, he was consistent, seeing things through to the end and confronting his weaknesses while critically observing those of others. He rejected fanaticism in all its forms – religious, political, or moral.

Like many young people who came of age in the interwar years of the twentieth century, Józef Łobodowski initially engaged with leftist revolutionary ideas. By the mid-1930s, he had abandoned these illusions, a process that continued and became fully consolidated during World War II.

By temperament, he was a passionate polemicist, with debate serving as a vital means of expressing his social stance and moral values. Through discussions in the press, he sought to shape public opinion, expose falsehoods, and challenge harmful stereotypes entrenched in societal consciousness.

In his literary work, Łobodowski celebrated the beauty and power of nature, as well as human virtues and weaknesses, depicting both romantic and instructive episodes from history. In his journalistic writings, he provided critical assessments of individuals and society, analyzed social and political processes, and highlighted historical lessons that had been overlooked and opportunities that had been missed.

Łobodowski always remained a patriot of his homeland, analyzing Poland's freedom and security through the lens of geopolitics and situating its future within the broader transformative processes shaping Central and Eastern Europe. In his assessments of the future, he impressed with both the rationalism of his reasoning and the boldness of his visionary foresight. He believed that actual progress should restore human dignity, lift people out of poverty, provide freedom for development, be grounded in humanism, and serve to improve and unite

nations. As a person shaped by the cultural frontier, he possessed far broader perspectives on societal issues – particularly in matters of interethnic relations – than many of his contemporaries.

Today, Józef Łobodowski's reflections on the future of European countries, including Poland and its neighbors, and the challenges and threats they face, resonate with even greater relevance than when they were first written. His insights on interethnic relations, particularly Polish-Ukrainian relations, remain a pressing call to action. In the context of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, which continues to take on increasingly global dimensions, Łobodowski's call for pathways toward mutual understanding and reconciliation between Poles and Ukrainians is more urgent and timely than it was over fifty years ago.



# CHAPTER 1

## THE LIFE PATH OF JÓZEF ŁOBODOWSKI AND THE FORMATION OF HIS PERSONALITY

### Childhood and Youth Experiences

The life of Józef Łobodowski (1909–1988) reflects, almost like a mirror, the dramatic upheavals of the twentieth century. Wars and revolutions that swept across Europe left deep marks on both the writer and his family. His biography is filled with extraordinary episodes, complex trials, and contradictory situations – elements that have long awaited a compelling, almost cinematic retelling.

Łobodowski was born into a noble family. He lost his father at an early age and was raised by his mother under difficult material conditions and within the framework of long-standing Christian traditions. From his ancestors, he inherited a fiery, rebellious temperament, a keen sense of justice, exceptional intellectual abilities, an extraordinary memory, and an insatiable curiosity about the world. He later reflected on his “difficult” birth in these terms:

My father, Władysław Łobodowski, clearly had a natural fondness for running his own small holding, as he had always dreamed of having his own little plot of land – perhaps the smallest, but his own. Thanks to these inclinations and dreams, I was born in a Lithuanian village in the Wejsieje district of Sejny County, in the part that, after independence, belonged to Lithuania and was referred to by the Poles as the Kaunas region. [...] My arrival into the world caused quite a sensation, for only daughters had been born in the family so far – three already – and my father was determined to have a male heir. I don't know why it took me so long to appear, but I finally did. [...] When I came into the world, a fearsome storm descended upon the countryside, with thunder crashing and lightning flashing – a spectacle so rare at that time of year – still winter

in Aukštaitija, that it sent shivers through the village. Terrified village women whispered among themselves that an evil being had been born, perhaps – God forbid – the very incarnation of the devil. My mother, too, was plunged into despair, for the newborn – that is, me – after surveying the surroundings, contorted my face, let out a sharp squeal, and made it abundantly clear that I wished to return whence I had come.<sup>1</sup>

Łobodowski spent his early childhood in Lublin, but with the outbreak of the First World War, his father was mobilized into the Russian army. As the front approached, his mother, Stefania Łobodowska, moved temporarily to Moscow for the duration of the war, fearing that the advancing front line might separate her from her husband. Many Polish families made similar decisions at the time, as many men were compelled to fight on the Russian side. During this period, a significant portion of Polish territory was under the control of the Russian Empire.

In Moscow, Józef received his early education at home, quickly learning to read and write in both Polish and Russian. His older sister, Władysława, recalled:

Since there was a four-year age difference between us (and in Russia, you had to be ten to start the first grade of a gymnasium), I was already in the third grade at the time and was getting him ready for the first grade. He was such a gentle boy, so sweet, sitting across from me with those large, gray-blue eyes with a sapphire sheen, gazing at me with pure adoration. And I, like a strict schoolmistress, always kept a ruler at hand, tapping it when necessary.

Once, to my great astonishment, I suddenly realized that this boy knew more than I did – in literature and, in fact, everything! He knew things remarkably well. Once, when I was having trouble preparing for a lesson, he came by and gave me a hint. That boy was always reading. Back then, our rural home boasted an excellent library, and he devoured all the books there. He knew Russian history – and not just Russian history, but that of other countries as well – perfectly, even as a little boy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kalendarium życia in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1: życie, twórczość, publicystyka, wspomnienia*, "Scriptores," 2009, no. 35, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Wypowiedź Wandy Tomankowej in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 437.



Il. I. J. Łobodowski with his parents and sisters in Russia, ca. 1915.  
From the archives of the National Museum in Lublin

After the February Revolution of 1917, life in Moscow grew increasingly complex, with food shortages becoming severe. By the end of the summer, the family relocated to the North Caucasus, settling in the fishing town of Yeysk. It was during this period that the writer's first conscious childhood memories began to take shape. There, through interactions with the local population – the Kuban Cossacks – Józef Łobodowski began exploring Ukrainian history and culture, particularly the history of the Zaporizhian Sich and its descendants who had settled in the Kuban region. It was also there that he first heard and began learning the Ukrainian language, spoken by the inhabitants of the Cossack stanitsas.

Later, the writer reflected on his experiences in the Kuban region as follows:

If the old, well-worn saying about a land “flowing with milk and honey” ever truly applied anywhere, it was here, in the Cossack lands of the Kuban. The black soil, sometimes several meters deep, yielded wheat so abundant that a rider on horseback could disappear in it as if lost in a forest. There was an overwhelming abundance of fruits: apricots, peaches, and a variety of plums known locally as “tycza,” and above all, an extraordinary abundance of watermelons and melons. When a Cossack brought them to market on a two-wheeled high cart, he sold them ten at a time – he wouldn't sell them singly. Watermelons were even fed to the pigs. Housewives could never keep count of their domestic poultry. Naturally, there were horses and horned cattle. The people were robust, open-hearted, and friendly, deeply devoted to ancient customs handed down intact from the depths of the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Later, the Russian Bolshevik Revolution reached the Kuban, initially radically transforming life in the Cossack settlements and ultimately leading to their destruction.

Desperate resistance was crushed everywhere; numerical and technological superiority proved overwhelming. In the battles of 1920–1922, the Kuban region suffered heavy losses, but it had not yet been dealt a mortal

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<sup>3</sup> Irena Szypowska, *Łobodowski. Od “Atamana Łobody” do “Seniora Lobo,”* Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, Warszawa 2001, pp. 15–17.

wound. Those wounds were inflicted only later, during the years of forced collectivization. In Russia, ethnic resistance did occur, but it never took on a mass character. In Ukraine and the North Caucasus – it did!<sup>4</sup>

– Łobodowski wrote.

The events of the revolution, which he witnessed firsthand, were a profound shock to Józef and left a deep, lifelong impression on his psyche. He observed the Cossacks killing Bolsheviks who came for forced requisitions, and night after night, he watched rebellious settlements burn, destroyed by the Bolsheviks.

The Kuban Cossacks, like the Ukrainian peasants, were starving to death, and thousands were sent to labor camps. Others perished in open combat: Cossack stanitsas were bombed from the air and attacked by armored units. In essence, Cossackdom was destroyed. [...] I lived in Russia during its most turbulent years and witnessed the revolution unfolding on the streets. Already then, as a seller of cigarettes and tobacco, I was clashing with the authorities [...]. To my parents' despair, I befriended homeless children who roamed the port,<sup>5</sup>

– Łobodowski later recalled.

In those famine-stricken years, at the age of twelve, he sold illegal moonshine and cigarettes on the streets, stole things, and even spent time in jail. He was forced to build a coffin with his own hands and bury his father in Yeysk. The family was subsequently spared from exile to the Solovetsky correctional labour camp by a Bolshevik commissar whom his father had once saved from execution. During those harrowing years, the boy came to understand for the first time that human cruelty and nobility are in no way determined by social class or national origin.

It was during this time that Łobodowski first became aware of the fragility and vulnerability of human life. He witnessed the scale of violence and the force of evil that instilled in him a profound sense of the need to seek justice and strive for a better world. His relentless intellectual curiosity, combined with his study of diverse histories and cultures,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 17–19.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

provided him with a strong foundation for critical thinking. Coupled with his rebellious spirit and fighting temperament, these experiences shaped him into a distinctive and compelling creative personality. He was particularly inspired by his family's Cossack heritage, tracing back to his distant great-great-grandfather, the Cossack Loboda, which left a lasting impression on his identity and worldview:

When I was still a schoolboy and learned of this, I questioned my father about my origins. He answered: "Listen – this is no more than a memory. Over two hundred years and more, your ancestors married Polish women, so what share of Ukrainian blood could remain in your veins? Half a percent? One percent? But hold on to this memory, because it is indispensable to any understanding between the two nations".<sup>6</sup>

During his adolescence, amid the Russian Bolshevik Revolution and the wars in the Kuban, Łobodowski confronted his first significant tests of character, willpower, and humanity, experiences that would profoundly shape his moral and personal resilience. "After returning from the Caucasus, horrific scenes were seared into my mind. I had been a witness to executions on both sides – Cossacks hanged the 'Reds,' then the 'Reds' shot the 'Whites' and the Cossacks. At night, I dreamed of blood-soaked corpses; I was afraid to enter a dark room alone,"<sup>7</sup> – the writer recalled.

In 1922, following the death of his father, the family returned to their longed-for homeland, Poland. During the journey, the eldest sister succumbed to typhus, and only three of them arrived in Lublin: his mother, Stefania, 17-year-old Władysława, and 13-year-old Józef. Until the end of his life, Łobodowski cherished the words his father had spoken on his deathbed: "I would rather serve as a watchman in Poland than as a dignitary under the Soviets."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Irena Szypowska, *Rozmowa z Józefem Łobodowskim* in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 373.

<sup>7</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Wspomnienia lubelskie* in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 166.

<sup>8</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Szklane domy i Hegel* in: *Józef Łobodowski, Notatniki. Tom 2. Publicystyka*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2023, p. 48.

The 1920s and early 1930s in Lublin marked a formative period in Józef Łobodowski's life, shaping him both as a student and as an emerging personality. These years were characterized by intellectual exploration, spirited debates, and frequent clashes with authority. After completing his schooling, Łobodowski attended the State Gymnasium named after Jan Zamoyski, an institution dedicated to preparing students for practical life. Even then, he stood out among his peers for his insatiable curiosity and eagerness to explore the unknown. He possessed a rare gift for storytelling, a deep love of poetry, and an ability to persuasively defend his convictions – qualities that remained with him throughout his life.

After the end of the First World War, Europe entered an era marked by free thinking, fueled by the emergence of new, independent nation-states. This climate encouraged the spread of diverse national ideologies. Revolutionary ideas flourished in people's minds, accompanied by hopes for a brighter future and the possibility of building a new, happy existence. Rebellions and protests were widespread, as were the desires for immediate change, the creation of new customs and ways of life, and the formation of novel social ideals. Young people eagerly engaged in sports and the arts, participated in amateur clubs, discussed emerging philosophical ideas, and took to the streets to express their aspirations through bold and provocative actions. This vibrant, restless energy became the natural milieu for the young Józef. "We were individualists, entirely free from herd instincts, yet this did not preclude selflessness or a readiness for sacrifice,"<sup>9</sup> – as the writer later recalled of those years.

He was a fiery and consistently argumentative student. He openly expressed the leftist and atheistic views fashionable at the time, debated with his teachers, skipped classes, clashed with school authorities, criticized contemporary Polish society, and displayed a strong desire to effect change.

By the age of thirteen, Łobodowski was already writing poetry and editing the literary magazine "W Słońce" ("Toward the Sun"), founded at his gymnasium. He acted in and directed the school theater, and had

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<sup>9</sup> *Kalendarium życia in: Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, pp. 14–15.

memorized the dramas of Aleksander Fredro and Juliusz Słowacki. Gifted with a phenomenal memory, independent thinking, and the ability to grasp the essence of complex problems, he was observant and highly active. Even at this early stage, he stood out as a remarkable personality, distinguished by his intellectual and creative talents, as well as the independence and originality of his worldview.

In the spring of 1929, Józef unexpectedly stopped attending his mathematics and physics classes.

By the seventh grade, I had definitively given up on physics, chemistry, and mathematics. When my mother was going to yet another parent – teacher meeting, I warned her: “Don’t be surprised if I get a failing grade in mathematics. I don’t have time for it – I need to read. I’m going to be a writer; what do I need mathematics for?”<sup>10</sup>

– the writer recalled this period with humor.

For skipping classes, he was expelled from the gymnasium – a decision he accepted as entirely justified – and without hesitation, he immediately went to work, first at the post office and then at the telegraph. He began earning his own money and gained a sense of independence. Soon, the school regretted having expelled such a gifted but controversial student and invited him to return. By that time, he was a transformed young man – self-reliant, confident, arriving at school in the dark blue uniform of a telegrapher, dramatically reading his poems to fellow students and urging them to take action.

At that same time, still a gymnasium student, he published his first poetry collection, *Słońce przez szpary* (*The sun through the gaps*), and sent it to his idol, Julian Tuwim, who replied to him: “The collection has too many poems; the poems themselves have too many words. Still, there are some very good ones (Atavism).”<sup>11</sup> In these poems, the turbulent, elemental forces of the poet’s inner self intertwined with – or even clashed against – the rationalism and intellectual vision of

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<sup>10</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Wspomnienia lubelskie* in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 165.

<sup>11</sup> Irena Szypowska, *Łobodowski...*, pp. 23–24.

societal development. A sense of organic unity with nature, coupled with a simultaneous desire to transform the world toward greater perfection, became enduring forces that evolved yet remained ever-present in the artist's worldview and creative work.

In 1931, Józef was preparing for his final exams. Although his knowledge of mathematics was weak, his moral principles would not allow him to cheat or copy, so he memorized every single example from the oral exam tasks – without exception. He embraced this as a personal challenge. From his mother, he knew that during the January Uprising of 1863, his grandfather had hidden from Russian gendarmes in the family crypt, among the coffins in the cemetery on Lipowa Street in Lublin. Józef drew upon this knowledge as a way to confront his own fear and prove himself worthy of his grandfather.

And so it came to pass. I spent several nights in the old cemetery on Lipowa Street, drilling those formulas into my head like mad [...] – The first time, I was terrified; after that, it went better and better. And it was precisely those formulas that I studied, sitting on a little bench by my grandfather's grave. It was May, the moon was full, and the cemetery was as bright as day. Jasmine bushes grew near the grave, and they were full of nightingale nests. The nightingales screamed all night long, as if they had gone mad. I no longer remember whether it lasted three nights or four, but I mastered those formulas perfectly, the exam went splendidly, and I passed my final exams without major difficulty,<sup>12</sup>

– the writer recalled.

## In Search of Ideological Bearings

After finishing gymnasium, Józef Łobodowski enrolled in the Faculty of Law at the Catholic University of Lublin. The early 1930s were marked by economic crisis, not only in Poland but across Europe. The state was still struggling to recover; unemployment was rising in

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<sup>12</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Wspomnienia lubelskie* in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, pp. 165–166.

the cities, and rural areas were becoming increasingly impoverished. Society was visibly radicalizing, with widespread disillusionment in the existing order, which in turn fueled the popularity of fascist, nationalist, and communist ideologies. The youth were particularly susceptible to their influence. Sharp debates about the future of human civilization dominated the press and public discourse – and they inevitably engaged the young, talented, and fiery-minded Łobodowski.

During this period, Łobodowski began collaborating with the Lublin poet Józef Czechowicz in the new periodical “Kurier Lubelski” (“The Lublin Courier”) and published two poetry collections, *Gwiazdny psalterz* (*The Starry Psalter*) and *O czerwonej krwi* (*Of Red Blood*). By February 1932, however, the Lublin press reported that *O czerwonej krwi* (*Of Red Blood*) had been confiscated. Paradoxically, the confiscation likely drew more attention to the poet himself than to the content of his poems.

The collection included revolutionary-themed poems that called for rebellion against established norms and authorities, advocated radical change, and reflected the author’s affinity with leftist ideas. The confiscation was entirely absurd, as the works had been inspired by *Odi barbare* (*Barbarian Odes*) by the Italian poet and Nobel laureate Giosuè Carducci – texts recommended in the educational curriculum for reading. Łobodowski’s work was also heavily influenced by the poetry of the Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, who at the time enjoyed considerable popularity in Poland. The collection reflected the emergence of a new generation of Polish avant-garde. Had it not been for the court’s confiscation ruling, it is unclear whether the collection would have achieved the same level of recognition among readers.

“Local National Democratic opinion (The Endeks)<sup>13</sup> immediately labeled me a Communist, suspecting that the money for publishing my book had come from Jewish Party members. The term “Żydokomuna” (Jew-Communism) was enough to dispel any doubts,”<sup>14</sup> – Łobodowski later recalled this period.

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<sup>13</sup> The “Endeks” – a shortened name for Poland’s National Democratic Party, which based its activities on a nationalist ideology.

<sup>14</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Wspomnienia lubelskie...*, p. 168.

The confiscation of his collection marked only the beginning of the confrontation. The authorities accused Łobodowski of blasphemy and inciting the public. Friends close to Józef Czechowicz and other Lublin literary figures, including lawyers, came to his defense, drawing even more public attention. The trial ultimately ended successfully for the poet: apart from the confiscation of the collection, the court imposed no further penalties.<sup>15</sup> However, as a consequence of these events, he was expelled from the university and barred from continuing his studies at any other institution in Poland:

Józef Łobodowski, a first-year law student at the Catholic University of Lublin, was expelled from the University by a Senate decision dated 5 February of the current year for disseminating pornography and blasphemy in poetic works of his own publication, which had been confiscated by the prosecutorial authorities.<sup>16</sup>

The situation surrounding him created an even greater aura of sensation. Among the youth and intelligentsia, he gained popularity specifically as the “confiscated poet,” an image he skillfully leveraged. However, this was also a period of new trials, as he experienced a loss of confidence in life and in the prospects that education might have offered him. “He lost the ground beneath his feet. It was a heavy blow for the mother of an only son as well. Nor did he realize or appreciate that he was losing a guiding force – one that could have disciplined his unbridled nature and independent mind,”<sup>17</sup> – as noted by journalist Irena Szypowska.

Repression only strengthened Łobodowski’s resolve and tenacity. The communists skillfully exploited this very trait. Fiery, rebellious, and a maximalist, with a keen sense of justice and dreams of brotherhood, equality, and freedom, he proved receptive to the appeal of communist ideology, which promised to build a new, happy future – a “paradise on earth.” The loss of the opportunity to continue his university

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<sup>15</sup> Józef Zięba, *Żywot Józefa Łobodowskiego (1)*, “Relacje,” 1989, no. 3, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Kalendarium życia in: Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 22.

<sup>17</sup> Irena Szypowska, *Łobodowski...*, p. 27.

studies accelerated the young writer's alignment with Lublin communists. With ample free time, he could actively participate in propaganda campaigns, connect easily with people, and engage in prolific writing, publishing, and editing of his periodicals.

He quickly gained even greater fame in Lublin as a rebellious poet, a passionate publicist, a catalyst for unusual events, and a striking, original personality. Government repression only fueled his desire to act defiantly. Critics were everywhere, particularly from religious and official circles. Łobodowski became the protagonist of numerous scandals recounted throughout the city, drawing attention with his expressive appearance and behavior, earning the nickname "Otaman Loboda." "I have always despised the silence of settled bourgeois townfolk"<sup>18</sup> – Łobodowski later recalled this period of his life with particular vividness.

The younger generation of Lublin writers, especially those linked to the literary avant-garde, actively railed around him, regarding him as a bold and uncompromising leader. In the spring of 1932, he began working with the Union of Democratic Youth, taking on the role of editor for several issues of the magazine "Trybuna" ("Tribune of the Youth"). However, his collaboration proved to be short-lived. After the publication of his provocative poem *Słowo o prokuratorze* (*A Word to the Prosecutor*) and the subsequent confiscation of that issue, his ties with both the magazine and the organization came to an abrupt end.

In the summer of 1932, the poet published his following collection, *W przeddzień* (*On the Eve*), which, according to tradition, was immediately confiscated by order of the city governor. Yet only a few days later, the District Court in Lublin overturned the decision. The poems in this collection differed markedly from his earlier works, reflecting the poet's creative evolution, a gradual departure from revolutionary slogans, and the emergence of new themes and imagery – marked by a profound contemplation of human existence and an awareness of its existential inevitability. By that time, Łobodowski had already established himself as the recognized leader of Lublin's literary youth. He

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<sup>18</sup> Irena Szypowska, *Zawsze gardziłem ciszą zasiedziałych mieszczan. Rozmowa z Józefem Łobodowskim*, "Poezja," 1988, no. 6, p. 28.

felt a strong inner drive to address the public through the press, expressing his ideas and assessments of social life, persuading and calling others to action.

At the end of 1932, Józef Łobodowski launched the monthly magazine “Barykady” (“Barricades”), which published not only his own writings but also poems by other Lublin authors, along with literary criticism and journalistic essays. However, the magazine quickly drew the attention of the authorities. The second issue was confiscated in its entirety due to radical statements directed against the Catholic Church, the clergy, and the Polish educational system. The court went so far as to order a search for the unknown author of the article *Palarnie opium* (*Opium Dens*) by Marian Plizga – who, in reality, was none other than Łobodowski himself:

The court, for the moment, refrained from opening proceedings, awaiting the results of the search for the chief “culprit,” the elusive Marian Plizga. Łobodowski must have derived considerable amusement from reading the wanted circulars issued for . . . his own pseudonym, obliging all military and civilian authorities to arrest the suspect and deliver him to the nearest prison.<sup>19</sup>

The legal proceedings surrounding “Barykady” (“Barricades”) extended throughout 1933. In the end, the court ordered the destruction of the magazine’s second issue. Łobodowski was cleared of all penalties, while an unidentified person paid a 200 zloty cash bail on his behalf. His prison sentence, meanwhile, was suspended for five years. “So the poet evidently had influential, well-funded patrons who ensured he did not come to too much harm,”<sup>20</sup> – the Polish writer Józef Zięba later recounted this episode.

To the Lublin public, he was Otaman Łoboda – a nickname rooted in his family history and the Cossack legacy of his great-great-grandfather. His literary circle, in turn, became playfully known as the Band of Otaman Łoboda. “The group never constituted an ideological or artistic

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<sup>19</sup> Józef Zięba, *Żywot Józefa Łobodowskiego* (2), “Relacje,” 1989, no. 4, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Józef Zięba, *Żywot Józefa Łobodowskiego* (3), “Relacje,” 1989, no. 5, p. 4.

unity; it was merely a coming together of random individuals, related by temperament and gypsy-like interests, yet undeniably talented”<sup>21</sup>

In the early 1930s, Józef Łobodowski emerged as a prominent figure in Lublin’s literary and bohemian circles, as well as its street life. He blazed onto the city’s poetic scene like a comet from nowhere, charged with rebellion, immense talent, and unstoppable energy. With his art and unpredictability, he shook the foundations of the contemporary establishment.

This period of Łobodowski’s life in Lublin is shrouded in legends and extraordinary stories. Among them were the famed “battles” of Otaman Łoboda against professional boxers in the arena of the Corso Cinema. An amateur fighter, he always lost – often leaving the ring with a broken nose – yet he remained fearless, self-assured, and driven by a hunger for sensational spectacle.<sup>22</sup> In Lublin and beyond, he became a striking figure: a poet-rebel with the temperament of a polemicist and agitator.

“That mixture of intellectual life and tavern-going hooliganism provided an outlet for both sides of Józef Łobodowski’s nature. Often, his nighttime brawls took on something of the character of a social demonstration; at other times, in his polemical interventions, a tendency to strike below the belt became apparent,”<sup>23</sup> – as noted by Waclaw Gralewski.

In the autumn of 1933, Józef Łobodowski was mobilized and served in the military in Rivne, in the Volyn region – a reality he, like much of Polish society at the time, regarded with deep criticism. There, he experienced firsthand the harshness of military drills, the mindless repetition of orders, and the abuse of authority. True to his rebellious nature, he sought unconventional ways to cope with the stifling conditions that weighed heavily on a creative spirit. Above all, he left a strong impression on those around him with his striking and original appearance.

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<sup>21</sup> Waclaw Gralewski, *Wataha Atamana Łobodi* in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 214.

<sup>22</sup> *Розмова з Адамом Томанком*, in: Світлана Греля-Кравченко, *Юзеф Лободовський — митець, мислитель, бунтар та українофіл. Життя і творчість*, «Синя папка», Луцьк 2019, p. 187.

<sup>23</sup> Waclaw Gralewski, *Wataha...*, p. 214.

“His features were otherworldly; it would be hard to describe that face—there was in it a kind of compulsion, an apocalyptic irony, perhaps a contempt for this world. But I will never forget those eyes: like two hells, filled with satanic laughter,”<sup>24</sup> – a fellow serviceman later recalled him vividly.

Łobodowski openly defied orders, arrived late to his unit, and spoke in a proud, high-pitched voice. His commanders despised him and seized every opportunity to assert their authority. At the same time, he excelled in portraying Prince Konstanty in Juliusz Słowacki’s drama *Kordian*, recited Jan Lechoń’s poem *Mochmacki*, and even wrote the lyrics for his regiment’s anthem. As a result, some officers admired him and forgave many of his transgressions.

Kosiński found out that I often went into town without a pass and returned without any obstacles. He was incredibly curious about how I managed it. He made a bet with me for a bottle of vodka that he would catch me at the first opportunity – on the condition that I had to warn him whenever I planned to go out again. He missed me. But he didn’t admit defeat and bet me again. Finally, after the third or fourth lost bottle, he gave in: “I can’t do this anymore – my pay won’t cover these bets. But please, tell me how you do it. An officer’s word of honor that I won’t betray you.” After that, I told him everything.

The guards at our gate checked everyone entering and leaving with passes. But the guards at the entrance of the neighboring 45th regiment, seeing the trim on the visor of my cap, would mistake me for an officer in the dim evening light, salute me, and let me through without asking a word. All I had to do was crawl under the barbed wire separating the barracks of the two regiments,<sup>25</sup>

– recalled J. Łobodowski.

Military service brought the young poet not only hardships but also a romantic love story. In Rivne, he met the gifted young poetess Zuzanna Ginczanka, who was deeply moved by his poetry. He often escaped from his unit to see her. After the war, Łobodowski published

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<sup>24</sup> *Kalendarium życia in: Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 33.

<sup>25</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Wspomnienia lubelskie...*, p. 171.

the poetry collection *Pamięci Sulamity* (*In Memory of Sulamita*), dedicated to Zuzanna, who tragically perished during World War II.

Because of his rebellious nature, he frequently encountered difficulties in the army and was constantly seeking outlets for his creative energy. In early 1934, while still in service, he attempted suicide. The reasons remain uncertain, as neither documentary evidence nor the poet himself confirmed them. Some scholars attribute the attempt to his unhappy love for Zuzanna Ginczanka, others to harassment by officers, and still others to a crisis of political convictions. The attempt failed: Łobodowski was injured, tried before a military court, and imprisoned. However, thanks to the intervention of prominent Polish writers Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna and Ewa Szemberg-Zarembina, he was released, and his military service was postponed for five years.

– Were you harassed there? Or are you perhaps a complete pacifist? – Oh no, I had nothing against that school, madam. It wasn't pacifism – it was simply... for love. I looked at him in stunned disbelief. In those clothes, with his front teeth missing, it was obvious the love must have been unhappy – what girl would have wanted him?,<sup>26</sup>

– the Polish writer Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna later recounted this story about Łobodowski.

Reflecting on his time as a junior officer in Rivne, the writer recalled another unpleasant episode that exposed the Polish officers' nationalist arrogance toward their subordinates. Many years later, in an interview, he recounted the story once again:

There was one Ukrainian among us. As a rule, Ukrainians were not admitted to the officer cadet school, but he submitted an application – Józef Piłsudski was still alive at the time, it was 1933 – and addressed it directly to Piłsudski. Piłsudski ordered that he be accepted. Scenes like this would occur, for example: a lieutenant, the platoon commander, would come in and check the personal details of all the candidates, because before taking the oath, we were not yet cadets, only recruits with secondary education. He went through the personal data, reached that boy, and

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<sup>26</sup> *Kalendarium życia in: Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 38.

asked him about his nationality. “Ukrainian,” the boy replied. “What do you mean, Ukrainian? Have you gone mad? Where is this Ukraine of yours? There is no Ukraine! Say you are a Rusyn!” It was nothing but a mockery of national feeling.<sup>27</sup>

The years 1934–1935 marked a turning point in the writer’s worldview. The communist ideas once embraced by the young poet now appeared as illusions – an ideal entirely detached from Soviet reality. Reports of famine in Ukraine, the widespread repression of Ukrainian artists, testimonies from acquaintances and friends, and the suicides of Ukrainian writers – all of this cast a deep shadow and prompted somber reflection.

The well-known Polish poet and publicist Jacek Trznadel also argued that the cause of the suicide attempt lay in the writer’s inner ideological transformations rather than in problems related to military service or romantic affairs. From childhood, J. Łobodowski had repeatedly faced severe challenges, yet he possessed the inner strength and determination to withstand the trials of fate. It is therefore difficult to believe that humiliation by senior officers or unrequited love alone could have driven him to attempt suicide.<sup>28</sup> The writer himself never wished to recall this episode in later years.

Another legendary episode from these years was his clandestine trip to the Soviet Union. Reports from acquaintances about artists’ suicides, famine, and political repression in Soviet Ukraine compelled him to see the situation firsthand. “In 1935, the decision ripened to travel illegally to the Soviet Union and see what that reality really looked like. Of course, I returned thoroughly ‘cured.’”<sup>29</sup> – the writer recalled.

At that time, he made a definitive decision, recognizing the ideology he had once embraced as illusory and false. “It was the Great Famine (Holodomor) that became the catalyst for the writer’s ideological

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<sup>27</sup> *Rozmowa z Józefem Łobodowskim* in: *Józef Łobodowski, Przeciw upiorom przeszłości. Myśli o Polsce i Ukrainie*, Wydawnictwo Test, Lublin 2015, p. 566.

<sup>28</sup> Jacek Trznadel, *O Józefie Łobodowskim*, “Arka,” 1994, no. 50, p. 38.

<sup>29</sup> Józef Zięba, *Żywot Józefa Łobodowskiego*, “Poezja,” 1988, no. 6, p. 21.

transformation – from leftist positions close to communism to a stance of resolute anti-communism,<sup>30</sup> – the claim was made by Grzegorz Bąk, who has studied Łobodowski's life and work.

In one of his last interviews, shortly before his death, the writer remembered his secret journey to the USSR with these words:

My break with the Left was also connected to Ukrainian matters. Among other things, it was prompted by news of the famine in Ukraine, organized by the Soviet authorities in 1932. I learned about it with considerable delay, but in 1935 I was in Soviet Ukraine. I crossed the border “green” – smugglers made it possible for me. I got as far as Koziatyn, in the Kyiv region.

There, I realized that they were already on my trail – that they already knew someone was moving around illegally. It was interesting, but deeply sad.

I used to walk a great deal on foot through the Lublin region – Lublin, Krasnystaw, Zamość, Chełm... In Poland, if I approached a peasant woman or a young girl and said, “Niech będzie pochwalony” (“Praise be”), I would hear in reply, “Na wieki wieków” (“Forever and ever”).

But what did my first encounter in Volhynia look like? Near Shepetivka, not far from the Polish border, a young girl was picking berries in the forest. I came up to her and said, “Sława Bohu” (“Glory to God”), and instead of replying “Na wieki wieków,” she looked at me with a crazed expression, dropped her basket – and ran. This was a recurring phenomenon: sheer, panic-stricken fear at the sight of a stranger. And in Berdychiv, which I passed through on my way back, a Jewish man spoke to me in Polish on the street. “How do you know I'm Polish?” I asked him. “Because you walk and look like someone who's not from here – or perhaps from the consulate in Kyiv?” I said, “No.” “Then run.”<sup>31</sup>

Like a sudden lightning bolt piercing the darkness of ideological deadlock, the suicide of a friend – a communist from the Kovel region who had once spoken to him in Lublin about the famine and repres-

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<sup>30</sup> Grzegorz Bąk, *Józef Łobodowski: dux et hetman cohortium poeticarum* in: *Świat nie wywalczony. Szkice o uniwersach Józefa Łobodowskiego*, red. Dorota Siwor, Instytut Literatury, Kraków 2021, p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> *Rozmowa z Józefem Łobodowskim...*, pp. 575–576.

sions in Soviet Ukraine – unexpectedly illuminated a path forward for the writer. Later, in memoirs written in exile, Łobodowski recalled this encounter with his Volhynian acquaintance as having had a profound impact on him:

My friend arrived shaken to the core. Almost in tears, he spoke of what had been happening in Ukraine during the horrific famine years of 1932–1933. “I’d heard whispers about it two years earlier, but I thought it was all capitalist slander. And now I know – know for certain – that it’s true. So what now? How does one live now? They have defiled the holy altar of the revolution...” Two months later, he committed suicide.<sup>32</sup>

It is possible that this encounter, together with other meetings with Ukrainians, became a decisive factor in shaping the writer’s ideological transformation.

In 1934, after being discharged from military service with a five-year deferment, J. Łobodowski jokingly spoke some prophetic words to his friends in Lublin: “There can be no war without me, so the war will break out no earlier than 1939”<sup>33</sup>.

In the autumn of 1934, the writer began publishing the periodical “Dźwigary” (“The Bearers”). Three issues were released, which, on one hand, continued the ideological line of his previous publication, “Barykady” (“Barricades”), yet, on the other hand, were less radical and avoided confiscation by the authorities. The magazine’s cessation also reflected Łobodowski’s evolving worldview and his growing ideological maturity as an editor, publisher, and journalist. A year later, in the autumn of 1935, his poetry collection *Rozmowa z ojczyzną* (*Conversation with the Homeland*) was published, introducing the world to a very different poet. Rebellious motifs and revolutionary fervor had receded, giving way to a poignant, lyrical meditation on the homeland.

At that time, in his journalistic writings, Łobodowski expressed for the first time the idea that the most popular ideologies in Europe

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<sup>32</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *O cyganach i katastrofistach* in: *Poeta wobec sejsmicznych ruchów historii*, wybór, opracowanie i wstęp Halyna Dubyk, Instytut Literacki Kultura – Instytut Książki, Paryż–Kraków 2017, p. 93.

<sup>33</sup> Irena Szypowska, *Łobodowski...*, pp. 52–53.

– communism and nationalism – had much in common and that neither truly served the interests of society or of Poland. He wrote:

I see no banners beneath which one might lay down his head, nor do I hear words of command. Instead, I hear the clamor of the marketplace, where a throng of opportunists compete in professing their love for the proletariat. In Poland, there are no ranks to which I could attach myself. And yet, how easy it is to put on a splendid uniform and pin a fine cockade to it. But do not call that heroism.<sup>34</sup>

Freedom and dignity were, in the writer's view, the values that any revolution should bring to every individual. If these are absent, it means we are following false slogans and ideas.

In 1936, Józef Łobodowski published the poetry collection *Demonom nocy* (*To the Demons of the Night*), which introduced images of Ukrainian nature, historiosophical and folkloric motifs, and a profound sense of nostalgia. Literary critics regarded the book as a continuation of the "Ukrainian School" tradition in Polish literature. In early 1937, the poet received the Young Talent Award from the Polish Academy of Literature for this collection.

In the spring of 1937, the Voivode of Volhynia, Henryk Józewski, invited Józef Łobodowski to work in the editorial office of the weekly *Wołyń*. The publication primarily focused on Polish-Ukrainian issues, reflecting the voivode's policy of promoting cooperation among national minorities within his authority. H. Józewski was an ally of Józef Piłsudski, a supporter of the Promethean movement, and an advocate for creating a federation of Eastern European nations to counter Russian threats. He believed that Poland should collaborate with Ukrainians in culture, education, and governance to face future challenges jointly.

Łobodowski managed the *Sprawy ukraińskie* (*Ukrainian Affairs*) section of the weekly, and in the autumn of 1937, the voivode unofficially offered him the role of editor. His time in Volhynia left a last-

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<sup>34</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Smutne porachunki*, "Wiadomości Literackie," 1935, 27 października, p. 1.

ing mark on his poetry, introducing numerous Volhynian motifs and images into his work. In the weekly, Łobodowski published poetry and essays on the culture and history of the Volhynia region, as well as on pressing social issues of the time. By the mid-1930s, he had become an active advocate for the Ukrainian cause and for fostering Polish-Ukrainian dialogue.<sup>35</sup>

Following the death of Józef Piłsudski in 1935, Poland's internal and foreign policies increasingly came under the influence of radical nationalist tendencies, which heightened Polish-Ukrainian tensions and led to harsher measures against national minorities. These developments culminated in the spring of 1938, when the Volhynian voivode, Henryk Józewski, was accused of being pro-Ukrainian and dismissed from his post due to his efforts to foster understanding and cooperation between Poles and Ukrainians in Volhynia. In response to this decision, Łobodowski wrote the poem *Wiosna zdradzona* (*Betrayed Spring*). He left Lutsk alongside Józewski and moved to Warsaw, where he began working for Polish radio.

By this time, Łobodowski had undergone a significant transformation: from a rebellious, "hooligan" poet, he had become a caring, responsible, and measured man (by then already married), as well as an engaging and unconventional journalist and publicist, and a poet whose work was marked by strong notes of pessimism and a sense of impending catastrophe.

Łobodowski was always at the center of cultural life. In Warsaw, he frequented the club *Prometeusz* and met Ukrainian poets Yevhen Malaniuk and Natalia Livińska-Kholodna. Since the mid-1930s, he had been publishing in Warsaw periodicals, including those associated with the Polish Promethean movement, such as *Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński* ("Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin") and *Wschód* ("Sunrise"). He also collaborated with the fortnightly *Myśl Polska* ("Polish Thought") and the Ukrainian Scientific Institute, for which he translated the poetry of Taras Shevchenko into Polish.

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<sup>35</sup> Ludmiła Siryk, *Naznaczony Ukrainą. O twórczości Józefa Łobodowskiego*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2002, pp. 19–20.



Il. 2. Józef Łobodowski with his wife Jadwiga on Krakowskie Przedmieście Street in Lublin. From the Tomanek family archive

At the beginning of 1939, an article by Łobodowski was scheduled to appear in the weekly “Wiadomości Literackie” (“Literary News”), in which he predicted that, in the event of a war with the Third Reich, Poland would be struck from the east. The censors confiscated the text for allegedly threatening public order. The well-known Polish historian Paweł Libera later commented on this situation: “The writer was fully aware of the dangers posed by the imperial policy of Soviet Russia. In April 1939, he published an article in ‘Wiadomości Literackie’ (‘Literary News’), in which he foresaw the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact and a potential strike from the East in the event of a war with the Third Reich.”<sup>36</sup>

In August, following the signing of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, the editor of the weekly, Mieczysław Grydzewski, applied to the Warsaw City Commissariat for permission to publish Łobodowski’s previously confiscated article. Although the request was approved, the text was never published in time.

At the same time, on the eve of the war, J. Łobodowski was in Transcarpathia, tasked with gathering material on the situation in Carpathian Ukraine following the Polish diversionary operation “Łom”; however, this book was never published.<sup>37</sup>

Upon my return to Warsaw, I was pressed insistently to deliver this brochure; ten days later, I submitted it to the proper authorities. Yet, although it was still early June, the brochure was never published before the outbreak of war. There were far too many clerks who kept every matter buried in their desk drawers. Then, one day, I was handed my mobilization order. The long-anticipated armed conflict had finally become a reality,<sup>38</sup>

– as the publicist remembered.

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<sup>36</sup> Paweł Libera, *Antyrosyjski rusofil – Józef Łobodowski wobec Rosji in: Śladami pisarza. Józef Łobodowski w Polsce i w Hiszpanii*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2016, p. 222.

<sup>37</sup> Paweł Libera, *Józef Łobodowski o Ukrainie i stosunkach polsko-ukraińskich in: Józef Łobodowski, Przeciw upiorom przeszłości...*, pp. 26–27.

<sup>38</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Ze wspomnień ukrajinofila. W Polsce niepodległej*, “Wiadomości,” 1947, no. 13, p. 1.

The Polish diversionary operation “Łom” supported the actions of the contemporary Hungarian authorities aimed at dismantling Czechoslovakia and Carpathian Ukraine, which was part of it. J. Łobodowski did not address this topic in his publications. Operation “Łom” represented a logical continuation of Polish national policy toward Ukrainians and the suppression of all centers of the Ukrainian liberation movement carried out by the Polish authorities in the late 1930s. The fate of the brochure manuscript he wrote remains unknown. Later, in his émigré publications, he recalled with regret and sorrow the involvement of Poles in the liquidation of Carpathian Ukraine and the executions of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen at the end of the 1930s.

### War and Emigration

A few days before the outbreak of the war, the writer was called up for military service. He carried with him, for the rest of his life, vivid memories of the final moments spent with his family:

When I said goodbye to my mother on 28 August, she asked me whether there would be a war. I replied that it looked that way. “I have lived through three wars,” she answered. “I will not survive the next one.” She did survive, however, and died more than thirty years after the war had ended. She lived to see her great-grandchildren. Knowing that my return would not be possible for a long time – and perhaps that I might never return in my lifetime – I wanted to make my way back to the country illegally, during the war and afterward. Something always stood in the way. Perhaps it was for the best, for had I fallen into the hands of the Gestapo or the security police, I would almost certainly no longer be alive.<sup>39</sup>

Łobodowski took part in battles against the German army in southern Poland as a member of the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade, and later in eastern Galicia near Lviv. After the Soviet forces invaded from the east, the Polish army crossed the Hungarian border,

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<sup>39</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Wspomnienia lubelskie...*, p. 166.

was disarmed, and interned. Józef was held at the Topolcza camp and later transferred to other camps, from which he managed to escape and reach Paris. At that time, the Polish émigré government was based in France. In early 1940, the writer was arrested by the French police and spent several months in prison. There are several versions of this unfortunate incident. One suggests that he possessed Ukrainian-language leaflets intended for distribution in Poland, urging people not to succumb to provocations and to avoid involvement in the Polish-Ukrainian conflict. Another explanation points to his violation of blackout orders – he had lit a match to read a street name while returning home at night. The circumstances of this episode in the writer's life were documented by the Polish researcher Paweł Libera, who based his account on archival materials from the French police.<sup>40</sup>

Nina Taylor-Terlecka, drawing on the memoirs of Tymon Terlecki, claims that “his compatriots were partly responsible” for Łobodowski's temporary imprisonment in France.<sup>41</sup> Official representatives of the Polish émigré community were slow to secure his release. Many within the National Democratic (Endecja) camp openly disliked him. Only Tymon Terlecki and the Polish PEN Club appealed to the French authorities on the writer's behalf.

At the Polish military camp near Toulouse, France, the writer contributed to the publication of the monthly “Wróćimy”, preparing nearly half of its content and reproducing it using a rotator. At the same time, he also edited the weekly “Polska Walcząca” (“Fighting Poland”) and independently handled its layout.<sup>42</sup>

In the pages of “Wróćimy” (“We Shall Return”), Łobodowski continued to promote ideas of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation and anticipated the looming conflict resulting from the growing divergence of

<sup>40</sup> Paweł Libera, *Józef Łobodowski – warunki pracy i twórczości pisarza emigracyjnego* in: *Świat nie wywalczony. Szkice o uniwersach Józefa Łobodowskiego*, red. Dorota Siwor, Instytut Literatury, Kraków 2021, p. 255.

<sup>41</sup> Nina Taylor-Terlecka, *W oczach jednego krytyka – Głos Tymona Terleckiego* in: *Śladami pisarza...*, p. 132.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p. 133.

Polish and Ukrainian interests during the war. He wished to travel illegally to Volhynia to reconnect with former colleagues and prevent unrest, but the leaders of the Polish political emigration denied him permission. According to the writer's memoirs and the accounts of other Poles, rivalries among various Polish political factions in exile hindered Polish-Ukrainian cooperation and blocked Łobodowski's planned trip. One French publisher had even agreed to finance the journey to publish his reports and materials from the region. However, the trip required the consent of General Sosnkowski, and due to the intrigues of the "Sikorski faction" (supporters of General Sikorski), Łobodowski was denied the opportunity to meet with him.<sup>43</sup> Łobodowski later recalled this situation as follows:

I wanted – an idealistic idiot – to go to the Homeland, to Volhynia. I knew in advance – not such a fool – that there would be a Polish – Ukrainian massacre. And I wanted to prevent it, fool that I was, fixated on the Hadiach Agreement, believing that under Soviet occupation it would be possible to reach a Polish – Ukrainian accord. It failed. Was that because I never reached those lands? Probably not – neither side wanted such an accord. As someone who came there years later told me: "Had you come then with such an initiative, you would have been shot on the spot." I did not go, and I was not shot. What luck.<sup>44</sup>

In 1941, a new collection of the writer's poems, *Z dymem pożarów* (*Amid the smoke of burning fires*), was published in Nice, featuring works he had written at the beginning of the war. At that time, Łobodowski sought to join the main Polish army contingent stationed in England. Together with his companion Zbigniew Kubiński, he attempted to cross the French-Spanish border. However, their journey proved unsuccessful – they were arrested by the Spanish police and remained in prison until February 1943.

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<sup>43</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Dlaczego zostałem w Hiszpanii* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 1. Poezja. Proza*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin, 2023, p. 125.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 122–123.

“We – that is, myself and Zbigniew Kubiński, a young man from Zakopane who set out with me for Spain so as not to give in – were forced to practice rigorous spiritual gymnastics, killing hunger and cold through constant mental effort. Kubiński spent whole days studying foreign languages, while I scribbled verses,”<sup>45</sup> – Łobodowski recalled.

Due to the terrible conditions in prison, the writer fell seriously ill. After his release, he decided to remain in Spain. Had he agreed to obtain Spanish citizenship, he would have enjoyed significantly better material and financial security, but he never consented to do so.

Due to his political views, Łobodowski was unable to return to Poland. During the war, the Germans considered him a communist and an enemy of the Third Reich. After the war, he was classified as an anti-communist and regarded as an enemy of communist Poland.

In 1945, immediately after the war ended, the writer published a book in Spanish titled *Por nuestra libertad y la vuestra: Polonia sigue luchando* (*For Our Freedom and Yours: Poland Keeps Fighting*) in Madrid. In 1946, he contributed a substantial chapter, *Literaturas eslavas* (*Slavic Literature*), to a history of world literature. In 1947, a new collection of his poems, *Modlitwa na wojnę* (*Prayer in Time of War*), was published in London, including works written during his time in a Spanish prison.

Łobodowski actively participated in the political and cultural life of the Polish émigré community, maintained extensive contacts with representatives of other nationalities living in Spain, and had many friends and acquaintances among Spaniards.

From 1949, J. Łobodowski began working in the Polish section of the Spanish national radio. He participated in its founding and developed his own programs there. “Łobodowski was a pillar of the broadcast throughout its entire existence, from 1945 to 1975,”<sup>46</sup> – according to Grzegorz Bąk.

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<sup>45</sup> *Kalendarium życia Józefa Łobodowskiego* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Wspomnienia lubelskie...*, p. 69.

<sup>46</sup> Grzegorz Bąk, *Józef Łobodowski: dux et hetman cobortium poetarum* in: *Świat nie wywalczony...*, p. 15.

After his first broadcasts on Spanish radio, the publication of Łobodowski's works was banned in Poland, and the responsibility was placed on his wife, who worked at one of Lublin's gymnasiums. She was told that, if she wished to continue working, she would have to change her surname. In 1950, the Lublin District Court officially dissolved their marriage, but Łobodowski considered himself married for the rest of his life.

Life in exile was difficult. Earning a living through creative work was challenging, and securing funding for book publications was even more difficult. Józef Łobodowski was one of the few Polish artists who made a living solely from literary work. The publication of his books depended on financial support from Polish émigré institutions, and he frequently sought assistance from prominent Poles living abroad.

In 1953, Łobodowski corresponded with Professor Bolesław Szczęśniak of the University of Notre Dame in Indiana regarding the publication of his collection *Uczta zadżumionych* (*The Banquet of the Plague-Stricken*) and the promotion of its subscription. In his letters, he discussed his creative plans, mentioning that he was preparing sixteen new books for publication, but producing them required substantial financial resources. Lacking such funds, he turned to well-known and respected compatriots for assistance.<sup>47</sup>

In 1954, two poetry collections by Łobodowski were published in Paris: *Uczta zadżumionych* (*The Banquet of the Plague-Stricken*) and *Złota Hramota* (*The Golden Charter*). The first collection contained satires and farces, while the second continued Łobodowski's engagement with Ukrainian themes. *Złota Hramota* (*The Golden Charter*) included poems written both before and after the war, in which the poet positioned himself as a successor to the literary tradition of Polish Romanticists associated with the Ukrainian school. In these works, he celebrated the Cossacks, the beauty of Ukrainian nature, interpreted historical and folkloric motifs, and expressed admiration for the melancholic landscapes of Volhynia and Polesia.

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<sup>47</sup> Polish Library – Biblioteka Polska w Londynie, Rękopisy, Papiers of Professor Bolesław Boym-Szczęśniak, 666/96/Rps – 666/97/Rps.

Drogą Pamięć Profesora!  
 Wybieram sobie jak Pan musiał  
 mnie błęć za miłość. Oboj, miłość  
 bardzo ciężkie te dwa ostatnie miesiące  
 / „bo kto na serce chory, nie pomoże  
 ni dektary” / i byłem impetnie do  
 niczego. Foratem jedyna osoba, która  
 mogła mi przedjąć tekst podania  
 na angielski, wyjechała, i uchadzi  
 z dnia na dzień na jej pomysł.  
 Komu innemu nie mogłem tego powierzyć,  
 bo jednak zależy mi na dyskreji, przy-  
 najmniej do czasu. I tak się znalazło.  
 Zafascynowałem kopię podania, które wyła-  
 żył mi, jednocześnie przysłał do  
 Niemysłowego i Weintrauba.  
 Za dwa - trzy dni jadę do Paryża.  
 Jeśli Pan zechce napisać, list natych-  
 miast przekaże mi z Madrytu do  
 Francji. Po powrocie wyślę Panu  
 grubny list z manuskryptami.  
 Dziękuję serdecznie za zającie się  
 moimi sprawami i za pomoc przepra-  
 szam za tak długą zwłokę.  
 Serdecznie uściskam  
 i prędko mienia dla  
 Paryskiej rodziny  
 & uł.

Madryt 13 maja.

Il. 3. Letter from Józef Łobodowski to Professor B. Boym-Szcześniak.  
 From the archives of the Polish Library in London

## PRZEDPŁATA NA „UCZTĘ ZADŻUMIONYCH” Józefa Łobodowskiego

Przed rokiem w prasie emigracyjnej ukazała się zapowiedź subskrypcyj na tom wierszy satyrycznych i fraszek JÓZEFA ŁOBODOWSKIEGO, p. t. „Uczta zadżumionych”. Z różnych powodów autor nie wyszedł poza to. Czynniki to dopiero teraz, gdy dzięki pomocy paru osób dobrej woli zapowiedziana książka znalazła się już w drukarni i UKAZANIE się jej spodziewane jest na koniec lata lub początek jesieni. Częściowo choćby powodzenie przedpłaty znakomicie przyspieszy termin.

Ale nie tylko to. Powodzenie „UCZTY ZADŻUMIONYCH” umożliwi wydanie dalszych książek, gotowych lub prawie gotowych do druku. Jest ich 16 (szesnaście). Proszę o przyjęcie tego oświadczenia poważnie. Ostatnia moja książka przedwojenna ukazała się w roku 1936 („Demonom nocy”). Podczas wojny Oficyna Nijcejska S. Tyszkiewiczza wydała osiemnaście wierszy pod wspólnym tytułem „Z dymem pożarów”; po wojnie (1946) nakładem „światpoli” ukazała się „Modlitwa na wojnę”. Pierwsza z tych książek powstała w ciągu trzech zaledwie miesięcy, pod świeżym wrażeniem kampanii wrześniowej; druga — ma charakter poetycko raczej marginesowy. Szesnaście książek na przestrzeni siedemnastu lat nie jest to zawiłe, zwłaszcza jeśli się zważy że poszczególne pozycje to proza publicystyczna lub przekłady.

A zatem szesnaście książek, zatiaczających szuflady i tęskniących do tłoczni drukarskiej. Szesnaście książek niezmiernie przyszkadzających w dalszej pracy, gdyż nie tak nie utrudnia kontynuowania drogi, jak niezalatwiony bilans minionych lat. A dla pisarza takim bilansem może być jedynie i wyłącznie wydanie napisanych książek.

A oto — żeby nie mówić na wiatr — tytuły kandydatów do wydania.

1) „W POŁOWIE DROGI” — wybór wierszy lirycznych z lat 1939-52. Około 200 stron druku.

2) „KASYDY I GAZELE” — wiersze powstałe w kręgu zainteresowań arabsko-andaluzyjskich. Spora garść tych wierszy ukazała się w różnych okresach w „Wiadomościach”. Około stu stron.

3) „DROGA DO TOBOZO” — książka poetycka o Hiszpanii, zawierająca następujące działy: 1) „Rycerz Smutnego Oblicza” — poemat; 2) „Na szlakach La Manchy” — opis prozą podróży don Kichota, powtórzonej przez autora; 3) „Droga do Tobozo” — dwadzieścia kilka wierszy na tematy hiszpańskie; 4) „Ziemia i niebo” — trzynastu poetów hiszpańskich (XIV-XX stulecie) w przekładzie na polski. Około 250 stron.

4) „DWAJ POECI ANDALUZYJSCY” — przekład książki Juana Ramona Jimenezza, „Srebrni i ja”, oraz „Romancy cygańskich” Federico Garcíi Lorki, poprzedzony obszernym esejem o Andaluzyj, jej pejzażu, ludzie i poezji. Około 200 stron.

5) „UCZTA ZADŻUMIONYCH” — zbiór satyr i fraszek.

6) „LISTY Z HISPANII” — tom esejów. Pejzaż, folklor, historia, literatura, polityka.

7) „ZŁOTA HRAMOTA” — tom wierszy na tematy polsko-ukraińskie. Około 200 stron.

8) „WIATRY OD WSCHODU” — książka o problemach związanych z Europą Wschodnią i częściowo z Azją (Kaukaz, Turkestan). Ponad 300 stron.

9) „SEN NOCY WOŁYŃSKIEJ” — pejzaż, folklor i mitologia Wołynia w kilkunastu wierszach oryginalnych. W części drugiej — przekład dramatycznej baśni Łeśi Ukrainki, p. t. „Łeśna pieśń”.

10) „MOJA BIAŁORUŚ” — wiersze o Białorusi i przekłady z poetów białoruskich.

Il. 4. A prepaid card for a book by Józef Łobodowski.  
From the archives of the Polish Library in London

11) „HELLADA SCYTYJSKA“ — antologia poezji ukraińskiej w dwóch tomach. Tom pierwszy: od „Słowa o Puiku Ihora“ do Kotłarewskiego; tom drugi: od Szewczenki do współczesnych.

12) „WYPRAWA DO KOLCHIDY“ — przekład narodowego poematu gruzińskiego Szoty Rustawego. „Wepchis Tkaosani“, poprzedzony oryginalnymi wierszami na tematy kaukazkie.

13) „SŁOWO O KONIACH“ — poemat, którego fragmenty drukowane były w różnych latach w „Wiadomościach“. Około 160 stron.

14) „PIEŚŃ O KRZYSZTOFIE“ — poetycka opowieść na temat Krzysztofa Kolumba. Fragmenty — ogłaszane w „Wiadomościach“ i „Kulturze“. Blisko trzystu stron.

15) „DYTYRAMBY PATETYCZNE“ — kilkanaście wierszy na temat, jak to się mówi, „światopoglądowo-religijne“.

16) „JARZMO KAUDYŃSKIE“ — zbiór wierszy z lat 1935-52, które nie weszły do tomów wymienionych uprzednio. Około 80 stron.

Szesnaście książek — grubo ponad trzy tysiące stron druku. Wydanie wszystkich za jednym zamachem — to marzenie ściętej głowy. Ale dobry początek może stać się przysłowowym kamyczkiem, lecającym z góry. **Pięćset przedpłat pokrywa koszt „UCZTY ZADZUMIONYCH“**, każda następna przyczynia się automatycznie do wydania następnej książki. Tysiąc przedpłat umożliwi wydanie jeszcze jednego tomu, 1500 — dwóch, a — pofołgujemy fantazji! — dwa tysiące — trzech tomów! Jak w znanej bajce o mleczarce: „Zaniosę mleko na targ, sprzedam, kupię jaj, wylegną się kurczęta, sprzedam, kupię prosiaka...“ Ale żart na bok... Jeśli „UCZTA ZADZUMIONYCH“ będzie miała powodzenie, przedpłata na jedną książkę może zamienić się w przedpłatę ogólną na wymienione tomy. Czytelnik emigracyjny, który wpłaca swoją subskrypcję, zechce łaskawie pamiętać, że przyczynia się do kolejnego wydania wszystkich szesnastu książek.

„UCZTA ZADZUMIONYCH“ stanowiąc będzie **pokazny tom** o przeszło 200 stronach druku (216 do 240). Cena w przedpłacie: w Anglii — 13 szylingów, we Francji — 500 franków, w Stanach Zjednoczonych — dwa dolary. Inne kraje obowiązują odpowiednik 2 dolarów. Wpłacać można na konto „Veritasu“, 12, Praed Mews, LONDON, W.2., lub „Libella“ 12, rue St.-Louis-en-Île, PARIS, IV<sup>e</sup>.

#### WZÓR ZAMÓWIENIA DLA SUBSKRYBENTÓW

Prosimy wypełnić, wyciąć i przesłać

Do Katolickiego Ośrodka Wydawniczego „Veritas“  
12, Praed Mews, London, W.2., England.

Zamawiam niniejszym „UCZTĘ ZADZUMIONYCH“.

Józefa Łobodowskiego

Należność w kwocie..... przesyłam czekiem, przekazem,  
(niepotrzebne skreślić)

Imię i  
nazwisko .....

Adres .....

Podpis .....

Data .....

Łobodowski actively collaborated with Polish émigré institutions in Paris, London, and the United States. He published in Polish émigré periodicals, such as “Wiadomości” (where he ran the column *Worek Judaszów* (*Judas’s Bag*)), “Orzeł Biały” (“The White Eagle”), and “Tydzień Polski” (“The Polish Week”) (writing under the pseudonym Szperacz (The Prowler)) in London, as well as “Kultura” (“Culture”) and “Zeszyty Historyczne” (“Historical Notebooks”), edited by Jerzy Giedroyc, in Paris. He also contributed to the Madrid-based monthly “Polonia. Revista ilustrada,” published from 1955 to 1969 under the patronage of the Polish Red Cross in Spain, collaborated with the popular Spanish weekly “El Mundo” (“The World”).<sup>48</sup>

He translated extensively from Ukrainian, Belarusian, Russian, and Spanish literature. In his journalistic and essayistic writings, he analyzed European security and prospects, international relations, Polish-Ukrainian relations, and the threats posed by Russian expansionism and Western communism.

In the mid-1950s, the writer began working on autobiographical prose. In 1955, the first volume of the trilogy *Komysze* was published in London; the second volume, *W stanicie* (*At the Cossack Outpost*), followed in 1958, and the third, *Droga powrotna* (*The Way Back*), appeared in 1961. The trilogy drew on memories of his childhood and his years living in the North Caucasus among the Kuban Cossacks. Later, the writer stated that these works were not entirely autobiographical, estimating that they were probably about fifty percent so.<sup>49</sup>

In the mid-1960s, J. Łobodowski published a tetralogy titled *Żywot Józefa Zakrzewskiego* (*The Life of Józef Zakrzewski*) in London, comprising *Czerwona wiosna* (*The Red Spring*), *Terminatorzy rewolucji* (*The Apprentices of the Revolution*), *Nożyce Dalili* (*Delilah’s Shears*), and *Rzeka graniczna* (*The Border River*). In this work, he reflected on the next stage of his life journey – his youth spent in interwar Lublin.

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<sup>48</sup> Kazymierz Tylko-Dobrzański, *Moje wspomnienia o Józefie Łobodowskim* in: *Śladami pisarza...*, p. 242.

<sup>49</sup> Irena Szybowska, *Rozmowa z Józefem Łobodowskim* in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 373.

The most productive and active period of Łobodowski's literary work spanned from the 1960s to the 1980s. During this time, he published books such as *Kasydy i gazele* (*Casts and Gazelles*), *Jarzmo kaudyńskie* (*The Kaudyn Yoke*), *W połowie wędrówki* (*Halfway Through the Journey*), *Dwie książki* (*Two Books*), *Mare Nostrum* (*Our Sea*), *Pamięci Sulamity* (*In Memory of Sulamita*), *Rachunek sumienia* (*Examination of Conscience*), and *Dytyramby patetyczne* (*Pathetic Dithyrambs*). He also prepared for publication an anthology of Spanish poetry, a two-volume anthology of Ukrainian poetry (from *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* to contemporary works), an anthology of Belarusian poetry, and an anthology of Russian poetry. Additionally, he planned to publish the book *Droga do Tobozo* (*The Road to Toboso*), which would include poems about Spain and a historical novel set in the 16th century about the civil war in Peru.

Additionally, he wrote and published his memoirs in the émigré press. Overall, after the war, J. Łobodowski published seventeen books, including eight poetry collections, prose, journalism, and verse satires.

The writer earned his living exclusively through literary work – poetry, journalistic and literary-critical articles, and artistic translations. In his memoirs, he later wrote: “Could I ever have imagined that, as an old, mature writer, I would earn far less than I did in my callow youth?! I asked friends in Madrid to have me cremated after my death and to send my ashes to Lublin. I want them buried at the feet of my mother in the Lublin cemetery. And this is no sentimental whim.”<sup>50</sup>

During the writer's lifetime, his name and works were banned in Poland. Communist critics wrote about him with disdain and cynicism, labeling him a former Sanation agent and a fascist (see Andrzej Kuśniewicz, 1956, *Ataman, Landowner, or Simply a Fascist*).<sup>51</sup>

Łobodowski also refused to have his works published in communist Poland, considering such an act a betrayal of his convictions. It was not until 1981 that a poetry evening dedicated to J. Łobodowski was organized at the Józef Czechowicz Museum in Lublin, thanks to the initiative of the Lublin writer Józef Zięba.<sup>52</sup>

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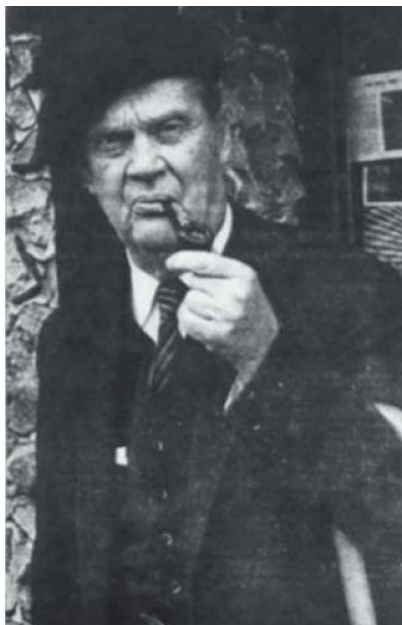
<sup>50</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Wspomnienia lubelskie...*, p. 166.

<sup>51</sup> *Kalendarium życia Józefa Łobodowskiego in: Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 75.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

Among the Polish émigré community, he was often nicknamed “Lobo,” which means “wolf” in Spanish.<sup>53</sup> This is a multilayered and symbolic metaphor – the writer felt lonely in a foreign land, yet remained independent and free.

Since 1967, the Ukrainian-Polish Society operated in London, comprising 190 members – 115 Poles and 75 Ukrainians. It was founded to facilitate the exchange of ideas between members of the Ukrainian and Polish émigré communities, improve relations, and foster cooperation. In March 1973, the Society organized an authorial evening titled “Ukraine and Poland in the Poetry of Józef Łobodowski,” during which the poet read his own works as well as poems by other Ukrainian and Polish authors.<sup>54</sup>



Il. 6. Józef Łobodowski in exile. From the Tomanek family archives

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<sup>53</sup> Ludmiła Siryk, *Naznaczonej Ukrainą...*, pp. 21–22.

<sup>54</sup> *A New Stage of Ukrainian-Polish Relations. Conversation of Kostyantyn Zelenko with Kazimierz Trembicki*, “Suchasnist,” 1975, no. 5, p. 72, [http://shron2.chtyvo.org.ua/Suchasnist/1975\\_N05\\_173.pdf](http://shron2.chtyvo.org.ua/Suchasnist/1975_N05_173.pdf)

In the fall of 1977, Łobodowski traveled to North America, where he held numerous authorial evenings and meetings at universities in Canada and the United States, addressing representatives of the Ukrainian and Polish émigré communities. He read his poetry and discussed the necessity of dialogue and cooperation between nations for the future of Europe. In New York, at the Ukrainian National Home, he delivered a speech titled “Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation and Its Significance,” in which he stated:

In Polish-Ukrainian émigré circles, voices are repeatedly heard urging that the past be forgotten, as if it could be erased and everything begun anew. I do not believe these are sound notions, above all because they are impossible to realize. No people can truly forget their past, and a people that does so becomes a nation outside of history. One cannot forget the past; yet in remembering it, one must be able to separate the wheat from the chaff, distinguish what was good from what was evil, and learn so as not to repeat those evil deeds.<sup>55</sup>

In Madrid, Łobodowski faced numerous material, physical, and moral difficulties, which he managed to overcome thanks to the support of friends. Among them was the family of Kazimierz Tylko, who cared for the writer during a serious illness. At the café Hermanos Portillo, he had his regular spot – a table by a column where books, newspapers, and a chess set were always laid out, and where he would work for entire days. Anyone wishing to speak with him could always find him there.<sup>56</sup> In Kazimierz Tylko’s residence, Łobodowski had a small, well-arranged room where he kept his manuscripts.

In 1952, Łobodowski fell ill with tuberculosis, likely a consequence of his weakened health following imprisonment in a Spanish jail. Kazimierz Tylko recalled administering approximately 1,200 injections at home. In 1954, thanks to the efforts of Polish friends, the writer underwent a seven-hour lung surgery. Afterward, he remained

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<sup>55</sup> *Kalendarium życia Józefa Łobodowskiego* in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 78.

<sup>56</sup> Irena Szypowska, *Historia mówiona* in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 378.

under the care of Kazimierz and his wife, Amelia, for almost two years. It was only due to the devoted attention and support of the Tylko couple, along with other friends and acquaintances, that he was able to recover from this serious illness.<sup>57</sup>

Łobodowski had a deep love and respect for journalistic work. While working in radio, he took great satisfaction in being able to address the Polish audience, believing that despite the obstacles posed by the communist regime, his voice would still be heard in Poland. After World War II, the Spanish national radio launched the first free Polish-language station in exile, and broadcasts in other European languages were also initiated. For a time, Łobodowski headed the Russian-language department of the Spanish national radio. In a 1958 letter, Wojciech Zaleski noted that Łobodowski faced a very challenging task, as it was one of the least popular Russian-language stations, and he also highlighted the complex relationships the writer maintained with other journalists in the department.<sup>58</sup>

In 1975, following the death of General Franco, Spain underwent a significant shift in its foreign policy. At that time, the Polish radio station in Madrid ceased broadcasting, and Łobodowski lost his modest but steady source of income. He received a meager pension and faced considerable financial difficulties in the final years of his life. Despite this, he continued to write extensively, maintained faith in the inevitable social changes in Poland, and hoped to see his relatives in Lublin.

Łobodowski missed witnessing the democratic changes in his homeland by just one year. In April 1988, he died at the age of 79 while delivering a lecture on the works of Juliusz Słowacki to members of the Polish émigré community in Poland. According to his will, after cremation, his ashes were secretly transported to Lublin and interred in the grave of his mother and grandfather at the cemetery on Lipowa Street. The official funeral took place in October 1988, organized primarily by the Catholic University of Lublin – the very same institution that,

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<sup>57</sup> Kazimierz Tylko-Dobrzański, *Moje wspomnienia o Józefie Łobodowskim* in: *Śladami pisarza...*, p. 239.

<sup>58</sup> PISM, A.45, 334/1 1955–1960, Sekcja Polska Radia Madryt, List Wojciecha Zaleskiego 22.01.1958.

over fifty years earlier, had denied Łobodowski the opportunity to be a student there.

What impressed me most was that, when everyone had gathered around the grave, a few young people suddenly appeared and unfurled a banner reading “Independent Students’ Association” (a clandestine, illegal organization). “To me, it was a symbolic moment. All the rest – the rectors, bishops, professors, and who knows who else – were merely the ranks of those who had sought to break Łobodowski. But there, at the cemetery by that grave, the defiant youth had come and, at the very last moment, unexpectedly displayed their banner. That, I thought then, is the future: young rebels like him still exist, his successors, for whom Łobodowski’s tradition remains significant. It was magnificent,<sup>59</sup>

– Irena Szypowska recalled this episode.

## Worldview and Spiritual Values

Freedom was one of the fundamental principles of Józef Łobodowski’s life, and his love of independence was a defining trait of his character, though by no means his only virtue. He never submitted to circumstances that oppressed him, constantly challenged fate, and resisted external forces that sought to undermine his dignity.

Even as a teenager, he endured his first trials of hunger and the bloody upheavals of the Bolshevik Revolution in the Kuban. Later, as a young man, he defended his stance and his right to creative expression against the pressures of authority in Lublin. During his military service in Rivne, he resisted the arbitrariness of senior officers. In military camps and prisons in France and Spain, he faced severe physical and moral hardships, witnessed political intrigues, and repeatedly observed how the struggle of interests and influences determined the fate of entire nations.

Józef Łobodowski possessed an irrepressible inner need for personal and creative freedom, and his life experiences shaped a profound

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<sup>59</sup> Irena Szypowska, *Historia mówiona...*, p. 380.

understanding of the necessity of political freedom – for both individuals and entire nations – as a foundation for social progress. Having traversed various stages of life in search of his path, he rejected both communist and nationalist ideologies, which were popular during the interwar period. In his writings, he criticized both nationalists and communists, who in turn regarded him as a determined adversary. Łobodowski could not accept the dictates of party dogmas, the primacy of political ideologies over common sense, creativity, moral values, or national interests.

In his journalistic work, he did not accept rules or norms that restricted freedom of expression. He valued his work at Madrid radio immensely; still, after 1970, when directives from the management of the Spanish national radio began to impose limitations on political topics, his interest in preparing radio programs gradually waned.<sup>60</sup> The lack of creative freedom and the inability to express his own opinions oppressed and humiliated Łobodowski; censorship was utterly unacceptable to him. A brilliant thinker and artist, he perceived the phenomena and processes around him with subtlety and depth, often anticipating their consequences. He frequently recorded his insights, only to encounter repeated disdain and disregard: “When for years on end I predicted the coming Polish-Ukrainian massacre, I was labeled an ‘unrealistic poet.’ And when, half a year before the war, I foretold an anti-Polish alliance between Stalin and Hitler, I was charged with ‘spreading false rumors’”.<sup>61</sup>

For Łobodowski, the freedom of individual creativity and the liberty to cultivate a national culture were hallmarks of humanity’s natural and proper functioning. In his article *Uzurpatorzy wolności* (*Usurpers of Freedom*), published in the Warsaw weekly “Wiadomości Literackie” (“Literary News”) in July 1936, he criticized both Soviet communists and Polish narodowcy for employing similar methods of social control: restricting freedom, enforcing strict centralization of power, creating

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<sup>60</sup> Józef Łobodowski, “*Tu mówi Madryt*,” “Zeszyty Historyczne,” 1980, z. 54, p. 128.

<sup>61</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Tym razem w obronie poetów*, “Kultura,” 1951, no. 12, p. 111.

a façade of democracy, and depriving individuals of the right to hold their own opinions. He emphasized the striking similarity between these political camps in their treatment of opponents and dissenters. According to the publicist, when living ideas ossify and become dogma, they pose the greatest threat to societal development. He wrote:

Such are the times today that the ideals of freedom must be defended against a gang of usurpers who equate the means leading to a goal with the goal itself, depriving socialism of what is most precious in it – not only bread, housing, coal, and electricity, but above all human dignity and the awareness of moral freedom, and therefore the responsibility of each individual.<sup>62</sup>

In his journalistic work, Łobodowski primarily presented himself as a political writer. By analyzing Soviet realities, he demonstrated how the Bolshevik dictatorship persecuted national cultures, how Russia easily assimilated smaller peoples, and even sought to destroy larger nations, such as the Ukrainian people, who refused to accept communist dogmas.

The inner need for freedom as a vital necessity was reflected in Łobodowski's literary views and moral priorities. He was captivated by Romantic literature, which centered on a vibrant and strong individual – someone capable of shaping the history of entire nations. The writer was particularly interested in representatives of the “Ukrainian School” in Polish literature, holding Juliusz Słowacki in the highest regard. In the works of these writers, motifs of Cossack freedom predominated, alongside images of the boundless Ukrainian steppe and the courageous warrior, animated by both the wild forces of nature and human passions.

His understanding of freedom as a cornerstone for the development of national culture shaped Łobodowski's views on the history and culture of Poland, as well as their interconnections with neighboring national cultures. Closely linked to this conviction was another key feature of his worldview – the concept of the cultural borderland.

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<sup>62</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Uzurpatorzy wolności*, “Wiadomości Literackie,” 1936, no. 31, p. 2.

Łobodowski spent most of his life in multicultural environments: first in the Kuban region, then in Volhynia, and for over forty years in Madrid. This fostered a profound understanding of social and cultural processes. He viewed the formation and development of a national culture as a continuous exchange of material and spiritual achievements between different peoples, especially among neighboring nations. Dialogue and mutual influence, along with the transfer of cultural heritage, were for him natural conditions of human development, with artists acting as catalysts in these processes.

Empathy, sensitivity, and a deep concern for the fate of different peoples permeate all of Łobodowski's work. He considered openness to the world and the assimilation of achievements from various national cultures an indispensable source for enriching one's own national culture and advancing it. As a creative individual, Łobodowski was shaped by multiple cultural traditions – not only Polish, but also those of neighboring countries, such as Ukrainian and Russian, and later, in emigration, Spanish. Living at the intersections of different national cultures gave him the ability to perceive and understand the world's complexity and to value the opportunity for each nation to develop culturally with freedom.

Multiculturalism – the ability to perceive another perspective or mentality and to view social phenomena and processes both from within and from outside – placed the artist far above other thinkers of his time who were confined to a single national-cultural environment. This 'transcendent' position allowed him to grasp reality more profoundly and to discern the underlying causal relationships and processes.

Łobodowski was particularly interested in the work of artists from different nationalities who were connected to the same region. In particular, he studied the writings of Ukrainian and Polish authors from Volhynia and concluded that they shared several common traits independent of their nationality. Each of them was a bearer of borderland culture, synthesizing in their works elements of various national cultures whose representatives had long lived on this land and considered it their homeland.

Łobodowski devoted several articles to the issue of cultural borderlands, including *Na łamach kultury* (*On the Pages of Culture*) ("Wołyń," 1937, no. 2), *Od Słowackiego do Samczuka* (*From Słowacki to Samchuk*)

("Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński," 1938, no. 20), and *O swobodę rozwoju kulturalnego* (*For the Freedom of Cultural Development*) ("Wołyń," 1938, no. 13), among others. He emphasized the deep spiritual kinship among artists of different nationalities for whom Volhynia was their homeland. He highlighted Ukrainian cultural realities that nourished the creativity of Polish artists, demonstrating the richness and diversity of multicultural regions and their artistic potential. According to the writer, the shared past and common traditions uniting representatives of different nationalities living in Volhynia – particularly Poles and Ukrainians – could provide insights into the pressing questions of Polish-Ukrainian relations at the time.

The writer was deeply troubled by the historical fate of Ukraine and its occupation by Soviet Russia. J. Łobodowski recognized that Poland's war with Germany could not become Ukraine's war. At the same time, the sensitive and often tragic aspects of Polish-Ukrainian relations during the interwar period were starkly revealed during the Second World War. In his assessments, he remained open-minded and uncompromising, acknowledging the responsibilities of both sides in the conflict while understanding the arguments and aspirations of each nation – an approach that distinguished him from many other Polish writers.

Łobodowski consistently rejected radical nationalism and ideologically aligned himself with the Polish Promethean movement, which advocated the creation of a federation of nations. He was drawn to the idea of political and cultural cooperation between Poles and Ukrainians in the face of mounting military threats from Germany and Russia. For him, the defense against external enemies constituted the primary goal that could unite the two neighboring nations.

After the war, during his years in emigration, Spanish culture entered Łobodowski's creative world alongside the Ukrainian one with remarkable intensity. He discovered in Spain a new and inexhaustible source of inspiration, referring to the country as "a crucible of cultures."<sup>63</sup> From this wellspring, he drew fresh ideas, motifs, and images. Spain captivated him with its traditions of chivalry, its ideals of courage

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<sup>63</sup> Jadwiga Sawicka, *Osobna droga* in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 436.

and sacrifice, and its vibrant cultural heritage. This new cultural experience broadened his worldview, offering a fresh lens for interpreting contemporary events, understanding politics and history, and exploring entirely new literary themes. At the same time, through his translations of Polish poetry – most notably the works of Karol Wojtyła, as well as those of other authors from the Slavic literary tradition – Łobodowski contributed to expanding the horizons of Spanish culture.

In the early postwar years, many young people from Poland, Ukraine, and other European countries emigrated to Madrid. Students resided at the Collegium of Saint James the Apostle, where an international circle of creative minds emerged, including Łobodowski. He actively engaged with the students – conversing with them, reading his poetry, and discussing current political events. During the first decade of the Collegium's existence, eighty-five Poles studied there, forming the largest national group among its 423 scholarship holders, followed by Ukrainians. Łobodowski developed close relationships with these students, who regarded him as a respected elder and eagerly welcomed every opportunity to meet and interact with him.

It was precisely at the Collegium of Saint James the Apostle that the poet's dream of bringing Poles and Ukrainians closer together was fulfilled. Józef Łobodowski and Potocki, a deputy of the Republic of Poland, contributed significantly to this Polish – Ukrainian rapprochement at the Collegium. The students themselves were also active in this endeavor, especially Kazimierz Tylko-Dobrzański, the poet's closest friend in Madrid.<sup>64</sup>

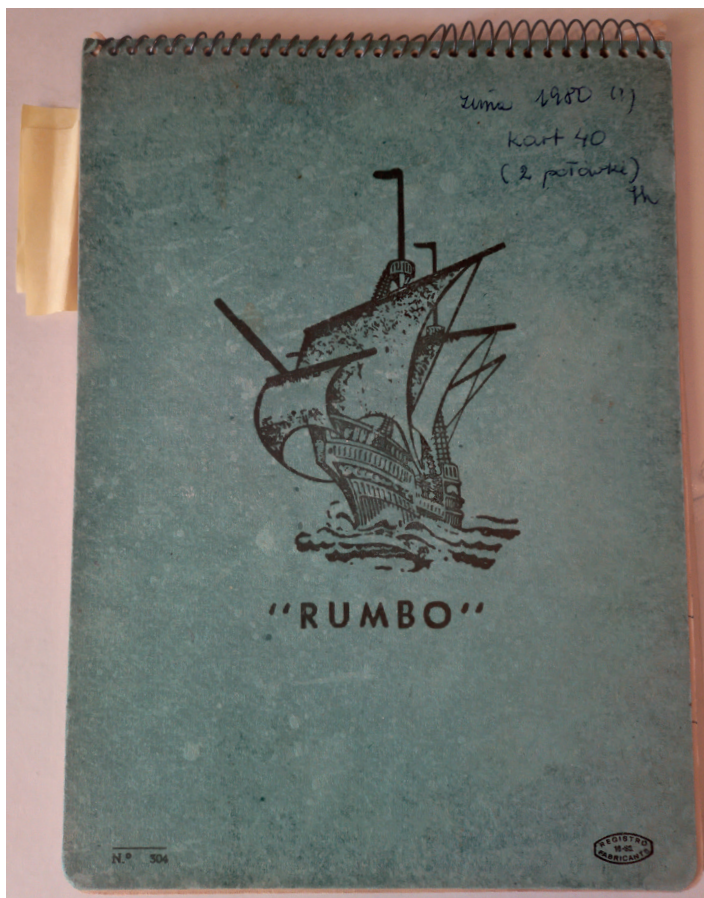
Kazimierz Tylko recalled this period of the writer's life:

We were the true representatives of Polish – and even European – reality, for Józio held a high position even among the Ukrainian students, nearly a hundred strong. All of us, without exception, were captivated by his poetry, and it was before us that he could always submit his work

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<sup>64</sup> Grzegorz Bąk, *Józef Łobodowski i Hiszpania: Hiszpania w biografii i w twórczości poety* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 3. Przekłady. Krytyka literacka*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2023, p. 95.

to its first – perhaps not authoritative, but nonetheless genuine – criticism. His earliest public appearances took place where our colleagues and I lived. He was an unrivaled reciter of his own poems and a brilliant participant in discussions on political, social, and general questions.<sup>65</sup>



Il. 7. Józef Łobodowski's notebooks. From the Tomanek family archives

<sup>65</sup> Cited in: Dariusz Pachocki, *Kuchnia literacka Józefa Łobodowskiego* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 3...*, p. 118.

The writer was convinced that cultural cooperation plays a decisive role in interethnic relations and that mutual understanding between nations begins with it. For this reason, he devoted many of his journalistic writings to the theme of spiritual kinship among different national cultures, highlighting affinities in ideas, emotions, worldviews, motifs, and images found in the works of artists from various peoples.

Józef Łobodowski regarded creativity as an educational mission, recognizing its significance in Polish-Ukrainian relations. He was keenly aware of the role and influence of journalism, publicistic writing, and propaganda on the state of public consciousness.

Throughout his life, he consistently adhered to the precepts of the Christian Decalogue, although he never portrayed himself as deeply religious. He upheld a set of firm life principles that guided him in all aspects of his life. He could not tolerate falsehood or hypocrisy; he always spoke his mind and acted in accordance with his convictions. At the core of his value system were universal human ideals. For this reason, he often experienced disappointment and never aligned himself with any political ideology.

In his article *Smutne porachunki* (*Sad Settlements*, “Wiadomości Literackie” (“Literary News”), 1935, no. 43), the writer exposed the hostility of the then-dominant ideologies – nationalist and communist – toward human values. Two seemingly very different concepts of social order revealed a striking similarity: both denied the primacy of moral values, undermined individual rights and freedoms, and imposed unfounded ideological dogmas. Józef Łobodowski observed this with profound sorrow:

We went out in search of justice and truth, for there was none of them in the old world. At the recruitment points, we were not given the truth. They wanted to repaint us, to dress us in other uniforms. But this is not a matter of exchanging one dogma for another. One does not fight bourgeois falsehood only to kneel before proletarian falsehood. I want to be a free man on free land. What has been done to our childish faith?<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Smutne porachunki*, “Wiadomości Literackie,” 1935, no. 43, p. 1.

In his youth, he experienced profound personal disillusionment with communist ideas, encountering the hypocrisy and cunning of party members and their “moral terror” toward the intelligentsia. He referred to them as “usurpers of the idea”. He criticized the self-interest and material motives concealed behind the lofty slogans of all contemporary political movements, including the communist camp. “For me, the highest authority is my own conscience,”<sup>67</sup> wrote Józef Łobodowski.

Because of the sincerity of his judgments and the critical nature of his statements, the writer came under attack from representatives of all political factions. Nevertheless, he exposed the narrowness of social castes, the false and fanatical devotion to dogma, and the pursuit of material gain hidden behind lofty ideals and slogans. He called for the shattering of the “posągi bożków wszystkich dogmatów i wyznań” (“statues of the idols of all dogmas and creeds”).<sup>68</sup>

He also addressed the ideological fanaticism of the political camps of his time in the article *Uzurpatorzy wolności* (*Usurpers of Freedom*, “Wiadomości Literackie” (“Literary News”), 1936, no. 31). Polish National Democrats and Russian Communists – eternal enemies and political opponents – employed the same methods of struggle: ossified and devalued revolutionary slogans that bore no relation to the resolution of real social problems. Behind every lofty ideal stands the individual, making concrete choices between good and evil. For this reason, the writer posed a rhetorical question: “But can mercy, gratitude, and other human emotions – always the same in the Stone Age and today, under the reign of reinforced concrete – be fully enclosed within social categories?”<sup>69</sup>.

What troubled him most was not so much the betrayal of revolutionary ideals in which millions had believed, but the threat to the future of humanity – the stagnation and degradation of social development. For the writer, an idea was meaningful only if it could unite people. He saw its strength in the supremacy of the “ethical Decalogue” over narrow national (or other) selfishness. In the article *Tropicielom polskości. List do Bolesława Micińskiego* (*Trackers of Polishness. Letter to*

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Uzurpatorzy wolności...*, p. 1.

Bolesław Miciński, “Wiadomości Literackie” (“Literary News”), 1937, no. 25), he accused his opponents of lacking even elementary knowledge of history, of political blindness, and of failing to understand the difference between Ukraine and Russia – not to mention the other, smaller nations subjugated by Russia.

In his assessment of social phenomena, Łobodowski prioritized ethical criteria, even when resolving the most contentious issues in interethnic relations. Broad cultural cooperation, mutual understanding, and cultural exchange between peoples formed the core of his program. The writer believed that Poles and Ukrainians were historically destined for a close and enduring alliance across political, economic, and cultural spheres, thereby ensuring the secure existence of both peoples on the European geopolitical map.

Participation in the military events of World War II, his time in military camps, and later in French and Spanish prisons revealed to Józef Łobodowski a different aspect of history and, at times, the darker side of previously familiar political opponents. He recounted these unexpected discoveries during and after the war in his publication *O cyganach i katastrofistach* (*On Gypsies and Catastrophists*):

September 1939 arrived, bringing defeat and occupation. Various “symbols” were confronted with reality. At roughly the same time, when the Gestapo – obligingly fulfilling a request from the NKVD – was transporting furniture from the Warsaw apartment of Comrade Wanda Wasilewska to Lviv, Paweł Musiał was being beheaded in the market square of Katowice by the axe of a Nazi executioner.

History is a great ironist and enjoys introducing such unexpected corrections.<sup>70</sup>

During the war, in a Spanish prison, the writer encountered communist agents under even more mysterious circumstances. Two Marxists – a Hungarian and a German with Austrian citizenship – ended up in the same cell as Łobodowski. A few weeks later, a friar from a nearby monastery arrived at the prison director’s office carrying a basket of

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<sup>70</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *O cyganach i katastrofistach* in: *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1...*, p. 338.

fine food for the two impoverished prisoners: white bread, sausage, cheeses, and fruit. From that point on, the Catalan monks regularly supplied the Marxists, who turned out to be friends of the personal secretary of a prominent Catholic politician from a Central European country. It was then that Łobodowski realized how deceitful the communist network could be in infiltrating every corner of the world.

Józef Łobodowski also encountered the falsification of testimonies and memoirs by Polish communist writers, published during the era of the Polish People's Republic, on multiple occasions in his life. In his memoir *W połowie wędrówki* (*Midway Through the Journey*), he wrote:

There is, for example, a conversation among the three of us: myself, Władysław Broniewski, and Jerzy Borejsza (Borejsza being a pseudonym; his real surname was Goldberg). The conversation turned to two communist poets, Witold Wandurski and Stanisław Stande, who had been accused in Kyiv of spying for Poland and executed. Broniewski said to me, "That's not true. They were not spies." So I asked him: "Mr. Władysław, then why don't you make that public?" At this point, Borejsza spoke up: "Certain things cannot be made public. If they go against the Party, they must be kept silent." I replied: "If the Party, in its own interest, orders a crime to be covered up, then such a Party can..." – and here I used an obscene word. Naturally, this does not appear in any memoirs about Broniewski, published especially in the country.<sup>71</sup>

What the writer saw, experienced, and reflected upon in the 1940s only reinforced his conviction in the falsity of all political doctrines that did not prioritize human values. In his daily life, Józef Łobodowski was always open and sincere, never compromising his views for material gain. He was one of the few writers who lived entirely from literary work. Constant financial hardship was a regular part of life during his years in emigration. He could have significantly improved his material circumstances by obtaining Spanish citizenship, yet he never did so throughout his life.

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<sup>71</sup> Irena Szypowska, *Rozmowa z Józefem Łobodowskim...*, p. 371.

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One of the first to seek him out in Spain during the final years of his life was the Polish journalist Irena Szypowska. Upon her initial arrival in Madrid, she looked for him at the Polish church:

Before entering the church, I observed the people gathering there. One man caught my eye—of average height, a little unkempt, even neglected, yet somehow intriguing, different from the other Poles present. They were carefully shaved, well dressed, elegant; he was something else altogether. It seemed to me that in some indefinable way he surpassed them, that he was beyond reach. I approached him and asked, “Master, are you Józef Łobodowski?”

“Ah, yes,” he answered in a young, powerful voice, clearly pleased.<sup>73</sup>

In Irena Szypowska’s memoirs, he is depicted as a calm and balanced writer, rich in life experience – a vivid personality who stood out among other Poles both outwardly and inwardly. Clearly, he lacked intellectual companionship and took pleasure in recalling and discussing literature:

Those were gentle, deeply pleasant moments. We would linger together over red wine – the only drink he deemed worthy – while he looked on with mild displeasure whenever I asked for coffee. It felt as though the spirit of Warsaw’s prewar literary cafés had returned: conversations about life, politics, and literature unfolding just as they once had. I mostly listened. He spoke – and I was a grateful listener, one who understood. We talked about Tuwim, Ginczanka, Czechowicz, Gałczyński, about Russian writers and their tragic destinies, about the literary press of the time, and finally about his own life.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Stefania Kossowska, *Przyjaciele i znajomi. Jerzy Giedroyc, Józef Łobodowski i Zofia Kozarynowa*, “Rzeczpospolita + Plus – Minus,” 1998, no. 161, 11–16 VII.

<sup>73</sup> Irena Szypowska, *Historia mówiona...*, p. 378.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

Life's trials added experience and prudence to Łobodowski's rebellious nature, broadening his perspective on social phenomena. Yet, they did not alter his human essence or compromise his spiritual stance and individuality. He always followed his own path, held firm opinions, served no idols, cherished the people he loved, and remained a true individualist.

I would also say that his personality revealed a tension between nature and culture; even his works show that he was constantly engaged in a struggle between the "wildness" that connects a person to nature and gives them vital strength, and culture, which imposes constraints, and history, which destroys. He was a great erudite. He had an excellent memory, told stories brilliantly, and retained a strong, expressive voice until his last days. No one read his poems better than he did,<sup>75</sup>

– the journalist recalled.

Until the end of his life, he remained the same romantic he had been in the youthful 1930s. When he had money, he collected ship models and could, effortlessly and without hesitation, purchase an expensive gift for a close friend or family member. He never knew how to spend money prudently, for it had never held great significance for him. After 1939, he never saw his family again – his wife, mother, and sister – and he never remarried.

Except that he never admitted to being unhappy, to anything being wrong with him, or to being in pain. No—he was always healthy, strong, robust; he knew exactly what was going on and what he himself was aiming for. I don't think one could say he was an optimist. He was a realist, and that is something quite different.<sup>76</sup>

His life experiences shaped the writer's convictions and ideals, and he remained faithful to them throughout his entire life.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 379.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 380.



## CHAPTER 2

### CONTEMPORARY AND FUTURE EUROPE IN JÓZEF ŁOBODOWSKI'S POLITICAL JOURNALISM

Józef Łobodowski's name first appeared in Polish journalistic discourse in the early 1930s. Initially, he published in Lublin periodicals, either independently or in collaboration with Józef Czechowicz and other Polish writers and public figures. By the mid-1930s, his works began appearing in the most prominent Polish periodicals of the time, including "Wiadomości Literackie" ("Literary News"), "Pion" ("The Vanguard"), "Zet" ("Zet"), "Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński" ("Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin"), and others.

The political journalism of Józef Łobodowski was consistently distinguished by the sharpness and topicality of its themes, as well as by a vivid and expressive style. In terms of content, his works were always multifaceted and diverse, polemical, and uncompromising in their critique of the enemies of freedom and social progress. Most of his texts appeared in the press, exploring the intersection of political, historical, philosophical, and cultural topics.

The writer examined contemporary social issues against the backdrop of a thorough analysis of political processes. He scrutinized both domestic and foreign policies of Poland, evaluating its achievements and missteps, and proposed innovative ideas and solutions for complex problems. His texts are characterized by deliberate intertextuality, drawing on his vast intellectual knowledge across various academic fields, and contain numerous allusions and references to historical, political, and cultural contexts. Józef Łobodowski explained the causal relationships of social processes, revealed the nature of events and phenomena, and warned of their potential impact on future developments.

Among the central themes of his journalism were the future of European countries and the threat to their security from Nazi Germany in the 1930s; the nature of communism and the danger of Soviet

expansion and the spread of communist ideology into Western Europe; Poland and its security situation; the historical destinies of neighboring peoples; Ukraine, its history and culture; Polish-Ukrainian relations; and the necessity of a Polish-Ukrainian alliance and its impact on the future of Europe as a whole.



Il. 8. The monthly magazine “Wschód,” which published Józef Łobodowski’s journalism in the 1930s

Łobodowski viewed Poland within the broader context of European and global political processes, emphasizing its historical role and decisive influence on the fate of Central and Eastern Europe. He linked his vision for the future of the countries in this region to the necessity of establishing cooperation and partnership. The pursuit of understanding and collaboration for collective security remained a fundamental principle in his worldview and guiding program throughout his life.

After the war, the thematic scope of Józef Łobodowski's publications expanded significantly. Spain's position on the international stage, its foreign policy, and the attitudes of the Spanish authorities toward the countries of the communist bloc, as well as Spain's relations with the West, introduced new dimensions to his work. His journalism now reflected a broader, global geopolitical context than it had before the war.

Łobodowski wrote about the history and culture of Spain, the relentless spread of communist ideas to the West and their destructive impact on Western culture, the struggle for power in various parts of the world, and the overt or covert influence of the Soviet Union, Stalin, and his followers on these political processes. The writer exposed the brutality of Soviet international policy and the same "refined" deceit of the global international movement with which he had been familiar since his youth.

When Józef Łobodowski entered journalism, new nation-states had emerged in Europe following the end of World War I, and nationalist ideas and ideologies were gaining popularity. In Poland's public debate during the 1930s over the country's developmental direction, the nationalist concept and policies of the *Endecja* (National Democratic movement) led by Roman Dmowski prevailed. Their opponents were the so-called "Piłsudskiites," supporters of Józef Piłsudski and the Polish Promethean movement, who held a minority in the Polish parliament.

Activists of the Promethean movement advocated a federal concept of the state, based on dialogue and cooperation with representatives of national minorities in Poland – particularly Ukrainians – and on active international efforts to support the national liberation movements of peoples subjugated by Russia. This concept increasingly lost ground in the struggle for influence within Polish society. After Piłsudski's death, all initiatives he and his supporters had launched regarding national policy were gradually rolled back. This led to a marked radicalization of the government's domestic policies toward national

minorities and a sharp deterioration of interethnic relations in the eastern territories of the Second Polish Republic, particularly in Volhynia and Galicia.

In his vision for Poland's future, Józef Łobodowski embraced the ideas of Polish Prometheism, which were founded on the principles of dialogue and cooperation among all peoples living in Poland. In international politics, he advocated engaging representatives of all nations oppressed by Soviet Russia – those striving for liberation – in a collaborative effort aimed at the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Empire into independent national states.

In his press publications, he consistently emphasized that the path proposed by the Polish Endeks (nationalists) for resolving the Ukrainian question – the most acute of all national issues at the time – namely, the Polonization of Ukrainians in the territories of the Second Polish Republic, was a path that would lead to the loss of any ability to influence Eastern Europe in competition with imperial Russia. In his view, this approach inevitably led the country toward a decline in power and influence on the world stage. Moreover, Łobodowski repeatedly warned that such a national policy could end in tragedy for Poland itself. His critical perspective on Poland's domestic and foreign policies in the interwar years stemmed from his deep patriotic convictions, his concern for the nation's future, and his awareness of the tragic consequences of the authorities' mistakes, which threatened the very existence of the state.

### **The Ideas of Dialogue and Cooperation in Józef Łobodowski's 1930s Texts**

Following the end of World War I, the European political landscape underwent significant changes: the largest empires collapsed, and new independent states emerged, including Poland. Many of these countries were socially structured as monoethnic states, which contributed to the formation and popularity of nationalist ideas. At the same time, imperialist ideologies began to revive in several countries, often drawing on the national traditions of the past.

In his press publications of the 1930s, Józef Łobodowski analyzed the international situation in Europe, highlighting the distribution of

power, the state of global politics, and the positions of neighboring countries and their influence on Poland. He examined the ideological landscape of Europe, noting the emergence of new trends – such as the rise of Italian, German, and Soviet imperialism – and reflected on their potential impact on the fate of other European countries, particularly Poland.

The power of German military imperialism was growing rapidly. According to Łobodowski, the imperialism of the Third Reich was inherently racist and nationalist and differed significantly from the imperialism of contemporary Italy. He described Italian imperialism as “historiosophical,” since it was rooted in the traditions of ancient Rome and the cultural boundaries of the Pax Romana (Roman Peace) and was characterized by a generally favorable attitude toward Christianity. For this reason, he considered it far more serious and consistent than German imperialism.

Soviet imperialism, in Łobodowski’s view, was entirely different. Despite numerous ideological shifts and historical twists, it always remained grounded in its original principles of “indivisibility” and “land accumulation,” serving as a direct continuation of the imperialism of Tsarist Russia. Both White and Red Russia pursued different paths toward the same goal: the restoration of an imperial “All-Russia.”

Regarding contemporary Russian imperialism, he wrote in the article *Na marginesie dyskusji – ankiety* (*On the Margins of the Discussion – Survey*):

When, during the chaotic retreat of [Anton] Denikin’s forces in December 1919, two Red pilots – both former imperial officers – were captured, they reported: “In the rear, especially in Great Russia, a national consciousness is awakening. There is satisfaction that a weakened Russia is once again consolidating, despite difficult external and internal conditions, and without foreign aid. The eternal “gatherer of Russian lands,” Ivan Kalita, had arrived this time bearing a red banner and socialist slogans upon his lips. Yet the essence of his activity, of course, remained entirely unchanged”.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Na marginesie dyskusji – ankiety*, “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński,” 1937, no. 38, p. 428.

The new imperialisms were characterized by hostility and expansionism toward other European states. Against this backdrop, Józef Łobodowski reflected on the potential emergence of a Polish imperialism that could serve as both an alternative and a safeguard for Poland and other countries of Eastern Europe. The ideological foundation for this vision could be found in Polish Prometheism. The Promethean concept envisioned the creation of a federation of independent Eastern European states, with Poland at its center, assuming the leading political role as a unifying force in the region. The initial step toward realization was conceived as an alliance and partnership between Poles and Ukrainians in their struggle for an independent state. Other nations subjugated by Russia were to join this coalition, creating a powerful shield against external threats.

In the journalism of the 1930s, the Promethean concept was closely linked to the resolution of the “Eastern Question,” or more precisely, the Ukrainian question. Since the Ukrainian minority was the largest in Poland, Łobodowski regarded this issue as a matter of “life and death” for the Second Polish Republic, one that could influence the future of Polish statehood.

At the same time, he observed that Polish society, for the most part, was not ready to embrace or support the idea of a federative Poland. The toxins of narrow, short-sighted nationalism and blind hatred toward other nations poisoned public consciousness. The formation of a federation of independent states around Poland – primarily a federation of Poland and Ukraine – could have provided a foundation for strong resistance against Soviet expansion from the east and fascist aggression from the west. This concept was supported by a small group of politicians and publicists, followers of Józef Piłsudski, while the majority of society rejected it. The Polish failure to understand the decisive historical role the country could have assumed, combined with the political shortsightedness of the contemporary government, significantly shaped the subsequent fate of the Polish people and their closest neighbors, particularly regarding their role and position in the Second World War and the postwar period.

In his journalistic writings of the 1930s, Łobodowski addressed the issues of Poland and Ukraine within the broader context of Europe’s future. He consistently emphasized the immense threat to Euro-

pean culture and civilization posed by Soviet Russia from the east. In the article *Za naszą wolność i waszą* (*For Our Freedom and Yours*), Łobodowski wrote that Russia had a historic opportunity to transform its long-standing role as the executioner of nations into that of a liberator. This opportunity arose after the 1917 revolutions. Yet, by manipulating popular socialist slogans of freedom, brotherhood, and equality, Russia became an even greater oppressor of liberty than the Tsarist Empire had been:

Never in the entire history of the world has such a vast deception been perpetrated; never has human suffering and sacrifice been desecrated so monstrously as here. Until recently, Russia was the country toward which the eyes of workers and intellectuals alike – veterans of the revolution and the young – were turned with the greatest hope and expectation. It was believed that, through the suffering of a great nation and its heroic sacrifice, a system worthy of a free human being would finally arise, one that would justify all the victims offered up in its name. It turned out otherwise. Above the smokestacks of all the Magnitostroi and the stages of party mass spectacles there rose the old, familiar figure of the tsarist gendarme, stifling criticism and ruthlessly crushing every independent impulse.<sup>2</sup>

The Russian revolutionary experiment clearly demonstrated that Marxism as an ideology had already become obsolete and had exhausted itself – “mummified and withered.” Time and again, Soviet reality proved its futility and harmfulness.

Józef Łobodowski exposed the deceit and treachery of the USSR (or, more precisely, Bolshevik Russia) and its allies – the leftist parties in European countries – in the article *Metodyczne szaleństwo* (*Methodical Madness*). He argued that Russia employed false slogans of liberating the proletariat of the world as a means to oppress and destroy subjugated peoples. In contrast, the rest of the world remained deaf and blind to the manifestations of Russian genocide against entire nations. He wrote:

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<sup>2</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Za naszą wolność i waszą*, “Wiadomości Literackie,” 1936, no. 38, p. 1.

The formula is brief and clear: fulfilling the independence aspirations of Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Turkestan would weaken Russia – and, by extension, the anti-fascist front. Everything else is deemed irrelevant. Thus, in the very name of democracy and in the very name of freedom itself, the democratic-left camp sanctions the subjugation of entire nations and their daily suffering beneath the Moscow boot.<sup>3</sup>

Moscow succeeded in convincing the world of its own greatness and the supremacy of Russian culture. Hiding behind this image, Soviet Russia denied other nations the right to their own culture and statehood. Europe, in turn, blindly supported Russia, with both the political left and right aligning without conducting an objective analysis of the surrounding events and their consequences, “The vicious circle was complete: socialists met with national democrats, and the mass mobilization of volunteers – “working of their own accord for the benefit of Russian state interests” – swept up ever larger crowds.”<sup>4</sup>

Bolshevik Russia treacherously exploited socialist slogans and ideas to construct a new empire, rooted in the same oppressive essence as its predecessor. Łobodowski described this as sophisticated manipulation and deceit, constituting one of the greatest crimes against the European people. In this article and other journalistic pieces, he emphasized the astonishing level of fanaticism with which Russia’s supporters denied Ukrainians and other nations subjugated by Russia the right to independence: “Pacifism, democracy, socialism – what fine slogans to be mobilized in defense of empire! Hundreds of thousands of ‘ambassadors,’ of their own accord, serve as eager representatives of Moscow’s interests. Is this not the secret behind the stubborn survival of that office of horrors known as the Russian Federation?”<sup>5</sup>

Łobodowski described this state of Polish public consciousness – the failure to grasp the importance of the Ukrainian question and the widespread prevalence and support of Russophilism – as madness. He

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<sup>3</sup> Stefan Kuryłło, *Metodyczne szaleństwo*, “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński,” 1938, no. 33, pp. 354–355.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 355.

perceived it as a threat not only to the future of the Polish state but to the future of all Europe.

In the mid-1930s, Józef Łobodowski underwent a profound ideological crisis. He experienced immense disappointment due to his loss of faith in leftist ideas and the degradation of the socialist ideal, which he observed in the life of the USSR. As a young writer, he had associated the ideal social order with the socialist idea, rooted in the “Springtime of Nations” and the slogans of freedom, democracy, and equality. Yet the phenomena and processes he witnessed among the peoples of Soviet Russia were a complete negation of these socialist ideals. The lofty and progressive ideas were distorted and exploited by Russia to serve its usual imperial ambitions.

Łobodowski saw the most outstanding merit of socialism in its elevation of universal human values above all other categories, including national ones. He was drawn to the ideas of equality, freedom, and humanity and demonstrated how these principles could harmoniously coexist with national ideals – provided the welfare of one nation was not placed above the interests of all humanity.

Socialism is not so much an international as a supranational idea. The fate of all humanity and its culture stands above the power and prosperity of any single nation. I am, first and foremost, a human being, and only then a Pole. Without human values and an awareness of my humanity, I would be a poor Pole indeed. Yet I share nothing with those who, [as S. Żeromski once wrote – remark by Svitlana Kravchenko], “reveal the baseness of their soul in the Polish language.” I might just as well have been born a German or an Englishman, and it would have neither increased nor diminished my worth. But this hierarchy of values in no way changes the fact that I am deeply bound to my native land – that its past and culture are the very air I breathe, and that I shall never renounce them. I know perfectly well that no one’s welfare requires me to abandon my mother tongue or to narrow the horizons of my native culture in any way,

– he wrote in the article *Za naszą wolność i waszą* (*For Our Freedom and Yours*).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Za naszą wolność...*, p. 1.

Łobodowski regarded the westward expansion of Bolshevik Russia as the greatest threat to Europe's future. In implementing the Promethean concept of forming a federation of Central and Eastern European states around Poland, he saw a path to safeguarding European civilization from the destructive influence of the East. Bolshevik Russia had exploited the socialist idea to usurp power, claiming the right to make ultimate decisions and depriving conquered peoples of the ability to shape their own cultural development. For this reason, Łobodowski emphasized the necessity of protecting European culture from the corrosive and destabilizing effects of communism. He envisioned Poland and its neighboring European states as independent and free, guided primarily by universal human values in their policies.

The writer's social ideal was "a free person on free land."<sup>7</sup> This was how Łobodowski envisioned the future of Poland and all of Europe. He elaborated on these ideas in the article *Smutne porachunki* (*Sad Reckonings*), which was written in response to accusations that he had betrayed the communist ideals he had once embraced. Numerous critiques appeared in the Polish leftist press from his ideological opponents, prompting him to respond.

In this article, Łobodowski confirmed his profound disillusionment with communism and explained the reasons behind his departure from communist views. The falsity, deceit, party dictatorship, and repression of dissenters were all masked by slogans of freedom, which bore no relation to social reality or the practical activities of the communist party. Unwilling to participate in this vast deception, he began writing about the threat that communism posed to all democratic countries and to freedom in general:

To go along with them means to violate one's conscience every day: to close one's eyes to everything one is instructed not to see; to submit to moral terror; to withhold one's own judgment until an official arrives to harmonize opinions in accordance with an anonymous directive. To live in the dreadful conviction that any criticism, any attempt at

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<sup>7</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Smutne porachunki*, "Wiadomości Literackie," 1935, no. 43, p. 1.

ideological opposition, will be treated as disguised counterrevolution. I have had enough of this charade. Look at yesterday's soldiers of freedom – today's slaves of empty slogans. Their heads are beginning to ripen for the guillotine. [...] It is not betrayal to withdraw obedience from the usurpers of an idea. I do not betray the ideals of freedom. I abandon those who have degenerated into socialism. [...] One cannot lie with impunity for too long, counting on the naivety of one's listeners. Above all reasons of state, the ethical Decalogue matters more.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the grim predictions of the late 1930s, Józef Łobodowski remained an optimist. In his journalistic writings, he urged readers to learn from the mistakes of history, believing that nations could overcome their poverty, fears, and prejudices to become free peoples. Quoting Noé Jordania, the leader of the Georgian political emigration, Łobodowski envisioned the future of Europe as a civilization united by a common culture founded on universal human values:

Europe, – writes Noé Jordania – stands before a profound problem, a complex task, a question of the very life of its civilization. That civilization will acquire a broad foundation only if it becomes a universal civilization, only if the nations of Asia enter into it. The West and the East have encountered one another many times in the past, but those encounters were hostile. Today, this question has resurfaced globally as a necessary means of preserving European culture. To the apostles of this encounter, Europe's egoism will be of no use. Only on the basis of equality and cooperation is rapprochement possible, and only thus can a single, genuinely universal human culture be created.<sup>9</sup>

Józef Łobodowski reflected on the future of European peoples in many of his journalistic texts. He regarded the Polish Promethean movement as the most far-sighted and promising initiative of his time. This movement proposed the creation of a federation of Eastern European nations – with the potential future inclusion of Asian peoples – aimed at liberating them from Soviet rule. Its foundation was based

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Za naszą wolność...*, p. 1.

on the principles of dialogue, partnership, and cooperation, uniting nations around shared strategic goals. Among its primary objectives was the transformation of the Polish-Ukrainian relations paradigm.

In the article *Zapoznana strona zagadnienia (odpowiedź Nr. 12 na ankietę)* (*The Familiar Side of the Issue (Response No. 12 to the Questionnaire)*), published in 1938, Łobodowski discussed the idea of creating a bloc of states stretching from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea. He argued that the foundation of such a geopolitical project should be the Polish-Ukrainian bridge. Its development, he emphasized, had to begin primarily with cultural cooperation, the identification of political and security challenges, and the formulation of shared goals and objectives. He wrote:

The creation of a great bloc stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea may be based on geopolitical principles; one may calculate what each of the nations forming such a bloc stands to gain and what it may lose. There can be no doubt, however, that the political and historical interests of individual nations cannot serve as the sole mortar binding the structure together. Naturally, one must not indulge in irresponsible historiosophical mysticism and remove from view those cardinal issues and questions. Nevertheless, we should remember that any purely mechanical union – one not animated by the affirmation of a common idea and by the creation of a shared cultural type, differentiated nationally yet common in the broadest sense – is sooner or later doomed to destruction. Therefore, in striving to realize the goals set by all allies under the banner of active Prometheism on the political and social plane, one must not forget the fundamental obligation to respect the cultural dimensions of the problem.<sup>10</sup>

Łobodowski consistently emphasized the necessity of cultural work, believing that the rapprochement of nations begins with it. He repeatedly highlighted the importance of building a cultural dialogue as the foundation for the future consolidation of Europe's peoples. In the article *W obliczu rozstrzygnięć* (*In the Face of Decisions*), he analyzed

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<sup>10</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Zapoznana strona zagadnienia (odpowiedź Nr. 12 na ankietę)*, "Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński," 1938, no. 6, p. 59.

the contemporary situation in Eastern Europe, examined the political interests of European countries, and tentatively divided them into two opposing camps. The first camp included countries seeking to preserve the existing status quo, while the second comprised countries and peoples interested in revising the current state of affairs.

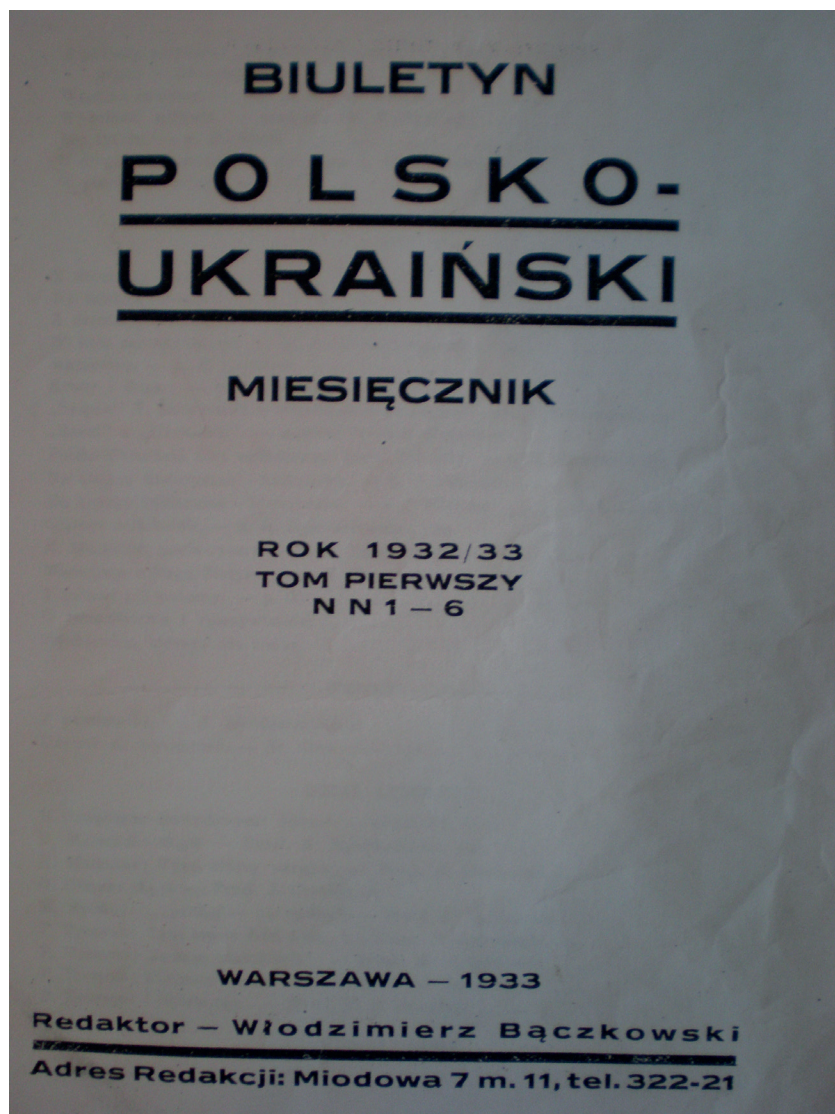
It was evident that people living under foreign domination, subjugated by stronger neighboring countries, viewed the prospect of a future war as an opportunity to gain independence – a prospect whose imminence in 1938 left little doubt. As a result of World War I and the collapse of the old empires, several European countries, including Poland, regained their independence. Ukrainians and other nations recognized the same opportunity under foreign rule. In this geopolitical context, the interests of Poles and Ukrainians diverged. The Poles sought to preserve the status quo and maintain their state, at least in its existing form. In contrast, the Ukrainians aspired to the collapse of the USSR and the incorporation of Western Ukrainian lands into an independent Ukrainian state. In the anticipated future conflict, they saw a chance to unite all Ukrainian territories and establish their own sovereign nation.

At the same time, J. Łobodowski regarded Poland as one of the revisionist states shaping the course of international politics in Eastern Europe. However, he considered Polish revisionism fundamentally different from that of Russia or Germany. While the USSR and the Third Reich sought to expand their empires through the conquest of neighboring territories, Poland's revisionist ambitions were not driven by territorial aggrandizement.

“Polish revisionism concerns more than the mere mechanical expansion of the state; it involves the transformation of the political map of Central and Eastern Europe in such a way that a new balance of power would enable us to fully capitalize on the opportunities offered by our geopolitical position and our pivotal role in shaping culture in Eastern Europe,”<sup>11</sup> – the publicist supported this argument by appealing to a well-known idea in Polish society: Poland's cultural mission in Eastern Europe.

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<sup>11</sup> Stefan Kuryłło, *W obliczu rozstrzygnięć*, “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński,” 1938, no. 37, p. 403.



Il. 9. The weekly “Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin,” which published journalistic texts and translations by J. Łobodowski

The aggressive designs of Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany for the complete domination of Europe were evident to all; these empires pursued their goals through different ideologies but employed similar methods and comparable means. In Łobodowski's view, Polish revisionism aimed to combine geographic position, national interests, and historical tradition to forge a multinational bridge between the Black and Baltic Seas, serving as a bulwark against expansion from both East and West. This concept rested primarily on the necessity of establishing a strong defensive alliance of states.

Łobodowski recognized, however, that faced with simultaneous expansion from the East and the West, such a plan was complicated, if not impossible, to realize. He also did not dismiss the potential threat of a new Rapallo emerging.<sup>12</sup> The publicist believed that neutralizing Russia seemed a more feasible task than neutralizing Germany, since, in his view, Russia "It is not monolithic – neither in national composition nor in psychological makeup."<sup>13</sup> He was convinced that Poland's first step should be to form alliances with Eastern European states and peoples, directing their efforts toward the dismantling of the USSR and the establishment of several independent nations. Only then, he argued, could this bloc effectively counter the militaristic threat posed by Germany from the West. In his concept, Łobodowski grounded his vision in Poland's national interests, firmly asserting that "the sources of Polish power lie in the East."<sup>14</sup>

By first altering the situation in the East and subsequently in the South, Poland, together with its allied countries, would be able to resist Germany. "For Polish revisionism envisions an independent Kyiv, Tiflis (Tbilisi), and Samarkand – and, consequently, a powerful Baltic–Polish–Czech–Hungarian–Romanian bloc that would neutralize the threat to us from Central Europe, stretching from Hamburg to... Baghdad,"<sup>15</sup> – the publicist wrote that the practical implementation

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<sup>12</sup> Treaty of Rapallo on the Restoration of Diplomatic Relations between Soviet Russia and Germany, signed in 1922.

<sup>13</sup> Stefan Kuryłło, *W obliczu...*, p. 404.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

of such a concept was hindered by the nationalisms that, at the time, dominated the collective consciousness of many peoples, including the Poles.

For its lack of foresight, the writer criticized not only Polish nationalism but also the leftist political movements in Poland and across Europe, which advocated uniting with Soviet Russia against Nazi Germany. These movements either failed to recognize – or deliberately ignored – the growing threat from the East and were unable to propose any concrete measures of resistance.

The subversive activities of the Comintern and the USSR were far more powerful and dangerous than those of Germany. At the same time, leftist journalism broadly promoted a disguised pro-Soviet agenda under the guise of anti-fascism. During this period, Łobodowski wrote extensively about the methods of Soviet propaganda: “Thus, leftist journalism presents light and shadow in a highly tendentious manner, with a clear pirouette of sympathy toward the innocent Moscow bear. Fanatical Hitler-phobia pushes one toward Sovietophilia, which in turn cuts down all efforts at Polish-Ukrainian understanding.”<sup>16</sup>

He suspected the existence of powerful hidden forces that continuously promoted Russophile tendencies in the journalistic discourse of the 1930s, justifying them as necessary to resist the advance of fascism and presenting communist ideology as the sole counterbalance.

The ideas of Łobodowski, like those of other publicists of the Pro-methean movement, largely went unheard by the Polish public. His reasoned arguments could not penetrate the political fanaticism of mass consciousness or withstand the onslaught of militant propaganda. It was a time when nationalist ideologies and monoethnic states were fashionable across Europe. Many in the 1930s admired the rapidly growing economic and military strength of Hitler’s Germany, as extensively reported in the European press. In contrast, others were impressed by the so-called “successes” of industrialization, collectivization, and the Bolshevik experiment.

All the governments of Europe, seeking to secure themselves, signed non-aggression pacts with Germany and the USSR one after

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 405.

another, hoping these agreements would shield them from the coming war. The people who had lost their wars of independence and had no state of their own were entirely disregarded. Their interests were ignored, and no one considered them full-fledged political allies.

In the end, in the Great War, all Europeans lost, while the Soviet (Russian) empire emerged victorious, extending its sphere of influence deep into Central and Southern Europe. The West acquiesced to this division of influence, effectively allowing Stalin to dominate the greater part of the continent.

### **The Concept of a Free and United Europe in Łobodowski's Emigration Journalism**

After several months of war and the retreat of the Polish army into Hungarian territory, J. Łobodowski managed to resume his journalistic and publishing activities even while interned in military camps. During his stay at the French Camp de Livron near Toulouse, he participated in the founding and publication of the monthly "Wrócimy". In the editorial office, he worked alongside the Polish artist Witold Januszewski, with whom he shared a warm and enduring friendship.<sup>17</sup> Witold Januszewski was responsible for the artistic design of the publication. At the same time, Łobodowski contributed to the preparation of its first ten issues before deciding to leave France and travel to England via Spain. In the pages of this periodical, he published poetry, short satirical sketches on camp life, reviews of front-line events, and politically themed articles. For these contributions, he used the pseudonym Stefan Kuryłło, already familiar from the interwar period, to sign his writings on contemporary political matters.

In his political journalism, Łobodowski addressed topics that were both personal and urgent – issues made even more pressing by the outbreak of the war. In the second issue, his article titled *Russia and*

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<sup>17</sup> Dariusz Pachocki, *Kuchnia literacka Józefa Łobodowskiego* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 3. Przekłady. Krytyka literacka*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2023, p. 116.

Us appeared, in which he exposed the imperialist nature of Russia, its persistent expansionist ambitions, and its enduring hostility toward an independent Polish state. He observed that the “White” Russian emigration, although fundamentally anti-Bolshevik, expressed satisfaction over Poland’s defeat in 1939.<sup>18</sup> The publicist was convinced that, regardless of faction or ideology, Russia had consistently pursued the conquest of foreign territories and the subjugation of other peoples. All Russians, irrespective of age, social background, or political affiliation, steadfastly defended the sacred “inviolability” of the great empire. They were unable to assess their own history critically and were unprepared to entertain the idea of dissolving the Russian prison of nations.

In the third issue of the monthly “Wróciemy” (“We Shall Return”), Łobodowski published the article *Prometheus in Chains*, in which he elaborated on the ideas of Polish Prometheism – long familiar to him – and demonstrated their enduring relevance in the new historical reality. He argued that the early experiences of World War II confirmed the validity of forming a bloc of states around Poland. Had Józef Piłsudski’s federal concept been implemented in the 1920s, Poland would have had reliable allies in its confrontation with Germany and the USSR in 1939.

The dominance of nationalist tendencies and the ethnonational concept of a monoethnic state in Polish politics during the interwar years contributed to Poland’s defeat and loss of state independence. The nationalist arrogance of the ruling politicians on the eve of World War II hindered cooperation with neighboring peoples, leaving the Poles to face the German and Soviet armies alone. Łobodowski emphasized the necessity of uniting with all peoples striving to free themselves from Russian oppression, highlighting in particular the importance of collaboration with the Ukrainians – a need made even more urgent by the ongoing war.

The article provoked the displeasure of the camp authorities and resulted in Łobodowski being deprived of financial support. He fled

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<sup>18</sup> Paweł Libera, *Antyrosyjski rusofil – Józef Łobodowski wobec Rosji in: Śladami pisarza. Józef Łobodowski w Polsce i w Hiszpanii*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2016, p. 223.

the camp and continued publishing the periodical clandestinely for a time in 1941, until finally deciding to cross the border and attempt to reach England via Spain.<sup>19</sup>

During his border crossing, Łobodowski was arrested and endured difficult years in a Spanish prison. For him, this period proved unpleasant yet invaluable, as it provided an opportunity to interact with people from diverse social strata in Spain, who willingly shared their life experiences. These interactions allowed him to gain insight into the country's political processes, sense the spirit of the Spanish people, and become acquainted with their culture and mentality.

After his release, Łobodowski remained in Madrid and began publishing his works in both Polish émigré and Spanish press. He later took up work in Spanish radio. During his years in exile, he contributed extensively to periodicals such as "Wiadomości" ("News"), "Kultura" ("Culture"), "Zeszyty Historyczne" ("Historical Notebooks"), "Orzeł Biały" ("The White Eagle"), and "Tydzień Polski" ("The Polish Week"). He also worked in the Polish section of Madrid radio and made broadcasts for Radio Free Europe, among other outlets.

Łobodowski quickly realized that the Spanish public knew almost nothing about the countries of Eastern Europe, and he immediately set out to fill this gap. In 1946, for his work *History of World Literature*, published in Spain, he contributed an extensive chapter dedicated to Slavic literatures, covering works from Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Czechia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia.<sup>20</sup>

In 1952, the book *Zbrodnia katyńska w świetle dokumentów* (*The Katyn Crime in the Light of Documents*) was published in Mexico and subsequently translated into Spanish. During the 1950s and 1960s, Łobodowski collaborated with the editorial team of the monthly "Polonia – Revista Ilustrada" ("Illustrated Magazine"), published in Spanish

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<sup>19</sup> Paweł Libera, *Józef Łobodowski o Ukrainie i stosunkach polsko-ukraińskich* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości. Myśli o Polsce i Ukrainie*, Wydawnictwo Test, Lublin 2015, pp. 32–33.

<sup>20</sup> Grzegorz Bąk, *Józef Łobodowski i Hiszpania: Hiszpania w biografii i w twórczości poety* in Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 3...*, p. 104.

by the Polish Red Cross. As one of the main contributors, he used his writings to introduce Spaniards to Poland and its culture. He wrote extensively on historical topics, presented Polish literature, described the lives of Poles under Soviet occupation, and highlighted artists who had suffered political repression. He portrayed Polish culture as organically connected to Western civilization, the Mediterranean culture, and the traditions of the Eastern peoples who had historically been part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

During his years in exile, Łobodowski continued to write extensively about Poland and Ukraine, reflecting on the postwar division of Europe into spheres of influence and analyzing the nature of Marxism and communist doctrine. He also sought to understand the reasons for the popularity of this ideology in European countries, particularly among the intelligentsia.

He sought to utilize his collaboration with the press and radio to disseminate knowledge about the peoples of Eastern Europe – particularly their culture, history, and traditions – and to promote Slavic cultures in Spain and beyond. According to recollections of friends, during this period Łobodowski began to study international relations in depth, focusing particularly on American–Soviet relations and the roles of England and France in addressing global political issues.<sup>21</sup> He closely monitored the international situation in Eastern Europe.

### **Work at Spanish Radio**

From 1949 to 1975, the Polish section operated on Spanish national radio. Its formation took place over the first six years under the leadership of Karol Wagner-Pieńkowski. The Polish radio in Madrid was established thanks to the initiative and support of General Anders, as well as General Franco's respectful attitude toward this Polish general. The Polish editorial office was part of Spain's national broadcasting service, which also included Hungarian, Ukrainian, Croatian, and other sections. All of these radio divisions were established primarily

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<sup>21</sup> Kazimierz Tylko-Dobrzański, *Moje wspomnienia o Józefie Łobodowskim* in: *Śladami pisarza...*, Lublin 2016, p. 238.

to counter communist propaganda.<sup>22</sup> This initiative aligned with the task set by the Spanish authorities at the time. After the end of the war, many émigrés arrived in Spain, including approximately 7,000 Poles, of whom around 2,000 remained to settle in the country.<sup>23</sup> Most were former military personnel, while a portion were civilian refugees. In the summer of 1941, following the German occupation of France, J. Łobodowski also decided to move to Spain. He was detained as a military internee in Figueres prison for eighteen months and was only released in 1942, when he received permission to reside in the country.

After the end of the war, a significant number of Polish students, as well as young people from other nationalities such as Hungarians, Croats, and Ukrainians, arrived in Spain to pursue their studies. This development further underscored the importance, for the Spanish authorities, of expanding radio broadcasting in multiple European languages.

J. Łobodowski was part of the Polish editorial team from its very inception, and he wrote extensively about the team's plans and prospects for the future:

It appeared at the beginning of 1949, during a very particular period – when hopes for a swift change in the nation's fate had not yet faded, and expectations tied to rising international tensions were still alive. Free Europe would come later, and other foreign radio stations broadcasting in Polish were entirely politically colorless, relatively soft – in other words, insignificant. From the very first day, by adopting a sharp tone, we seemed to enter a void. Within a few weeks, letters began arriving from the homeland, their number steadily growing – a telling confirmation that we had chosen the correct orientation and tone, one that resonated with a significant majority of listeners.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Polski Instytut i Muzeum Sikorskiego w Londynie. A.45.334/1 1955–1960. Radio Nacional de España, invierno 1966, Boletín de Programación, Febrero. Nº 49.

<sup>23</sup> Magdalena Bogdan, *Radio Madryt 1949–1955*, LTW, Warszawa 2011, p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> Józef Łobodowski, "Tu mówi Madryt," "Zeszyty Historyczne," 1980, z. 54, p. 114.

As mentioned earlier, the national editorial teams of Spanish radio were established with the support of the Spanish authorities at the time to disseminate anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda in foreign languages. J. Łobodowski believed that the idea had originated within General Franco's closest circle.<sup>25</sup> By that time, Spanish radio already had a Russian editorial team, composed of former officers of the White Army. Shortly after the establishment of the Polish editorial team, additional teams were formed, including those for Hungarian, Romanian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, and other languages.

In the early stages, journalists enjoyed complete editorial freedom, with the primary objective of conducting effective broadcasting in Poland while promoting anti-communist ideas. By the decision of the Polish émigré government, Karol Wagner was appointed chief editor, but he arrived in Madrid only six months after the editorial team had been established. His deputy was the former Warsaw journalist Henryk Lubenski, who also visited the office only occasionally. As a result, J. Łobodowski served as the *de facto* head during the first months of operation. He was the driving force behind the radio, providing it from the outset with an ideological orientation that the team maintained, with only minor modifications, throughout its existence.

Stanisław Rylski served as the permanent secretary of the editorial team, while feuilletonists and speakers included Antoni Dering, Karolina and Andrzej Babecki, Kazimierz Tytko-Dobrzański, and others.

Employing a variety of journalistic genres, such as news reports, articles, and commentaries, the editorial staff addressed a broad spectrum of topics, ranging from international affairs to developments within Poland. The editorial policy was consistent with Spain's foreign policy at the time, which was marked by a clear anti-communist orientation and underpinned by principles of Christian ethics. While the journalists generally accepted this editorial stance, the Spanish authorities maintained continuous oversight of the programming content across all national editorial offices.

Łobodowski was expected to prepare one article each week, which he usually read on air himself. The daily Polish-language broadcast

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 116.

lasted 30 minutes, during which everything intended for his compatriots had to be conveyed. For the first six months, he was virtually the sole voice on air, shouldering, in practice, a personal and unofficial responsibility for the radio's work. Thanks to the distinctive style of his feuilletons, Polish Radio Madrid soon developed a unique character and became easily recognizable among other radio stations. This proved to be a crucial stage, as a broad audience was successfully engaged, and a flood of letters began arriving in Madrid from Poland.<sup>26</sup>

In 1950, in the eleventh issue of the Paris-based journal "Kultura," J. Łobodowski published an article entitled *Sytuacja w kraju poprzez korespondencję* (*The Situation in the Country through Correspondence*), in which he analyzed information drawn from letters received by the editorial office. During the first year of Polish radio's activity, more than one thousand letters arrived in Madrid from Poland and other countries under communist rule. All of these letters reflected the harsh realities of life for Poles under Soviet occupation. They were marked by hatred toward the 'Soviets' and communism, as well as by anger, pain, and bitterness over the condition in which the nation found itself. Each letter recounted the brutality of the Bolsheviks, the abuses and violence of the Soviet Army, and many authors implored that their letters be read on air so that the entire world might learn of their plight.<sup>27</sup>

An analysis of the correspondence revealed that Polish radio was listened to not only by Poles but also by Ukrainians, Belarusians, and representatives of other nationalities. In the early period of the Polish editorial team's activity, its broadcasts were jammed less frequently than those in Russian or Ukrainian. The letters increasingly conveyed the extent to which political terror was penetrating the private lives of citizens. The intensification of repression by the communist authorities, along with restrictions on sending letters through post offices, led to a marked decline in the volume of correspondence. It became evident that Soviet reality was making the country ever more impoverished and oppressed, steadily curtailing freedom and diminishing hopes for a better future.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 117.

<sup>27</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Sytuacja w kraju poprzez korespondencję*, "Kultura," 1950, no. 11, p. 73.

In the article, the writer called on Polish political émigrés to put aside their internal disputes and to seriously consider the creation of an anti-Soviet underground movement on Polish territory. He wrote: “Let the quarrelsome émigré community – wasting its time in political games on the rubbish heap of shattered illusions – reflect on this possibility and draw the right conclusions, ones that, we hope, will not come too late!”<sup>28</sup>

The letters provided the editorial team with valuable insights into the interests and concerns of their listeners, helping them to shape future programming and select relevant topics. The literary work of J. Łobodowski frequently became the focus of broadcasts on Spanish Radio and Radio Free Europe. In 1954, Tymon Terlecki presented Łobodowski’s collection *Złota Hramota* (*The Golden Charter*) to the audience, highlighting the Ukrainian motifs in his poetry and underscoring that, through the medium of poetic language, Łobodowski affirmed Ukraine’s place within Western and European culture.<sup>29</sup>

During the first six months of the editorial team’s work, when it was not yet possible to fill the broadcasts with original programming, a considerable portion of the airtime was taken up by Spanish music. Gradually, however, a stable structure emerged: an opening and greeting, a radio journal (news bulletin), commentary on the press, and the main feature (pogadanka dnia). The last component was the longest, lasting about ten minutes. The “Conversations of the Day” were most often prepared by J. Łobodowski, S. Rylski, A. Dering, and others. As Magdalena Bogdan notes, many of the texts published under S. Rylski’s name were in fact written by Łobodowski, who, with his colleague’s assistance, was able to secure additional earnings in this way.<sup>30</sup> On more than one occasion, the writer had to deliver his own contributions in place of those submitted by other members of the editorial team, particularly when the latter were considered substandard or problematic, marked by excessive subjectivity or weak argumentation.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 81.

<sup>29</sup> Nina Taylor-Terlecka, *W oczach jednego krytyka – Głos Tymona Terleckiego* in: *Śladami pisarza...*, pp. 135–136.

<sup>30</sup> Magdalena Bogdan, *Radio Madryt...*, p. 68.

<sup>31</sup> Józef Łobodowski, “*Tu mówi Madryt,*” ..., pp. 122–123.

The fundamental principle guiding the editorial team's work was the delivery of objective information, free from either optimism or pessimism. Its primary task was to counter communist propaganda and wage an ideological struggle against communism. In this effort, Christian principles were employed as an effective tool, counteracting communist slogans and the texts of Soviet propaganda. Broadcasters sought to reveal to listeners the hidden motives and intentions behind the actions of the communist authorities, responding promptly and analyzing events in both Poland and abroad. They aimed not only to uphold a high intellectual standard in their discussions but also to ensure clarity and accessibility, employing a polemical style, ironic commentary, and critical observations. Radio programs deliberately avoided issues related to internal disputes within Polish émigré circles and individuals. Content was tailored to the needs of listeners in both Poland and the diaspora. According to a 1953 survey of the Polish émigré community, 77% of Poles listened to Radio Madrid, whose popularity at the time rivaled that of Voice of America and the BBC.<sup>32</sup>

Radio Madrid irritated the communist regime, which responded by intensively jamming its broadcasts, as it did with other Western radio stations. However, the scathing criticism in the Soviet press only heightened interest among Poles, both in the homeland and in the diaspora.

An essential component of the editorial team's programming was the radio journal, which delivered the latest news. Sources included the Polish émigré press ("Wiadomości" ("News"), "Orzeł Biały" ("The White Eagle"), "Dziennik Polski" ("The Polish Daily") and "Dziennik Żołnierza" ("The Soldier's Daily"), among others), BBC materials, and the authors' personal contacts in various countries. The team could not afford to maintain its own network of correspondents – initially relying on only one in Paris – because of severely limited funding. The lack of financial resources for even the most basic needs remained a persistent challenge for the editorial office throughout its existence.

Various political factions and figures within the Polish émigré community sought to weave intrigues around the editorial team or to exploit the radio for their own political purposes. The staff, however, kept their

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<sup>32</sup> Magdalena Bogdan, *Radio Madryt...*, p. 71.

distance from such schemes and conflicts, fully conscious of the importance of their mission. This was primarily thanks to the prudent leadership of Karol Wagner, whom Łobodowski described as a tactful and liberal director who resolved misunderstandings through cordial discussion.<sup>33</sup>

During K. Wagner's absences, his duties frequently fell to Łobodowski. Even when ill, the writer continued to prepare radio texts from his bed. For him, work at the station represented a serious and vital mission. His responsibilities also included analyzing correspondence. According to his estimates, in the early stages of the station's operation, 40% of listeners were employees of the Polish heavy industry, and 30% were school-aged youth. At the same time, the smallest groups were rural residents and members of the intelligentsia. Radio Madrid was listened to not only by Poles but also by Ukrainians, Belarusians, Czechs, Slovaks, and others.<sup>34</sup>

Listeners frequently wrote to request longer broadcast durations and to report technical problems caused by the jamming of radio programs. Many even traveled to another village or to the far side of the city to listen to the Polish Radio broadcasts from Madrid.<sup>35</sup>

Subsequently, the volume of letters declined sharply due to increased control by the Polish authorities over postal operations, which required letters to be submitted in person at post offices. The correspondence arriving from Poland in the early 1950s reflected a gradual loss of trust in the policies of Western states and waning hopes that they would assist Poles in achieving independence. Increasingly, people pinned their hopes on the potential resolution of issues in the event of a new, albeit possible, world war.

The early years of the editorial team's activity were its most productive. During this period, historical events, international affairs, and Polish domestic politics could be assessed openly and objectively. Discussions of the restoration of Polish independence considered the country's borders within a federalist framework, envisioning a federa-

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<sup>33</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Jeszcze o Karolu Wagnerze*, "Tydzień Polski," 5 III 1988, p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> Magdalena Bogdan, *Radio Madryt...*, p. 91.

<sup>35</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Sytuacja w kraju...*, p. 72.

tion of Eastern peoples that would divide Europe and Russia. Regarding Polish-Ukrainian relations, J. Łobodowski also advocated cooperation among all Slavic peoples, particularly between Poles and Ukrainians, in resisting the communist regime.

In the 1950s, a process of gradual economic integration began among the countries of Western and Central Europe; in 1951, the European Coal and Steel Community was established, comprising ten countries. At that time, the countries of the communist bloc could not expect any support from them. Broadcasters of Polish Radio expressed hope in their programs that a healthy tendency toward international cooperation would gradually emerge, arguing that proper political equilibrium in Europe was impossible without the liberation of Eastern European countries situated between Germany and Russia.<sup>36</sup> Even in programs devoted to literary and cultural topics – often prepared by J. Łobodowski, such as *W rocznicę Paderewskiego* (*On the Anniversary of Paderewski*), *O gangsterach i misjonarzach* (*On Gangsters and Missionaries*), *O planowaniu kultury* (*On Planning Culture*), *Rokosze socjalistycznej lektury* (*The Revolts of Socialist Literature*), and *Noworoczne podarunki Reżimu* (*The Regime's New Year Gifts*) – emphasis was placed on anti-communist ideas, highlighting the shared destinies of European peoples in their struggle for independence, national identity, and the right to freedom.

In its informational policy, the editorial team relied on Christian values, which formed the ideological foundation of the National Radio of Spain in the postwar years. The team addressed a range of historical topics to demonstrate that only Christian principles could serve as a basis for understanding among peoples and nations. Soviet myths and slogans were systematically exposed and debunked. The editorial staff sought, by all available means, to counter Soviet propaganda, the scale of which continued to grow.

By the mid-1960s, Spain's international policy began to shift from confrontation toward gradual cooperation with the countries of the communist bloc. This change had a profound impact on the work of the Polish editorial team. Journalists were instructed to focus

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<sup>36</sup> Magdalena Bogdan, *Radio Madryt...*, pp. 126–129.

exclusively on cultural matters, marking the beginning of the gradual decline of Polish radio broadcasting in Madrid. Łobodowski appeared on air less frequently, and it became increasingly complex to convey intended ideas and opinions through subtle language. In December 1975, the Polish editorial office of Radio Madrid ceased operations permanently. Following the death of General Franco, its revival became impossible. Łobodowski described the final months as a period of chronic strain for the editorial team:

During this final period before complete liquidation, we were given Spanish texts to translate into Polish – carefully selected so as not to be too insistent. Frankly, it felt like having our teeth pulled and replaced with poorly fitted dentures made of inferior rubber. The same occurred with other anti-communist broadcasts. Some still clung to the illusion that the situation might improve, but these were childish fantasies. At the end of December 1975, the long ordeal finally came to an end. We had exactly three weeks remaining until our twenty-seventh year of existence.<sup>37</sup>

Throughout its existence, Polish Radio Madrid faced significant financial difficulties. A small portion of the staff's salaries was covered by the National Radio of Spain, while the larger share was expected to be covered by the Polish side. These funds consisted of contributions from the émigré government, voluntary donations from Poles, and support from the SPK (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów (Association of Polish Combatants)), as well as other non-governmental organizations. However, such assistance was not always forthcoming, leaving the radio staff in a state of constant financial hardship. "So the budget was usually written with a stick on water".<sup>38</sup> This situation made it impossible to maintain stability within the team and undermined confidence. The editorial office relied on the patriotism and altruism of its journalists, who viewed their work primarily as a national and cultural mission. According to memoirs, correspondence, and archival sources, J. Łobodowski also managed the Russian editorial office of the National Radio of Spain for a period, likely due to his proficiency

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<sup>37</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *"Tu mówi Madryt," ...*, p. 119.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p. 126.

in the Russian language. He worked alongside Russians from the so-called 'White' émigré community. This fact was particularly noted by the Polish scholar of Łobodowski's life and work, P. Libera.<sup>39</sup>

### Security and Geopolitical Challenges in Postwar Europe

After World War II, a new political configuration of the European map emerged. While some longstanding issues remained unresolved, new problems and challenges arose. In Łobodowski's postwar journalism, one can trace a logical continuation of the themes and ideas characteristic of his publications in the 1930s. At the same time, numerous new topics gained relevance, reflecting the conditions of the contemporary historical era, life in emigration, international relations, security concerns, and the struggle against the encroaching expansion of communism.

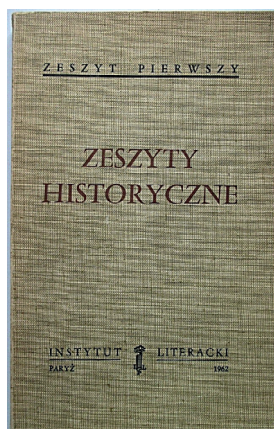
During this period, the writer actively collaborated with Jerzy Giedroyc, publishing in his journals "Kultura" ("Culture") and "Zeszyty Historyczne" ("Historical Notebooks"), as well as in London-based periodicals such as "Tydzień Polski" ("The Polish Week"), "Orzeł Biały" ("The White Eagle"), "Wiadomości" ("News"), and others.



Il. 10. The monthly "Kultura," which published numerous journalistic works and translations by Józef Łobodowski

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<sup>39</sup> Paweł Libera, *Antyrosyjski rusofil – Józef Łobodowski wobec Rosji* in: *Śladami pisarza...*, pp. 227–228.



Il. 11. The quarterly “Zeszyty Historyczne,”  
in which Józef Łobodowski published his journalistic works

Łobodowski was deeply concerned about disagreements and disputes among various political groups within the Polish émigré community. He encountered this issue as early as the beginning of the war, when he arrived at the building of the Polish émigré government in Paris to obtain permission for an unauthorized trip to Poland, specifically to Volhynia. It was then that he first observed how representatives of one political faction sought to exclude members of another faction – particularly the so-called ‘Piłsudskiites’ – from political influence.<sup>40</sup> Due to what he considered rather primitive disputes over influence, the trip did not take place. Łobodowski could not understand why a common goal – Poland’s freedom and well-being – failed to unite all Poles, regardless of political affiliation. The idea of unity, understanding, and cooperation was central to his worldview. He extended this vision to international relations, the construction of a future strong and united Europe, and the protection of Eastern European peoples from threats from the East, specifically those posed by the Soviet Union. In this context,

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<sup>40</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Dlaczego zostałem w Hiszpanii* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 1. Poezja. Proza*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2023, pp. 122–125.

the growing influence and popularity of leftist Marxist ideas in Europe deeply troubled the publicist, who perceived the westward expansion of communism as a threat to the entirety of European civilization.

The writer consistently emphasized the threat posed by Soviet Russia to European countries. He argued that the USSR's emergence from the war as a victor provided Stalin with grounds to expand his imperial ambitions across various regions of the world. Using Spain and other European countries as examples, Łobodowski illustrated how, after World War II, communism extended its visible and invisible tentacles across Europe like an octopus – a development he perceived as a grave danger. What puzzled him most was the sympathy for communist ideology exhibited by many prominent European intellectuals and artists, which he interpreted as a sign of the broader decline of cultural standards within society:

The contradiction lies in the fact that Marxist doctrine arose, par excellence, as an anti-religion – and yet, in spite of this, it became a substitute for it. Its continuation took the form of the cult of the leader: in the Soviet Union, first Lenin, then Stalin. When the progress of human thought undermined the so-called “scientific” foundations of the doctrine, it ceased to exist. The fact that so many intellectuals, thinkers, university professors, and writers cling to Marxism with both hands strikingly illustrates the profound decline of contemporary culture.<sup>41</sup>

Łobodowski recognized that Western Europe held a mistaken perception of Soviet reality and harbored the erroneous hope that Russia would gradually change under the influence of Western culture. He wrote: “In the West, particularly in England, people at the time – and for many years afterward – succumbed to naive illusions and pious hopes, counting on a favorable evolution and the gradual Europeanization of Soviet Russia.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Medytacje na plaży* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 1...*, p. 141.

<sup>42</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Dmytro Doncow. Życie i działalność* in: *Poeta wobec sejsmicznych ruchów historii*, wybór, opracowanie i wstęp Hałyna Dubyk, Instytut Literacki Kultura – Instytut Książki, Paryż–Kraków 2017, p. 262.

The publicist emphasized that, in the 19th century, Europeans did not hold such illusions about Russia. He suggested that these misconceptions likely resulted from deliberate covert actions by Russian propaganda.

Łobodowski examined the nature of totalitarian regimes and their systems of governance in articles such as *O eurokomuniźmie* (*On Eurocommunism*), *Komuniści zachodni* (*Western Communists*), *Czy zmierzch Zachodu?* (*Is the West in Decline?*), *Rosyjskość i sowietyzm* (*Russianness and Sovietism*), and others. He analyzed the psychology of dictatorial power and described the mechanisms by which it influences the masses. Fear was identified as the principal instrument of totalitarian regimes, and the writer demonstrated how it is employed to manipulate people's actions. He detailed various forms of intimidation and torture applied in Soviet prisons, drawing on information obtained from those fortunate enough to survive. It is precisely through the fear of death that dictators manage to subjugate the majority of the population, with only a few – the strongest in spirit – capable of resisting the system and overcoming fear.

The publicist devoted the article *Koestlerzy i koestlerki* (*Koestlers and Koestlerettes*) to the renowned British writer Arthur Koestler, who had adopted communist ideas in the 1930s and later exposed totalitarian regimes in his journalistic and literary works.

The methods of communist propaganda described by Łobodowski were diverse, ranging from camouflage as charitable acts to outright and blatant falsehoods. He first encountered such masquerades of benevolence in a Spanish prison, where Marxists were assisted by Catholic monks, an arrangement that greatly surprised the prisoners.

Łobodowski noted:

Moscow applied blatant falsehoods to historical facts and events – for example, portraying the creation of the UPA (The Ukrainian Insurgent Army) as the work of American intelligence, or accusing S. Petliura of orchestrating mass anti-Jewish pogroms, which he had in fact forbidden by his orders. Anything that occurred without Moscow's involvement or beyond its control was always labeled a 'sabotage.' A proven method of Soviet propaganda was the 'pinch of truth, barrel of lies,' which was the most difficult to refute. They labeled as fascists anyone who did not support communism.

One of the leading themes in Łobodowski's émigré journalism was the future of Europe and the prospects of the Eastern European peoples. In his interwar texts, he approached security issues from a Polonocentric perspective, analyzing situations from the standpoint of Polish interests and the potential threats posed by neighboring states. After the Second World War, the scope of his reflections expanded to encompass the entire European continent and even global dimensions. He understood and explained global processes, demonstrating their impact on the fate of European countries.

Despite changes in the global situation, the fundamental principles for addressing international issues concerning freedom, interethnic relations, and security remained unchanged. The publicist continued the legacy of Polish Prometheism, which was based on the idea of partnership and cooperation among Central and Eastern European countries for the sake of security and development.

"The fundamental principles remained unchanged – dialogue and interaction based on shared goals and common values. The writer took into account new historical realities, namely that most Eastern European peoples were confined within the "Soviet sack,"" as he termed it, which significantly limited their opportunities. Nevertheless, there was no alternative to the Promethean concept, and he envisioned the post-war situation as requiring all European nations to set aside parochial ambitions and gradually form a single, strong community capable of resisting any new expansionist empire.

Łobodowski was convinced that if Europeans failed to unite, they would remain perpetually under foreign domination. He appealed to the long-standing idea of Intermarium, which he understood as necessarily encompassing the countries of the Black Sea region.<sup>43</sup>

The idea of a united Europe was not new. In various forms, it had been considered by different political actors. The policy of the Jagiellonian dynasty in the First Polish Republic was based on the principle of uniting peoples for external security. Concepts such as Austroslavism and the triadist state were present in the political discourse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 19th century. On the eve of the First

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<sup>43</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Sprawa ukraińska*, "Wiadomości," 1947, no. 50, p. 2.

World War, the German concept of *Mitteleuropa* emerged, which, to some extent, found its continuation in the federal *Intermarium* concept advanced by the Polish Prometheists.

In the autumn of 1944, General Franco presented Churchill with a comprehensive geopolitical proposal addressing the crisis in Western Europe and its future. However, likely because the Spanish general was perceived by contemporary Allied politicians primarily as an ally of Hitler, his idea was not supported, and postwar Spain remained in international isolation.<sup>44</sup>

None of these ideas was realized, yet their very emergence confirmed a long-standing and persistent trend in European political thought. Gradually, an ideological foundation was being formed for the future. The historical situation prompted European peoples to unite and create a more complex structure capable of guaranteeing their security and protection.

In the article *Czy zmierzch Zachodu? (Is the West in Decline?)*, Łobodowski examined all plans for European unification that had existed throughout history. Beyond the aforementioned geopolitical concepts, ideas of subjugating the entire continent were pursued by Sulla, Napoleon, Hitler, and Stalin. The publicist divided these plans into two groups. The first encompassed schemes aimed at uniting Europe into a single, cohesive state apparatus that would erase all its national diversity. The second included ideas derived from the tradition of the ancient Romans, who did not impose their language and culture on conquered peoples. Łobodowski considered the fundamental mistake of dictators to be the identification of unity with uniformity, failing to recognize the artificiality – and therefore the futility – of political entities that do not unite around shared spiritual values, because “The common denominator must never obliterate the numerators that make up the whole.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Krzysztof Dybciak, *Południe, nie Zachód ani Wschód* in: *Świat nie wywalczony. Szkice o uniwersach Józefa Łobodowskiego*, red. Dorota Siwor, Instytut Literatury, Kraków 2021, p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Czy zmierzch Zachodu?*, in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2. Publicystyka*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2023, p. 77.

The postwar division of spheres of influence between Western Europe and Soviet Russia had tragic consequences for the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. Even in the final stages of the war, General Franco considered Russia a greater threat to Europe than Germany. Accordingly, postwar Spain consistently pursued a strict anti-communist and anti-colonial policy. Only much later did a gradual rapprochement between Western countries and Spain begin to emerge.

In postwar Europe, which was effectively half-controlled by the Soviet Union, Łobodowski perceived the growing Russian influence as a threat to all European peoples. Analyzing the war's outcomes in his radio broadcasts and press articles, he presented concrete evidence of the existing crisis of Western civilization. He addressed both overt and covert instruments of economic influence, as well as hidden propaganda implemented through various Russian émigré and cultural centers. Although most members of the Russian émigré community were anti-Bolshevik, the writer emphasized that they all retained an imperial worldview and supported the preservation of a large, indivisible empire. Misunderstandings and conflicts between European countries, including historical disputes, often worked to Russia's advantage and were sometimes instigated by it. Soviet policy aimed to fuel interethnic conflicts and prevent, at all costs, the unification of Western European countries. Soviet propaganda sought to spread hostility between Ukrainians and Poles, and between Poles and other neighboring peoples. Enmity and distrust provided fertile ground for informational manipulation.

Through financial, political, and economic influence, the Russians established networks of unofficial agents, even within religious structures such as the Vatican, and exerted significant influence on the European press and left-leaning politicians. Łobodowski wrote:

While we dwell on historical memories and quarrel among ourselves, the Russian émigré community does not rest on its laurels – it is already preparing to defend the idea of a “united and indivisible” Russia. Paris's *Vozrozhdenie* once argued that all efforts by Russians in exile should be guided by strategic foresight, ensuring that the fall of the Soviet regime would not lead to the empire's collapse. “We must keep our eyes open so that a blow to the Soviet lever does not kill the Russian horse.” Today,

Wall Street and the Vatican are the primary targets of this broader campaign by “democratic” Russians. American bankers are persuaded that only with an indivisible Russia can large-scale deals be struck; cardinals and missionaries are promised, just as Ivan the Terrible once promised Posevin, a Catholic Russia. The campaign has already reached a level that should raise alarm – and it is likely to gain further momentum as our domestic squabbles and provincial conflicts provide Moscow’s propagandists and agents with additional ammunition.<sup>46</sup>

The Soviet doctrine infiltrated the Western world through various channels, including modern pseudo-democratic ideologies. A striking example was Eurocommunism – a hybrid theory attempting to combine democratic principles with communist ideology. Eurocommunist ideas gained particular popularity in the 1960s and 1970s in Western Europe, notably in Spain, Italy, and France. Although Eurocommunist representatives declaratively distanced themselves from the USSR, in practice, they acted as covert allies and agents serving the interests of the communist regime. European communists and socialists, carrying portraits of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, participated in demonstrations organized by these movements. Łobodowski highlighted the dangers of this new social phenomenon for Europe in his article *Chmury nad słoneczną Hiszpanią* (*Clouds over Sunny Spain*).<sup>47</sup>

General Franco’s regime marked a period of authoritarian governance in Spain. After he died in 1975, the political situation gradually began to shift, ostensibly moving from authoritarianism toward democracy. However, in his journalistic texts analyzing societal processes at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, Łobodowski noted the emergence of numerous threatening tendencies. In the article *Hiszpańska demokracja telewizyjna* (*Spanish Television Democracy*), he observed the rapid penetration of communist influences into Spanish society, described the gradual expansion of communist impact on Spanish television programs, and highlighted the appearance of inter-

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<sup>46</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Dyskusje polsko-ukraińskie*, “Wiadomości,” 1948, no. 22, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Chmury nad słoneczną Hiszpanią* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, pp. 11–12.

views with representatives of the Spanish Communist Party, who promoted openly falsified versions of historical events and imposed their ideological slogans on public opinion.

“It was only after General Franco’s death that the Spanish communists revealed their true colors,”<sup>48</sup> – as Łobodowski noted, Spanish communists, like their Polish counterparts, sought to distort the history of the Spanish Civil War – a conflict about which the writer was well informed through the accounts of eyewitnesses and participants, including prisoners of Spanish jails. The Spanish communists attempted to establish in society the notion that the 1936 Civil War was merely a coup d’état orchestrated by a group of generals driven by a desire for power.

Łobodowski was struck by the fanaticism of a significant portion of Spanish society, which adhered to communist ideas and refused to consider alternative perspectives. In the minds of ordinary Spaniards, democracy was often associated with communism, and they were reluctant to abandon this misconception. The realities of Soviet life were too remote to serve as convincing evidence of an entirely different reality. The writer sought to draw the attention of Spaniards and Europeans to the fact that communist actions across Western Europe were consistently directed against Western moral values, European culture, and civilization.

“There is no need to be surprised by the communists. They are enemies of Western civilization and, therefore, readily contribute to the division of the West whenever it seeks to mount an effective resistance against voracious Soviet imperialism,”<sup>49</sup> – as noted by the publicist in the article *Po sześciu latach (6 lat po śmierci Franco)* (*After six years (6 years after Franco’s death)*), Soviet propaganda operated in Europe cunningly and insidiously, creating a false legend about Bolshevism. The tragedy of millions of Ukrainians and the artificially induced famine was ignored or interpreted according to the Soviet version; the Katyn massacre was falsely attributed to the Germans; the existence of

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<sup>48</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Hiszpańska demokracja telewizyjna* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 20.

<sup>49</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Po sześciu latach (6 lat po śmierci Franco)* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 25.

Soviet death camps and the Gulag was denied; the West was urged to pursue unilateral disarmament, while Soviet armament was justified as a measure of self-defense.

The falsification of history had long been a key instrument of Russian and Soviet propaganda. Summarizing the experience of World War II, Western historians silenced the role of the Ukrainian, Polish, and other peoples, awarding the laurels of victory over fascism to Russia. This allowed the Soviet regime to avoid responsibility for its own crimes and provided a foundation for its subsequent quiet westward expansion.

In 1980, Łobodowski wrote:

The historical cycle that began with Hitler's rise to power continues, and it is unclear when or how it will end. The stakes of this struggle are extraordinarily high: nothing less – and nothing more – than the very survival of our civilization and culture, which today face threats greater than at any time in the past.<sup>50</sup>

Łobodowski wrote that, even though after the war half of Europe fell under Stalin's control, he largely held Hitler primarily responsible, attributing to him political accountability for this outcome. The war also offered the Polish and Ukrainian peoples an opportunity to set aside old prejudices and conflicts, unite, and defend their independence. Unfortunately, they did not seize this chance and instead fell under a shared Soviet yoke:

Hitler's greatest crime – not in moral, but in political and historical terms – was that, while posing as a flagbearer of anti-communism, he did everything to pave the way for Russian Bolshevism to triumph and seize nearly all of Central and Eastern Europe. In those years, our people had an excellent opportunity to rise above the hateful memories of the past and advance together in shared interests – but they failed to seize it. Indeed, a beautiful prophecy for the future!<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Józef Łobodowski, [Echa tragedii wrześnieowej] in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 146.

<sup>51</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Dzieje osiemdziesięciolecia* in: *Poeta wobec sejsmicznych...*, p. 201.

He also assessed the Nuremberg Trials critically, arguing that, in his view, Soviet criminals were judging German criminals, which deprived the event of its genuine sense of justice. Łobodowski wrote:

Later, German leaders were tried and convicted for war crimes in Nuremberg. The fact that the tribunal included Soviet criminals did not trouble the Americans, the British, or the French in the slightest. Thus, the trial was a shameless farce. At the same time, Hiroshima was conveniently forgotten, adding yet another layer of tragicomedy to Nuremberg.<sup>52</sup>

He condemned the Western countries' passive attitude toward the Soviet Union's actions against other nations. In the article *Prawda leży na stole*, he discussed the suppression of protests in Budapest and Prague, the coups in Mozambique and Yemen, the deployment of Soviet troops to Angola and Ethiopia, and interference in the internal politics of South American countries. The West's lack of reaction to these events fostered complete impunity for the Soviet Union and encouraged further aggression. Regarding the West's relationship with the USSR, he wrote symbolically:

Beginning with Stalin's death, Soviet foreign policy resembled the technique of gradually slicing salami: one piece this year, another the next. It is high time to make it impossible for this "sausage-making" to continue – unless we are willing to hand over both the salami and the entire sausage factory to Moscow. A confrontation with the Soviet Union would likely entail heavy losses. Yet it is better to endure even the gravest losses than to condemn our civilization to destruction.<sup>53</sup>

The cynicism of Moscow in international politics, which Łobodowski described as a "bloody pustule," should have prompted the West to take radical measures, such as banning participation in the Olympics or refusing trade that contributed to the growth of the Soviet regime's military potential. Moscow consistently knew how to bide its

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, pp. 200–201.

<sup>53</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Prawda leży na stole* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 112.

time and create situations favorable to itself, always calculating its next move “for the short memory and quick fatigue of the so-called luminaries of the “decadent West.”<sup>54</sup>

Following the introduction of Soviet troops into Afghanistan, the writer posed a rhetorical question in one of his texts: Will Afghanistan cure the West of its illusions? Analyzing Soviet expansion, he noted the unfortunate reality that the fate of the Afghan people mattered to no one; all that concerned the world was access to the country’s oil fields. He was convinced that these events brought humanity several steps closer to a third world war.<sup>55</sup>

In publications from the early 1980s, J. Łobodowski documented numerous examples of subversive activities by covert Soviet agents in Spain, including mass arson attacks on churches, the distribution of children’s readers promoting Marxist ideology, and the propagation of communist slogans in the press. He was convinced that, with the support of European communists and socialists, Moscow sought to extend its control over all of Europe. He referred to Eurocommunism as “...a Trojan horse smuggled into Western Europe.”<sup>56</sup> In Spain, new cultural or religious centers, seemingly entirely unconnected to the Soviet Union, continued to emerge. As soon as their ties to the USSR were exposed, they disappeared, only to be immediately replaced by others.

His press articles contained in-depth analyses of historical events, from which he urged readers to draw instructive lessons for the future. On the 40th anniversary of the USSR’s attack on Poland on September 17, 1939, Łobodowski recalled the political situation in Europe on the eve of World War II, highlighting the mistakes of Western countries’ policies toward the USSR, particularly those of England and France, who at that time were Poland’s “allies.” The Western powers failed to

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<sup>54</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Różnice i kontrasty* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 114.

<sup>55</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *W Afganistanie* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, pp. 123–127.

<sup>56</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *O eurokomuniźmie* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 68.

provide Poland with the military assistance that might have stopped Hitler and Stalin and fundamentally altered the course of events.

He wrote critically about the West's careless attitude:

They ignored the fact that Warsaw continued to resist for another nine days, and that the fortified positions at Modlin and Hel held out for nearly three weeks. In some areas, the resistance of regular units lasted until mid-October. Yet it was convenient for Soviet propaganda to claim that they had played no military role, and for the Germans to assert that the Wehrmacht had received no assistance from the Soviets. The Western allies of Poland also preferred to pretend that the matter did not concern them, and they did not even consider recognizing the Soviet invasion as an act of war.<sup>57</sup>

Europe's egoism and indifference, which Łobodowski had already warned about in the 1930s, ultimately led to disaster for all nations. The writer criticized European policy, highlighting its mistakes and miscalculations. Above all, he was concerned with the future of European countries, which he saw as threatened not only externally by the USSR but also internally, through the hidden influence of Soviet agents and propaganda.

"What is honor? Comrades, it is precisely that which can still save our civilization – today threatened more by a fifth column than by any external enemy,"<sup>58</sup> – in his notes from 1974, the writer remarked that only a united effort to safeguard European values – through critical vigilance and firm resistance to the Soviet Union's expansionist ambitions – could, in his view, preserve Europe from impending defeat.

Łobodowski often engaged in debates with representatives of various Russian émigré circles. Yet he never managed to reach an understanding with them, as all of them – without exception and regardless of their political views – were marked by an imperial worldview. This, he argued, was a defining feature of the Russian mentality: the conviction in the indestructibility of the Russian Empire and the desire to preserve it at any cost.

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<sup>57</sup> Józef Łobodowski, [17 września 1974 r. ...] in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 54.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p. 55.

In his article *Falszywa diagnoza* (*False diagnosis*), published in the journal “Kultura” (“Culture”) (1977, no. 7), he challenged representatives of the Russian émigré community, who, no less insidiously than Bolshevik propaganda, falsified, distorted, and misrepresented historical facts. While pretending to hold oppositional views, they in fact advocated the same well-known militant Russian imperialism. The Russians, he noted, had always labeled as “separatism” the natural desire of individuals and nations for free development, while simultaneously promoting the struggle for the “free development of nations” within the vast framework of the so-called Free Soviet Union. Łobodowski regarded such statements as the height of cynicism and, in response, wrote:

‘Freedom’ and ‘Sovietism’ – how can anyone pronounce these two words in the same breath? It is the very definition of a towering *contradictio in adiecto*! Ultimately, this struggle is not merely for liberty and democracy – it is a fight for the survival of the unique identities of individual nations, whose very existence is under mortal threat.<sup>59</sup>

The writer consistently highlighted the true imperial nature of the USSR, portraying it as the heir of Tsarist Russia – a conqueror of territories and an oppressor of nations: “Bolshevism brings nothing new; it has grown organically out of the past. The Russians themselves have not changed in the slightest – still the same imperialism, the same chauvinism, the same disregard for human rights, and the same subjugation of other nations.”<sup>60</sup>

Łobodowski demonstrated that Moscow consistently exploited the mistakes, weaknesses, and miscalculations of various governments to its own advantage and to expand its spheres of influence. He wrote about the fate of the Orthodox Church in the USSR, which was skillfully transformed into an instrument of the dictatorial regime, about political repressions targeting representatives of culture and science, and against dissenters in general. Most of these examples were drawn

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<sup>59</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Falszywa diagnoza*, “Kultura,” 1977, no. 7, p. 199.

<sup>60</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Rosyjskość i sowietyzm* in: Józef Łobodowski, Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 83.

from Ukraine, as the writer viewed the Soviet empire primarily as a threat to European culture and civilization, systematically destroying the cultural achievements of all subjugated peoples. One of the tools for subjugating populations was Russification, accompanied by the persecution of native languages. The Bolsheviks were well aware that the native language is always a magical key that opens the door to our historical and cultural past. Losing this key – often, though not invariably – can result in the loss of historical memory, and with it, the erosion of a unique cultural identity.”<sup>61</sup>

A highly experienced and cunning enemy skillfully employed every available tool to advance his propaganda: “The Soviets are adept at – and even take pleasure in – acting with brutality when they sense the moment is ripe for decisive action. At other times, they employ cunning diplomacy, and when necessary, assume the role of chameleons.”<sup>62</sup>

How could one resist the sophisticated, insidious, and monstrous nature of the Soviet regime? “We must speak the truth, for it is the only effective weapon against false ideas and the carnival of liars.”<sup>63</sup>

He regarded the utterance of falsehoods or half-truths as a capitulation to the slogans of Soviet propaganda. Łobodowski wrote with indignation about the insidious cultural falsifications perpetrated by the Russians. The Soviet regime deliberately promoted the myth of a great Russian culture, allegedly unrivaled in the world. All cultural achievements of the peoples absorbed by the USSR were unconditionally attributed to this so-called “great” Russian heritage. The world, unfamiliar with – or unwilling to acknowledge – the cultures of these occupied peoples, sincerely believed in the grandeur of Russian culture:

If the Caucasian lezginka, the Transcarpathian czardas (borrowed from the Hungarians), the Hutsul kolomyika, Lithuanian ritual dances, and so on are all presented as Russian folklore, then we have a real problem

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>62</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *O eurokomuniźmie* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 68.

<sup>63</sup> Józef Łobodowski, [Przypadek Polski...] in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 62.

– because, by that logic, Russian folklore would have to be considered the richest in the world. I even encountered someone who foolishly claimed that the majestic polonaise from M. Glinka's famous opera *A Life for the Tsar* was a typical Russian dance. "The Poles imitated it afterward," he insisted. By that reasoning, one would have to conclude that Ogiński was a follower of Glinka.<sup>64</sup>

For decades, the notion of Russia's unparalleled cultural greatness was promoted, and the West accepted it unquestioningly. At the same time, the press enthusiastically reported on all Soviet artistic ensembles, which showcased their alleged "cultural grandeur" to the world.

The scope of J. Łobodowski's political thinking in his émigré journalism was considerably broader than in his interwar texts. He analyzed and considered the global context of international relations. Among influential international political players with plans for world division, alongside the USSR, China also emerged. The writer examined events in the Middle East, Africa, Afghanistan, and Central America, revealing the covert or overt involvement of these countries in international conflicts. He addressed these issues in articles such as *Prawda leży na stole* (*The Truth Lies on the Table*) ("Tydzień Polski," 1980, no. 23), *Różnice i kontrasty* (*Differences and Contrasts*) ("Tydzień Polski," 1980, no. 27), and *W Afganistanie* (*In Afghanistan*) ("Tydzień Polski," 1980, no. 5), among others. All of Łobodowski's reflections, factual notes, and commentaries were first recorded in his notebooks, from which his carefully revised drafts later gave rise to analytical articles. Fortunately, these notebooks have survived and are now preserved in the collections of the Józef Czechowicz Literary Museum in Lublin. Eighteen volumes of manuscripts safeguard the creative workshop of the writer's journalistic activity. Almost every notebook reveals the full spectrum of issues that engaged him, ranging from Spanish literature to international politics.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Komuniści zachodni* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 70.

<sup>65</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki*, zz. 1–18, 1973–1981; *Zeszyt z artykułami oraz brudnopisami listów Józefa Łobodowskiego*, 1983, 1988, rps., k. 86, Muzeum Literackie imienia Józefa Czechowicza, MC/Rp/219/2/ML.

Besides geopolitics, the themes that most persistently preoccupied the writer and remained central to his reflections were Ukraine and Poland – their historical destinies, prospects, security, and place within a united Europe. He consistently emphasized the decisive role of Ukraine and the other Eastern nations: their independence, he argued, was a condition for the freedom and stability of the entire continent.

In the pages of the London-based Polish émigré weekly “Orzeł Biały” (“White Eagle”), Łobodowski published journalism of a distinctly historiosophical and cultural character, in which he also addressed the threats posed by the USSR to European culture and civilization. In his reflections, he continued the intellectual legacy of the Promethean movement. Still, he extended its conclusions beyond the future of Ukraine and Poland to encompass all European nations endangered by Russian expansion.

At the same time, he wrote extensively on Polish culture, émigré life, and Spain, analyzing these topics within the broader framework of contemporary international politics and relations. He also engaged with a wide range of pressing political issues. Łobodowski sharply criticized the attitude of the powerful Western states toward the Soviet reality, stressing that such a stance was essentially immoral and risked leading to political defeat and the decline of European civilization itself. He expressed these views in numerous articles, including *Zachód jest ciężko chory* (*The West is Gravely Ill*, 1973), *Kassandra jest niepopularna* (*Cassandra is Unpopular*, 1974), *Dobrodzieje Związku Sowieckiego* (*The Benefactors of the Soviet Union*, 1975), *O właściwe proporcje* (*On the Proper Proportions*, 1977), *Marnowane szanse* (*Wasted Opportunities*, 1978), and *Między Warszawą a Kijowem* (*Between Warsaw and Kiev*, 1978).<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Bogusław Bakula, *Publicystyka Józefa Łobodowskiego w “Orle Białym”*. Szkic problematyki in: *Między literaturą a polityką. O Józefie Łobodowskim*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2012, pp. 51–67.



## CHAPTER 3

### J. ŁOBODOWSKI'S PERSPECTIVE ON POLISH-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The writer firmly recognized that Europe's security and prosperity could not be ensured without strong and trustworthy bonds among its nations and states. Yet history had left deep scars: conflicts, wars, and disputes over borders or spheres of influence had long divided neighboring peoples. Still, he argued that the burden of past grievances should not be dragged into the present. What truly mattered was confronting reality as it stood and seeking solutions rooted in contemporary needs. For Łobodowski, to look toward the future meant fostering partnerships and cooperation, rather than reopening old wounds.

That is why many of his essays and public interventions focused on Polish-Ukrainian relations, which he regarded as decisive for the fate of all Eastern Europe. He was deeply aware that the histories of Poles and Ukrainians had been inextricably intertwined. Time and again, both nations had found themselves subjected to the same Russian domination; time and again, their failure to unite in the face of external aggression had led to the loss of their independence, one after the other. For Łobodowski, the lesson was clear: only by drawing on the past, without repeating its mistakes, and by forging a genuine alliance could Poles and Ukrainians acquire the strength and confidence needed to shape their future.

In his articles published in Polish émigré periodicals, the writer frequently spoke out sharply against the stereotypes that continued to shape the mass consciousness in Polish-Ukrainian relations. These prejudices, deeply rooted in history, had only intensified under the impact of the Second World War. He addressed this issue with particular force in such essays as *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości* (*Against the Phantoms of the Past*, "Kultura," 1952, nos. 2–3) and *Kompleks nienawiści* (*The Complex of Hatred*, "Kultura," 1958, no. 11), among others.

Łobodowski saw only one true path to resolving the long-standing conflict between Poles and Ukrainians: for each nation to undertake an “examination of conscience”:

I have always been, and remain, convinced that true reconciliation between hostile nations can only be achieved through the mutual acknowledgment of committed offenses and inflicted wrongs. If the test of conscience is one-sided, no positive outcome can follow. Confession must be reciprocal. I do not intend to whitewash the Polish past in its treatment of Ukrainians. Yet the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth never held a monopoly on causing harm, and it frequently suffered injustices itself – not only after the partitions, but long before.<sup>1</sup>

The writer argued that there are no nations composed solely of merits and virtues, just as there are none burdened only with sins and guilt. Throughout history, every people has passed through various stages of formation and development. Only chauvinists are inclined to believe that their nation is exceptional and superior to all others. Both Poles and Ukrainians, in Łobodowski’s view, had often acted “recklessly” in the past, committing numerous and needless mistakes. Even after the war, relations between the two communities in emigration remained far from ideal.

The publicist reminded his readers that the historical destinies of the two nations had always been intertwined. For this very reason, he warned that in the event of a new conflict, if Ukraine were to lose its independence, Poland would likely follow suit.

In 1977, the well-known *Deklaracja w sprawie ukraińskiej* (*Declaration on the Ukrainian Question*) was published in the pages of “Kultura” (“Culture”). Józef Łobodowski was among the few signatories of the document. By publishing the declaration, the editorial board regarded it as a crucial step toward strengthening cooperation among the émigré communities of Eastern European nations in their resistance to Soviet imperialism. The authors emphasized that “Regardless of its form,

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<sup>1</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Deklaracja w sprawie ukraińskiej* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2. Publicystyka*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2023, p. 44.

purpose, or context, imperialism “equally enslaves the peoples who fall victim to it and equally corrupts those who carry it.”<sup>2</sup>

The declaration stated that one could not disregard the historical injustices inflicted upon the Ukrainian people by centuries of Polish imperialism. Yet, the authors emphasized an undeniable fact – and an immense threat –: Soviet imperialism, which at that time imposed two forms of subjugation on the peoples under its control. The first was “limited sovereignty” for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe (Poles, Germans, Czechs, etc.), and the second was “complete non-sovereignty” (dependence) for the peoples of the incorporated Soviet republics (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, and others).

According to the authors, the key distinction lay in the fact that all subordinated peoples were subjected to the process of Sovietization, yet only those of the second group endured total Russification. They argued that without truly free Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, and even Russians, there could be no absolute freedom for Poles, Czechs, Germans, and other European nations.

The Ukrainians were placed first precisely because they were the largest nation subjugated by Soviet Russia and, alongside the Lithuanians, demonstrated the most persistent and consistent struggle for their freedom. “Ukrainian patriots fill the prisons and labor camps, and resistance in Ukraine has come to symbolize the very essence of national defiance within the empire.”<sup>3</sup>

The text identified three crucial priorities intended to guide the activities of a united European émigré community: first, the Ukrainian cause – the liberation of the Ukrainian people; second, the struggles of other national minorities subjugated by Soviet Russia, striving for self-determination; and third, the imperial nation – the Russian people, “The sooner he understands that dismantling Soviet colonialism serves his own interests – since only this can prevent the threat of future mutual slaughter – the better it will be for him.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Deklaracja w sprawie ukraińskiej*, “Kultura,” 1977, no. 5, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



Łobodowski welcomed the signing of the declaration. Yet, he noted that its full implementation and the realization of its ideals would require persistent effort, mutual understanding, and a willingness to confront brutal historical truths. He emphasized that words alone were insufficient; only through sustained cooperation, dialogue, and the active engagement of both Polish and Ukrainian communities could the envisioned unity and resistance to Soviet imperialism become a tangible reality. "No declaration will suffice without genuine, reliable cooperation—cooperation grounded in loyalty and mutual trust."<sup>5</sup>

The international situation could change rapidly, opening up favorable conditions for the realization of joint liberation plans by Ukrainians and Poles; therefore, Łobodowski believed it was essential to lay a solid foundation in advance. Throughout history, such opportunities had arisen repeatedly for both nations, yet in his view, they had consistently been squandered, either partially or entirely. "So let us oversee our clocks, so they do not fail us once more,"<sup>6</sup> – the writer highlighted.

## Poland and the Future of Eastern Europe

Józef Łobodowski belonged to a generation of thinkers who confronted the most urgent existential dilemmas of their era – questions whose answers, in their view, bore decisive significance not only for the fate of individual nations but also for the trajectory of European history as a whole. He acutely sensed the burden of responsibility, believing that the future of the nation, the state, and the continent was tied to the resolution of these issues.

In the early stages of his career, one of the central concerns of Łobodowski's interwar journalism was the critical examination of Poland's political realities. His reflections were marked by sharpness, independence of judgment, and an uncompromising tone, combining

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<sup>5</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Deklaracja w sprawie ukraińskiej* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Notatniki. Tom 2...*, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

analytical precision with a passionate commitment to creating a sovereign and free state. Every observation he offered was imbued with an awareness of the nation's destiny and a profound concern for the well-being of its people.

The writer sharply criticized the domestic policies of the Polish authorities of the interwar period, particularly their treatment of national minorities. Among the most contentious political issues of the time was the "Ukrainian question," which became the focus of some of Łobodowski's most severe and uncompromising critiques. He exposed how a sense of superiority developed within the dominant nation toward the other peoples inhabiting Poland, with a particular emphasis on the imperial attitude of the Poles toward Ukrainians in the Second Polish Republic.

Łobodowski regarded this tendency as a serious threat, above all to Poland itself. In his view, the political shortsightedness and futility of such state policies lay in the fact that Ukrainians – potential allies in the struggle against external threats from Germany and Russia – were instead deliberately transformed by the Poles into adversaries and enemies. He interpreted this not only as a violation of the most basic ethical principles of social coexistence but also as a betrayal of the nation's own vital interests:

Indeed! The selfishness of Europe, the self-interest of chauvinistic peoples, and the greed of significant capital will long obscure the paths of those who champion understanding and harmony. A new barricade is thus raised. On which side will Poland stand? But what kind of Poland? A Poland without vision, mired in poverty and spreading apathy; a Poland that acknowledges the importance of the Ukrainian question only insofar as it treats its borderlands as material for assimilation by mediocrities and incompetents; a Poland sentimental about yesterday, indulgent today, and uncertain about tomorrow – such a Poland will have no part in what is to come. Ultimately, force will determine everything. Force – and above all, the force of ideas.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Za naszą wolność i waszą*, "Wiadomości Literackie," 1936, no. 38, p. 1.

The Promethean concept, which Łobodowski supported and sought to convey both in its essence and significance to Polish politicians and the broader public, proposed that Poland assume the extraordinarily noble mission of leading the peoples of Eastern Europe in their struggle against the expansion of Bolshevism and Russian domination. The political conjuncture emerging in Europe demanded a swift search for new solutions. In this context, Łobodowski wrote: "It is not enough to merely bask in the fading glimmers of the Legions' enthusiasm. What is needed is an idea. A competition for an idea has been announced. Meanwhile, we navigate between the fascist Scylla and the Soviet Charybdis in a frantic search for a reliable foundation."<sup>8</sup>

According to the Promethean vision, Poland could become the unifying center of a broad federation of nations striving for national liberation, assuming this critical historical mission as an international political leader. In the context of growing external threats from Germany and the USSR, such a role for Poland – and its cooperation with neighboring peoples – was both vital and advantageous from the standpoint of national security. Yet Łobodowski lamented that Polish society lacked the support and understanding necessary to appreciate the potential impact of the Promethean idea on Europe's future, as well as to make a realistic assessment of the international situation.

He addressed the Polish people by appealing to their long-standing tradition of valuing freedom and resisting violence in any form. He sought to draw attention to the pressures weighing on Polish society from both sides: the national idea distorted by the fascists and the socialist idea distorted by the Bolsheviks, both propagated through subtle political manipulation. Poles were being led to see confrontation and armed struggle with neighboring peoples as the only means of defense, rather than seeking allies and partners in the fight against fascism and communism. In the confrontation with Ukrainians and other national minorities, Łobodowski perceived a threat of future catastrophe for Poland. He wrote:

Under fire from all sides – pressed by fascism, that pathological distortion of the national idea, and by communism, that criminal perversion

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

of the socialist idea – we must not yield to the terror imposed by either camp. Everything truly vital in our national tradition and culture rises against violence in any form. In defending ourselves, we seek allies – and thus the old rallying cry returns to us: For our freedom and yours.<sup>9</sup>

Łobodowski repeatedly emphasized the Polish public's lack of knowledge about Ukrainian history. In many of his journalistic writings, he sought to introduce readers to Ukraine – its rich history, the ancient origins of its people, and its diverse cultural heritage. He wrote about Juliusz Słowacki and his admiration for Ukrainian culture and history, as well as about the existence of an entire strand of Polish literature known as the “Ukrainian School.” For Łobodowski, the concept of culture extended far beyond state borders, and he saw in Poland's cultural mission in the eastern territories a great potential not only for Poland itself but for all of Eastern Europe.

He criticized Polish society's indifference not only toward the cultures of the peoples within Poland – Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Belarusians – but also toward the cultures of neighboring nations such as the Czechs and Romanians. After the war, while living in exile, he analyzed the eastern policy of the Second Polish Republic in his works. He highlighted its significant miscalculations: the neglect of cooperation with neighboring peoples, the failure to capitalize on opportunities for joint efforts, and the underutilization of shared regional interests. In 1949, he wrote in the periodical “Wiadomości” (“News”):

It is painful to admit, but Poland showed the least interest in the cultural life of its neighbors. While zealously proclaiming its leadership, it did nothing to support the spontaneous aspirations of the many Danubian and Balkan nations. In this respect, twenty years of independence were squandered, for Polish national thought failed to produce a single great historical idea capable of becoming a true center of gravity. The Polish intellectual was enthralled by Soviet pulp and remained willfully ignorant of young Ukrainian literature. [...] He could recite by heart third-rate Parisian boulevard poets, yet could not name even two or

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

three renowned Czech poets. Political, social, and cultural movements that directly corresponded to our natural interests were less familiar in Poland than the chronicles of French high society or the tales of Chicago gangsters.<sup>10</sup>

The writer criticized Polish nationalists and their leader, Roman Dmowski, accusing them of advancing Russian interests: "Endecja's pseudo-nationalism was never aware of Poland's cultural mission or its role in the East. Time and again, it renounced that calling in favor of the doctrine of a "single and indivisible empire""<sup>11</sup>

He exposed the falsity and inconsistency of the ideological foundations of the Polish National Democrats, highlighting their limited understanding of the historical depth and significance of the Ukrainian question for Poland. Drawing on Christian principles in his arguments, he emphasized the errors and harmful consequences of the "Endecja" positions, particularly their disregard for universal human values.

At the same time, he criticized the Polish left for their inability to uphold the principles of genuine democracy and for their overt service to Russian interests. In the article *Demaskująca się demokracja* (*The Unmasking of Democracy*, "Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński," 1938, no. 30), the writer expressed his indignation at the stance of representatives of Polish leftist parties, denouncing their hypocrisy and insincerity in their treatment of Ukrainians:

One may still grow indignant at the sight of the Trotskyist trials; one may also write this or that about Stalin's Bonapartism. But when it comes to the freedom-seeking aspirations of nations first subjugated by Tsarist Russia and now kept in bondage by Red Moscow, our democracy has become deaf and blind. The suffering of eight hundred thousand Jewish intellectuals in Germany moves it to tears – to pain itself, but the fate of forty million Ukrainians leaves it unmoved! Abyssinia is said to have a right to independence; Ukraine does not. Possible armed assistance by

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<sup>10</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Brak programu wschodniego*, "Wiadomości," 1949, no. 7, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Tropicielom polskości. List do Bolesława Micińskiego*, "Wiadomości Literackie," 1937, no. 25, p. 5.

France to Barcelona is deemed acceptable; assistance granted by anyone to the Ukrainian nation against the Soviets is branded a crime.<sup>12</sup>

Łobodowski accused the Polish authorities of catastrophically exacerbating the Ukrainian question. He was convinced that fostering Polish-Ukrainian cooperation would ultimately benefit the Poles themselves, providing them with strength, confidence, and reliable allies for the future.

In the article *Metodyczne szaleństwo* (*Methodical Madness*, “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński,” 1938, no. 33), he described the incurable disease of Moscovophilism that afflicted Polish society, a legacy of Russia’s long domination over Poland. Twenty years of independent statehood had proven insufficient for the Poles to free themselves from a servile mentality: “Twenty years of independence – so many slogans, so many words – and yet a single scrap of blue-and-yellow cloth is enough for the old homo moscus to crawl out from beneath the state-building apron: the ‘imperial man’ with the all-Russian forelock on his brow.”<sup>13</sup>

Łobodowski wrote with dismay that fear and subservience toward Russia were characteristic of a significant portion of Polish society. This humiliating dependence clouded their judgment and prevented the Poles from making strategically sound decisions. He described the attitude of the majority of Poles toward the Ukrainian question as a form of madness – albeit a madness pursued with such consistency that it ultimately proved advantageous to their enemies:

Madness – yes, that is the word that best captures the essence of the matter. But – and here I return to the starting point of my reflections – there is far too much method in that madness, far too much consistency. We are pursuing the policy of suicides, yet someone with a vested interest watches us closely, ensuring that the suicide’s hand does not falter halfway, but carries through the task assigned to it. In truth, it is time to sound the alarm!<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Demaskująca się demokracja*, “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński,” 1938, no. 30, p. 323.

<sup>13</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Metodyczne szaleństwo*, “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński,” 1938, no. 33, p. 354.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 355.

The writer suggested that hidden forces within Polish society sought to divert the resolution of the Ukrainian question in Poland. He explored this problem in articles such as *Wilcze doły* (*Wolf Pits*), *W obliczu rozstrzygnięć* (*In the Face of Decisions*), and *Historia in statu nascendi* (*History in the Making*), published in 1938 in the weekly "Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński" ("Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin").

Łobodowski noted that the harsh actions of many Polish officials in the eastern voivodeships were directed against national minorities – Ukrainians in particular – and ultimately served Russian interests. These policies fostered deep resentment toward Polish authorities, creating fertile ground for the spread of communist ideas and the influence of Soviet propaganda in these regions. He specifically addressed the consequences of such policies in Polesia, highlighting their long-term social and political repercussions: "In the surrounding areas raged General Gustaw Paszkiewicz and Voivode Waław Kostek-Biernacki, about whom a prominent communist once remarked that he deserved the Order of Lenin – for a thousand of Moscow's best agents could not have Sovietized Polesie as swiftly as the "brilliant" conduct of the voivodeship administration in Brest."<sup>15</sup>

The publicist described the so-called "religious revindications" as tragicomedies – numerous staged cases in which Orthodox believers were ostensibly "converted" to Catholicism, orchestrated by local Polish authorities. The first sensational case, which dominated the Polish press for several weeks, occurred in the village of Hrynky, which had been entirely and "ceremoniously" transferred to the Catholic Church.

The first person formally received into Catholicism was a former Russian gendarme with a "Polish noble surname," as the publicist ironically noted – Akhtyakhtyarov, a resident of the village. The parish priest and the local landowner, a major, were awarded golden crosses for their services. Yet, two weeks later, three-quarters of the villagers had "returned" to Orthodoxy, and neither the priest nor the major was stripped of the golden crosses they had received.<sup>16</sup> Following the

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<sup>15</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Ze wspomnień ukrajinofila. W Polsce niepodległej*, "Wiadomości," 1947, no. 13, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

incident in Hrynky, Volhynia was swept by a wave of “revendication stories” and related mythical accounts in the Polish press. Interestingly, no journalists were permitted to attend the “ceremonial” act of the Hrynky revendication, and Łobodowski himself was unable to reach the village. Obtaining a permit from the authorities to enter these border regions was exceedingly difficult, making it impossible for anyone to depict this so-called “famous” event accurately.

By the late 1930s, certain circles in Poland had intensified their efforts to sabotage or obstruct the work of Promethean activists, who continued their educational outreach and cooperative initiatives begun earlier. Łobodowski recounted one such case involving Włodzimierz Bączkowski, who<sup>17</sup> planned to give a lecture in Ternopil on the importance of the Ukrainian cause for contemporary Poland. A squad was organized by order of the commander of the military corps, none other than Gustaw Paszkiewicz, to meet him at the train station, assault him, and prevent him from speaking. Fortunately, Bączkowski was warned about the planned attack and traveled to Ternopil by car rather than by train, thereby avoiding the confrontation.

After the war, Gustaw Paszkiewicz – the zealous defender of “Polishness in the Kresy” – served in the PRN army, combating the Polish underground and participating in the pacification of the Białystok region.<sup>18</sup>

The late 1930s were also marked by intensified censorship in the Polish press. Reports concerning the oppression or persecution of national minorities were routinely barred from publication, and any discussion of Ukraine and Ukrainians was rigorously suppressed.

Censorship pressure on Ukrainian affairs grew stronger with each passing day. It was impossible to inform the public about the persecutions that had taken place throughout the year in the Chełm region, where Orthodox churches and chapels were being destroyed en masse, priests were being expelled, and crowds defending access to the temples were dispersed. A thoughtless administration and brutal soldiery joined forces to

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<sup>17</sup> Włodzimierz Bączkowski – publicist, editor of the weekly “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński,” and representative of the Polish Promethean movement.

<sup>18</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości. Myśli o Polsce i Ukrainie*, Wydawnictwo Test, Lublin 2015, p. 134.

eradicate Orthodoxy in the Lublin region, employing methods for which no parallels can be found in the true Polish tradition. Any attempts at rapprochement, even in the cultural sphere, brought no results,<sup>19</sup>

– the writer recalled.

The writer foresaw that the destruction of churches, the mass imprisonment of Ukrainians in Bereza Kartuska, and other repressive measures by the Polish authorities could provoke violent retaliation. His nephew, the Polish journalist Adam Tomanek, later recalled these concerns in his memoirs.<sup>20</sup>

The writer regarded as a disgraceful chapter in the history of pre-war Poland (winter 1938–1939) the participation of Polish military forces in sabotage operations against Carpathian Ukraine, their support of the Hungarians in its subjugation, and the execution of the remaining Sich Riflemen retreating into the mountains after the annexation of the Ukrainian Carpathians. He wrote:

Meanwhile, the Polish military authorities were preoccupied with organizing sabotage in Subcarpathian Ruthenia, so as not to miss yet another opportunity to fuel mutual hatred. In March, after fierce battles, the Hungarians seized Khust, defended by only a handful of Sich Riflemen. When the battered remnants tried to make their way through blizzards toward Poland, a veritable hunt was staged against them in the Chornohora. Exhausted fugitives were shot down across the mountains and forests.<sup>21</sup>

The publicist recognized a significant danger in the deliberate distortion of history and the manipulative use of historical facts for political purposes. In particular, in his article *Historia stosowana (Applied History)*, he discussed how Polish politicians from various camps consciously manipulated historical facts to serve the interests of their

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<sup>19</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Ze wspomnień ukrajinofila...*, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Trzy głosy rodziny o pisarzu* in: *Śladami pisarza. Józef Łobodowski w Polsce i w Hiszpanii*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2016, p. 288.

<sup>21</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Ze wspomnień ukrajinofila...*, p. 1.

party ideologies. They sought, for example, to deny the existence of the multi-million-strong Ukrainian nation simply because Ukrainians had failed to achieve independence after the First World War in the same manner as the Poles. Łobodowski argued that such distortions of history posed a threat primarily to the Poles themselves, for their own history contained numerous episodes in which their lands had fallen under foreign rule.<sup>22</sup>

In 1948, Łobodowski published a review in the émigré periodical “Wiadomości” (“News”) of Jędrzej Giertych’s new book, *Pół wieku polskiej polityki. Uwagi o polityce Dmowskiego i polityce polskiej lat 1919–1939 i 1939–1947* (*Half a Century of Polish Politics: Remarks on Dmowski’s Politics and Polish Politics of 1919–1939 and 1939–1947*). In it, he highlighted the same problem: the author’s manipulative adaptation of historical facts to suit his own political postulates.

The stance of the Polish nationalist camp in interpreting historical events after the war remained unchanged. Distorting history to fit one’s claims and suppressing facts that could not be twisted were standard techniques of political propaganda employed by the book’s author. Giertych offered extremely biased assessments of his political opponents and presented a misleading account of the situation in Eastern Europe.<sup>23</sup>

Giertych regarded both Lithuanians and Ukrainians as enemies of Poland, habitually placing the word “Ukrainian” in quotation marks. He claimed that, should an independent Ukraine emerge, it would inevitably ally itself with Germany against Poland. In the context of the recent wars, such assertions appeared utterly unfounded and absurd.

Łobodowski did not deny the merits of the Polish nationalists during the Second World War, but he regarded their vulnerability to the Ukrainian question as a persistent malady. In his view, the development of the Intermarium – a federation of countries between the

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<sup>22</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Historia stosowana*, “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński,” 1938, no. 36, p. 393.

<sup>23</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Nowa książka Giertycha*, “Wiadomości,” 1948, no. 19, p. 2.

Baltic and the Black Seas – could have created new opportunities for the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe.

The debate with J. Giertych and other Polish publicists, conducted in the pages of *Wiadomości* and other émigré journals, extended over several issues. In his article *Masońskim dyszlem z Kreszczatiku na Ramblas* (*With the Masonic Yoke from Khreschatyk to the Ramblas*), Łobodowski once again challenged his opponent for distorting historical facts, undervaluing the contributions of Ukrainian historical and cultural figures, and manipulating or omitting essential events of the past to support his own views. He stressed that Giertych relied on far-fetched analogies and that the examples he cited amounted to arbitrary distortions of geography, history, and culture, tailored to fit predetermined theses.<sup>24</sup>

The numerous falsified publications in the émigré press illustrated the complete degradation of geopolitical thinking among the leading political figures of the nationalist camp at the time. Łobodowski demonstrated that in the writings of W. Studnicki and J. Giertych on Ukrainian topics, almost every sentence “swarmed with errors.” These authors claimed, for example, that the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood included only Russians alongside Shevchenko, that it had been founded as a result of Polish intrigues, that Ukrainians had offered no armed resistance to the Bolsheviks, and that the Battle of Kruty had never taken place, among other assertions.<sup>25</sup>

In his article *Między Muszalskim a Zagłobą* (*Between Muszalski and Zagłoba*), the author highlighted the striking similarity between the methods of Polonization employed by the Polish authorities in the interwar years against Ukrainians in the eastern voivodeships and the methods of Russification long practiced by Russia against Ukrainians. He cited numerous unjust decisions of the Polish government, as well as actions by Poles toward Ukrainians, which inevitably fostered feelings of hatred and contempt.

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<sup>24</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Masońskim dyszlem z Kreszczatiku na Ramblas* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości...*, p. 191.

<sup>25</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Między Muszalskim a Zagłobą*, “*Wiadomości*,” 1951, no. 26, p. 2.



Il. 13. Cover of the book *Against the Ghosts of the Past*

Łobodowski regarded the signing of the Riga Agreement with Bolshevik Russia – a treaty that completely disregarded Ukrainian interests – as the first treacherous step. It was followed by a series of discriminatory and repressive measures against the Ukrainian minority, which intensified particularly in the late 1930s. He wrote:

When Orthodox churches and chapels were being burned, dismantled, or blown up with dynamite in the Chełm region; when the so-called “revin-

dication" campaign was raging; when the Border Protection Corps was staging "dragonades" in the frontier districts; when Ukrainian nationalists were being brutalized in Bereza – society learned very little about it. But that is no argument. [...] In the autumn of 1938, the swaggering "heirs" of the Żółkiewskis and the Kościuszkos organized a diversionary campaign in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Units numbering from a dozen to several dozen men crossed the border at night, carrying out attacks and acts of sabotage – easy and safe enough, given the lack of protection for borderland villages. My God – when one thinks that we were capable of smuggling saboteurs into Yasinia and toward Svalyava, yet before September we were unable to prepare anti-German sabotage in defense of our own country!<sup>26</sup>

In the article, the publicist recounted the testimonies of participants in the Polish sabotage operations of 1938. These men not only expressed no doubts about the righteousness of their actions – throwing grenades into village homes with women and children inside and then shooting those who tried to escape the burning buildings – but even took pride in having served their homeland.

Łobodowski understood that the most significant responsibility for such atrocities rested with those in power, who had misled the populace through a relentless wave of anti-Ukrainian propaganda that saturated the Polish press in the 1930s. Yet history revealed with bitter clarity that those least guilty of these crimes – on both sides – ultimately paid the heaviest price.

Łobodowski adopted a decidedly critical view of specific chapters of Polish history. For instance, unlike many popular Polish historians of his time, he regarded the fall of the Polish state in the 18th century as a consequence of the degenerative actions of the Poles themselves. He believed that a critical assessment of one's own history was essential for acknowledging past mistakes, learning the lessons of history, and addressing historical shortcomings.

Łobodowski regarded Poland's interwar rejection of the idea of uniting all Slavic nations against the expansion of Germany and the USSR as the gravest mistake in Polish foreign policy. It represented

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<sup>26</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Między Muszalskim a Zagłobą* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości...*, p. 213.

a lost historical opportunity to assume a leadership role in Eastern Europe and to influence the fate of the continent's peoples. This decision by the Polish authorities ultimately served Russia's interests and facilitated the expansion of its influence across Eastern and Central Europe after World War II.

Łobodowski was also convinced that Poland's rejection of the Ukrainian program – the idea of an independent Ukraine – constituted the first step toward the gradual erosion of Polish independence. Past experiences with peace treaties with Russia had repeatedly exposed the deceit of Moscow's promises. The signing of the Riga Peace Agreement between Poland and Russia, he asserted, represented a betrayal of Poland's eastern neighbors, for which the people would soon pay with a terrible hecatomb and the loss of their freedom.<sup>27</sup>

Analyzing the policies of the Polish authorities toward national minorities and the broader society's response to them, J. Łobodowski noted the growing antisemitic sentiments in interwar Poland. Alongside the increasingly aggressive anti-Ukrainian tendencies, he regarded antisemitism as no less a complex problem than the Ukrainian question. Łobodowski declared himself an opponent of antisemitism and recognized that the "Jewish question" could not be resolved in a single stroke; it would continue to weigh heavily on Polish society for a long time, diverting attention and energy from the most pressing issues of public life. He wrote:

Those who seek to destroy other minorities, led by the Ukrainians, thereby risk greatly widening the front of the struggle. Supporters of a mono-national Poland – a Poland that gradually absorbs and denationalizes its Slavic minorities – consistently attempt to wage a merciless campaign against ten million of its citizens. How much energy is required not only to win this struggle, but even to sustain it at all?<sup>28</sup>

In Łobodowski's view, directing all the energies of Polish society toward the subjugation of national minorities and their Polonization

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<sup>27</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Brak programu wschodniego*, "Wiadomości," 1949, no. 7, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Na marginesie dyskusji – ankiety*, "Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński," 1937, no. 38, p. 428.

represented a disastrous political path chosen by the Polish authorities during the interwar years. In 1975, in his article *Zahora. Wspomnienie* (*Zahora. A Reminiscence*), he summarized his reflections on interwar Poland with the following words:

At the time, Poland was a republic in name only [...]. Article 110 of the Constitution, which defined the rights of the so-called national minorities, was constantly violated in independent Poland. It was observed, more or less, in the case of Jews, but not for Ukrainians or Belarusians. Over time, Poland became an increasingly nationalist state, in clear contradiction to the ideals implied by the name of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth itself.<sup>29</sup>

Interwar Poland failed to honor its commitments to the West and did not grant autonomy to the Ukrainians of the eastern voivodeships. Łobodowski regarded this as a fatal political error, arguing that granting territorial – or at least cultural – autonomy to the Ukrainians, and treating them on an equal footing with Poles and Jews, could have laid the foundation for mutual understanding and fostered cooperation beneficial to both peoples.

In 1977, in a review of Ivan Kedryn's memoirs, Łobodowski further addressed this issue. He enumerated the obligations Poland had assumed before the international community. Still, he failed to fulfill the conditions of the 1920 Warsaw Agreement with S. Petliura, including the granting of territorial autonomy to Ukrainians and permission to establish a Ukrainian university in Lviv, among other provisions. What the Poles termed the "normalization" of Polish-Ukrainian relations consistently benefited only the Polish side. Łobodowski also characterized the pacification campaigns as a grave mistake, executed with extreme cruelty and resulting in numerous human casualties. While the Ukrainians documented their losses, the Polish side never acknowledged them.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Zahora. Wspomnienie* in: *Poeta wobec sejsmicznych ruchów historii*, wybór, opracowanie i wstęp Hałyna Dubyk, Instytut Literacki Kultura – Instytut Książki, Paryż–Kraków 2017, p. 188.

<sup>30</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Dzieje osiemdziesięciolecia* in: *Poeta wobec sejsmicznych...*, p. 193.

In the 1930s, Polish censorship prevented the publication of a letter written by three Ukrainian Catholic priests, in which they condemned the Polish pacification campaigns and the terrorist methods employed by the Ukrainian national underground. Although the Polish authorities forbade the dissemination of this letter, as Łobodowski noted, it was nevertheless widely read. In 1939, at the outbreak of the war, Łobodowski met a young Ukrainian in a village near Lviv who showed him a scarred and mutilated back, inflicted during the Polish pacification nine years earlier – a horrifying confirmation of the authorities' crimes against the Ukrainian people.

After settling in Spain in 1943, Józef Łobodowski immediately immersed himself in literary work, recognizing that little was known there about Poland – its history, culture, or the other nations of Eastern Europe. His first significant work was the book *Por nuestra libertad y la vuestra. Polonia sigue luchando* (*For Our Freedom and Yours: Poland Keeps Fighting*), published in Madrid in 1945.<sup>31</sup> In this work, Łobodowski analyzes Polish-Russian and Polish-German relations, examining the roots of their hostility and highlighting the interdependence of Eastern European states, including Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic countries, and Romania. He explored the imperial nature of Moscow and its intrinsic connections to Asia. In this historical study, he wrote with great sympathy about Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, as well as about the Caucasus and its nations. The figure of Prometheus – a symbol of the Polish Prometheist movement and the struggle for freedom – was closely associated with the culture and history of these peoples. Łobodowski also offered a critical assessment of the policies of the Polish émigré government, particularly those of Władysław Sikorski<sup>32</sup> regarding the eastern border. He wrote about the lives of Poles under Soviet occupation and was among the first to reveal the truth about the Katyn massacre.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Por nuestra libertad y la vuestra. Polonia sigue luchando*, Madrid 1945.

<sup>32</sup> Władysław Sikorski – Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile.

<sup>33</sup> Grzegorz Bąk, *Po hiszpańsku o Polsce* in: *Świat nie wywalczony. Szkice o uniwersach Józefa Łobodowskiego*, red. Dorota Siwor, Instytut Literatury, Kraków 2021, p. 234.

In 1947, Łobodowski contributed a significant chapter titled *Literaturas Eslavas* (*Slavic Literatures*) to the aforementioned history of world literature,<sup>34</sup> in which he discussed Polish, Ukrainian, and other Slavic literatures. According to literary scholars, this was the first publication in Spain dedicated to Ukrainian literature.

During his period of emigration, Łobodowski, in addition to working with the Polish press, actively collaborated with Spanish media, writing about Poland's history, culture, and the contemporary political situation of the Polish people. One such outlet was the journal "Oriente Europeo" (Eastern Europe), which facilitated intercultural exchange and introduced Spaniards to the cultures of Eastern European nations.

In 1957, Łobodowski published a significant article in this journal titled *El Prometeismo polaco* (*Legiones de Dąbrowski*) (*Polish Prometheusism* (*Dąbrowski's Legions*)). In it, he examined the Polish Promethean movement and its central ideas, which had not lost their relevance; on the contrary, they had become even more critical for the fate of post-war Europe. Łobodowski elaborated on the necessity for people under Soviet occupation to unite their efforts in the struggle for independence. He also emphasized the significance and influence of Ukraine on Poland's destiny and on the strengthening of Europe as a whole.<sup>35</sup> Spanish researcher José Luis Orello argued that the views of the Polish Prometheists – and Łobodowski in particular – on Ukraine's role in European geopolitics either coincided with or were later developed in the ideas of the prominent American political analyst of Polish origin, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who regarded Ukraine's position as decisive for the future strengthening of either Europe or Russia.<sup>36</sup>

J. Łobodowski made significant contributions to the promotion of Polish culture worldwide through the magazine "Polonia. In Revista

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<sup>34</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Literaturas Eslavas* in: *Historia de la Literatura Universal*, dir. C. Pérez Bustamante, Madrid 1947, pp. 771–879.

<sup>35</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *El Prometeismo polaco* (*Legiones de Dąbrowski*), "Oriente Europeo," 1957, no. 25, pp. 33–42.

<sup>36</sup> Jose Luis Orello, *Józef Łobodowski i magazyn "Oriente Europeo"* in: *Świat nie wywalczony...*, p. 208.

Ilustrada” (“Illustrated Magazine”), a publication by the Polish community in Spanish in Madrid, he wrote approximately fifty articles on a wide range of topics after the war.<sup>37</sup>

In 1982, a book on Katyn, titled *El Crimen de Katyn a la luz de los documentos* (*The Katyn Crime in the Light of Documents*) translated by J. Łobodowski, was published in Mexico.<sup>38</sup> In the same year, a collection of poems by Karol Wojtyła was published in Madrid in Spanish, with translations also carried out by J. Łobodowski.<sup>39</sup>

It is also known that Łobodowski collaborated, albeit less actively, with the Polish press published in the Americas, particularly with the magazines “Gwiazda Polarna” (“The Polar Star”) and “Dziennik Związkowy” (“The Union Daily”) in the United States, and “Kurier Polski” (“The Polish Courier”) in Argentina.<sup>40</sup>

J. Łobodowski’s collaboration with the interwar press and his publications from this period reflect the evolution of his worldview and the consolidation of his fundamental life principles. In his texts, published in 1930s periodicals, he aimed to draw Polish society’s attention to the most urgent social issues, as well as to the misguided decisions of the authorities, whose consequences he foresaw as tragic – primarily for the Polish people themselves.

During his period of emigration, Łobodowski promoted Prome-thean ideas of cooperation and the joint struggle for the independence of the peoples of Eastern and Central Europe. He analyzed pressing security issues, wrote about the history and culture of Poland, and described the lives of the Polish people and other nations under Soviet occupation. Moreover, he acted as an advocate for Polish-Ukrainian understanding and partnership, urging both countries to acknowledge their mistakes and identify common interests for the future, while situating political events within the broader context of global geopolitics.

<sup>37</sup> Grzegorz Bąk, *Po hiszpańsku o Polsce...*, p. 228.

<sup>38</sup> *El Crimen de Katyn a la luz de los documentos*, trad. J. Łobodowski, pref. W. Anders, Mexico 1982.

<sup>39</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Poesias*, trad. J. Łobodowski, Madrid 1982.

<sup>40</sup> Paweł Libera, *Józef Łobodowski – warunki pracy i twórczości pisarza emigracyjnego* in: *Świat nie wywalczony...*, p. 243.

## The Ukrainian Question and Its International Significance

Ukraine has always occupied a central place in the journalistic and publicistic works of J. Łobodowski. Reflecting on his deep engagement with Ukraine, he wrote:

I will not hide that it all began with sentimental motives. The memory that my paternal lineage descended from Cossacks, my several years spent in the Kuban region and in Ukraine, and the profound influence of Ukrainian folklore and songs I encountered during my most impressionable years in early childhood – all of this predisposed me to eventually join the small, though by no means the worst, camp of Polish Ukrainophiles.<sup>41</sup>

In his press writings, Łobodowski explored various facets of Ukrainian life – its culture, history, and literature – as well as the complex legacy of Polish-Ukrainian relations, intertwining these with the pressing issues of his own time. The political significance of the Ukrainian question in Poland resonated with particular urgency. Łobodowski approached it through the lens of Józef Piłsudski's federalist vision and the ideals of the Promethean movement. For him, it was not a matter of abstract theory, but of national security and Poland's very future. He saw the Ukrainian question as extending far beyond the boundaries of domestic policy, reaching into the sphere of geopolitics. To unite the nations and states subjugated by Russia and to support their struggle for freedom – this, he believed, would provide Poland both greater security through strong allies and a stronger voice on the international stage. In this vision, Ukraine stood at the very heart of the matter – the keystone of the entire structure.

From 1936 onward, Łobodowski immersed himself in the world of the Prometheans. He worked closely with Włodzimierz Bączkowski, editor of the weekly "Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński" ("Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin"); forged ties with Ukrainian and Caucasian émigrés as well as

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<sup>41</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Ze wspomnień ukrajinofila...*, p. 1.

with the Ukrainian Scientific Institute in Warsaw; and became a familiar figure at the meetings of the Prometeusz Club in the Polish capital, where ideas of freedom, solidarity, and resistance to empire were passionately debated.

In his article *Za naszą wolność i waszą* (*For Our Freedom and Yours*), Łobodowski reflected on Ukraine's historical destiny against the backdrop of political developments in Russia and Poland, as well as the situation within the Ukrainian Soviet Republic in the broader context of European geopolitics. He described the gradual dismantling of Ukraine's economic and cultural autonomy, a process initiated by Moscow in 1927. Ukrainian trusts were merged with the Soviet People's Commissariat of Agriculture, while commercial institutions, cooperatives, municipal administration, industry, and the justice system were all subjected to centralization and unification. Literature and language soon followed: writers and scholars fell victim to repression, some silenced forever, others forced into muteness under the shadow of destruction.<sup>42</sup> Political repression and the annihilation of the Ukrainian intelligentsia became the principal instruments for bringing Ukraine into complete submission to Moscow's central authority. Such policies, the Russian Bolsheviks applied to all the peoples they had conquered. Łobodowski drew parallels between the events in Ukraine and the situation in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Throughout, Soviet Russia presented itself as the successor and continuator of the imperial chauvinism of Tsarist Russia. He also noted that a newly risen military power – Hitler's Germany – was employing similar methods of suppressing freedom, posing a fresh threat to the nations of Eastern Europe from the West.

Against the looming threats of communism from the East and fascism from the West, Łobodowski saw only one path to salvation for the peoples of Eastern Europe: the practical realization of the Polish Promethean idea – the unification of nations for the defense of their borders, liberation from occupation, and resistance to imperial expansion. For him, the independence of Ukraine and the Caucasian peoples was the very cornerstone of Poland's national security. He regarded the res-

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<sup>42</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Za naszą wolność...*, p. 1.

olution of the Ukrainian question within Poland as an essential component of Polish national interests, and he viewed Ukraine and other nations subjugated by Russia – the Ukrainians, the Caucasians, and the Belarusians – as Poland's natural allies in the face of the grave external threats of the time. For this reason, he consistently criticized the policies of the Polish authorities toward national minorities.

Łobodowski understood that neither Germany nor Russia would ever willingly support the independence of the nations they had subjugated. Freedom would have to be won collectively. In 1938–1939, when the short-lived Carpathian Ruthenia emerged on the ruins of Czechoslovakia – offering Ukrainians a glimmer of hope that Nazi Germany might support the creation of an independent Ukrainian state – the Third Reich ultimately betrayed the aspirations of the Ukrainian people.<sup>43</sup>

In his interwar publicistic writings devoted to Ukraine, Łobodowski consistently advocated granting Ukrainians living in Poland the opportunity for free cultural development and for integrating their heritage into the broader European cultural space. He wrote about how Polish culture in the borderlands had been shaped under the influence of Ukrainian traditions, just as Ukrainian culture had absorbed elements of Polish culture. He frequently drew upon nineteenth-century Romantic literature, emphasizing the need to revisit the past – to acknowledge mistakes and atone for wrongs on both sides. Only under such conditions, he argued, could accurate understanding and reconciliation not only be possible but necessary.

In the latter half of the 1930s, J. Łobodowski devoted himself intensively to translating works of Ukrainian literature. He later reflected on this vibrant and eventful period of his creative life, writing:

I translated extensively, slowly preparing a complete anthology of Ukrainian poetry, from *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* to Olzhych and Antonovych. The remarkable Ukrainian poet Yevhen Malaniuk encouraged me to translate Lesya Ukrainka's extraordinary drama *The Forest Song*. The translation – its completion delayed by side jobs – was finished in

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<sup>43</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Ze wspomnień ukrajinofila...*, p. 1.

the summer of 1939, and only the outbreak of war prevented the staging of this magnificent work, which is in no way inferior to *Balladyna* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Meanwhile, my collection of poems on Ukrainian themes continued to grow, eventually forming a unified whole under the symbolic title *Golden Charter*, scheduled for publication that same autumn by Jakub Mortkowicz. Some of these poems appeared in the “Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin” and “Skamander.”<sup>44</sup>

While at the Polish soldiers' camp, Camp de Livron, in France, Łobodowski participated in publishing the magazine “Wrócimy” (“We Shall Return”) (1940–1942). In its third issue, he once again emphasized the importance of Ukraine and the Ukrainian cause. The reaction to his article was highly unexpected: the camp commandant ordered the issue confiscated, and Łobodowski was deprived of his financial allowances, underscoring the perceived untimeliness of raising the question of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation. Reports he received from Poland confirmed that the same tensions in Polish-Ukrainian relations were present in the homeland as in the émigré community.

During the same period (1940–1942), as mentioned earlier, Łobodowski sought permission from the military authorities to undertake a secret journey to Volhynia. He keenly perceived that unfolding events in the country were steering toward armed conflict between Poles and Ukrainians – a situation in which both the Germans and the Soviets could have had a vested interest. He hoped to leverage his own experience and the numerous personal contacts he had established in both communities to help avert this confrontation. Regrettably, Polish politicians did everything possible to prevent this journey from taking place.

In 1947, Łobodowski published an article entitled *Sprawa ukraińska* (*The Ukrainian Question*) in the Polish émigré magazine “Wiadomości” (“News”), in which he reflected on his experiences during the interwar years and throughout World War II. He contemplated the fate of the Ukrainians and Ukraine, examined the course of Polish-Ukrainian relations, sought to uncover the mistakes and miscalculations that

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

had been made, outlined the tragic consequences of misguided decisions, and considered what course of action might be appropriate under the new historical circumstances.

In the article, Łobodowski engaged in a dialogue with Dmytro Dontsov regarding the historical roles of Polish and Ukrainian nationalisms. He agreed with the Ukrainian publicist's assessment that the reborn Poland of the interwar period had offered Ukrainians and other neighboring peoples no ideas of genuine appeal. Łobodowski further highlighted the striking parallels in the actions and decisions of Ukrainian and Polish nationalists, as well as the similarities in the errors they had committed.<sup>45</sup>

Łobodowski placed greater responsibility for the state of affairs on the Poles, who possessed their own state, army, and institutions to pursue national objectives. In contrast, he described Ukrainian nationalism as a form of self-defense, arguing that Ukrainians were compelled to protect themselves and that this necessity explained their actions.<sup>46</sup>

The losses suffered by both peoples as a result of these confrontations and conflicts were catastrophic from a historical perspective.

"Both nations have committed a mortal sin against the Holy Spirit – their own history – and this is, in some ways, worse than spilled blood, mockery, and injustice, worse than all executions, uprisings, pacifications, and acts of revenge,"<sup>47</sup> – the publicist wrote with full awareness that Poles and Ukrainians had found themselves together in the same "Soviet sack."

He urged politicians and publicists not to apply contemporary concepts and criteria when evaluating events and situations of the distant past, particularly during the period of the First Polish Commonwealth, as doing so led Ukrainian politicians and publicists to draw biased and inaccurate conclusions. Łobodowski considered this approach a fundamental mistake, noting that, following the cultural decline of

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<sup>45</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Sprawa ukraińska*, "Wiadomości," 1947, no. 50, p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Byzantium, Western influences had primarily reached Ukrainian culture through Polish channels.

It is worth considering how events might have unfolded had Kyiv fallen under Moscow's rule two hundred years earlier. All the tragic mistakes made by the Polish side do not change the fact that, within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Ukrainian culture developed and national consciousness grew; the capital accumulated at that time enabled Ukraine to survive the Muscovite flood until its eventual revival. That Ukraine's national revival had an ideological and political connection with Poland was no accident. Despite terrible memories, spilled blood, and bitter reckonings, there was, in the atmosphere of those times, something that prompted Slovatsky to write about Mother Ukraine and inspired Shevchenko to extend a brotherly hand to his comrades in a Muscovite prison,<sup>48</sup>

– Łobodowski pointed out.

In Łobodowski's views on the shared historical past of Ukraine and Poland, there were several issues on which he did not align with the Ukrainian perspective, despite his generally Ukrainophile stance. Above all, he disagreed with using an ethnographic approach to determine the affiliation of regions to a particular state or people without considering historical and cultural factors. This primarily concerned Galicia and Volhynia, which, despite the numerical and ethnographic predominance of Ukrainians, Łobodowski considered closely linked to Polish culture and history. Consequently, he argued that a federative solution regarding these regions would be more appropriate, as, in his view, the spread of Polish culture into the Right-Bank Ukrainian lands had not been expansionist or exterminatory in nature, unlike the actions of other peoples in history. He did not deny the existence of mutual acts of brutality in the past, committed by both Poles and Ukrainians.

Łobodowski believed that each nation must come to understand its own history from the perspective of its own mistakes and responsibilities. All the nationalisms existing at that time – Polish, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian – were the least inclined to critically reflect on their histories, typically shifting the blame onto their neighbors.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

The desire of the Polish Prometheists to see Galicia and Volhynia incorporated into a federative Poland, rather than an independent Ukraine, led many Ukrainians in the western regions to view the Prometheist concept critically and to withhold their support. Even a progressive segment of Polish society, such as the Prometheist movement and Łobodowski in particular, was at that time unprepared to understand that Eastern Galicia and Volhynia could one day become part of a Ukrainian state. The need for Poles to reconsider their stance regarding the affiliation of Lviv and Vilnius was arguably first raised after World War II by Jerzy Giedroyc, who argued that without such a step, reconciliation between Poles, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians would be impossible.

Among the figures of the Ukrainian national movement, Łobodowski held Dmytro Dontsov in particularly high regard. In many respects, their political views and assessments coincided. In 1981, he published a review of Mykhailo Sosnovskyi's book *Dmytro Doncow* in the journal "Zeszyty Historyczne" ("Historical Notebooks"). *Portret polityczny. Z historii rozwoju ideologii ukraińskiego nacjonalizmu* (*Historical Notebooks: A Political Portrait. From the History of the Development of the Ideology of Ukrainian Nationalism*), in which he noted that Dontsov was one of the key figures in Ukrainian socio-political and intellectual life and played a foundational role in the Ukrainian national revival of the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>49</sup>

Łobodowski characterized Dontsov as a rational thinker, capable of objectively assessing the socio-political situation and proposing the appropriate course of action. He was also impressed by Dontsov's approach to Polish-Ukrainian relations and his engagement with the ideas of the Prometheist movement. Łobodowski wrote:

He divided Ukraine's conflicts with its neighbors into those of fundamental (essential) significance and those of merely local importance. The Russian threat was always his top priority, casting everything else into shadow. He was a proponent of forming an anti-Russian coalition that would include, in addition to Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, and

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<sup>49</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Dmytro Doncow. Życie i działalność in: Poeta wobec sejsmicznych...*, p. 257.

Romania. He supported the Warsaw Agreement concluded in 1920 between Piłsudski and Petliura, seeing no other viable solution under the circumstances. He wrote that the loss of Galicia (Eastern Galicia) and part of Volhynia was excruciating, but temporarily necessary.<sup>50</sup>

Both thinkers unequivocally advocated for a complete separation from Russian influences, particularly in the intellectual and cultural spheres, which they regarded as the most important and defining. Dontsov called for the thorough Occidentalization of the Ukrainian people, recognizing that the destructive influence of Soviet Russia on all things Ukrainian was merely a continuation of the anti-Ukrainian policies of Tsarist Russia, camouflaged under the guise of Ukrainization.

In many of his press publications, Łobodowski emphasized that Ukrainian lands had served as a kind of shield for Europe against Mongol-Tatar raids and the expansion of foreign cultures, as they suffered most from attacks by nomadic peoples from the east and south. He described the greatest tragedy of Ukrainian culture as the fact that its development, which had begun long before that of other European cultures, including Polish, was constantly interrupted by external invasions. While Polish culture enjoyed several centuries of uninterrupted statehood, Ukrainians had to start almost from scratch after each foreign incursion. Łobodowski foresaw a flourishing future for Ukrainian culture should the country achieve independence.

Łobodowski unequivocally condemned the terrorist actions carried out by the OUN during the interwar period, such as the assassination of Tadeusz Hołówka and the attack on the post office in Hrudka Jagiellońska, among others. At the same time, he also criticized the actions of the Polish authorities toward Ukrainians, including pacification campaigns, the closure of Ukrainian schools, the destruction of churches, and other repressive measures.

In his émigré publications, Łobodowski repeatedly returned to the question of OUN activities in Western Ukraine, acknowledging that their actions were primarily a response to the policies of the Polish authorities toward the Ukrainian people. However, he maintained that

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 266.

armed attacks and the killing of civilians on either side were unacceptable, regardless of their causes or motives.

In the article *Między Muszalskim a Zagłobą* (*Between Muszalski and Zagłoba*), published in the journal "Wiadomości" ("News") (1951, no. 26), he described the beginnings of armed confrontation between Poles and Ukrainians from 1938 – the Polish diversionary operation in Carpathian Ukraine – through the tragic events in Chełm, Volhynia, and Galicia during the war. Łobodowski considered the imposition of collective responsibility on civilians based on nationality a grave crime and held both Poles and Ukrainians accountable for it. He acknowledged that Polish policies toward Ukrainians in the late 1930s had provoked hatred and a natural desire for revenge. Still, he consistently emphasized that the killings of peaceful Polish and Ukrainian peasants could never be justified and called on both peoples to recognize their historical responsibility.<sup>51</sup>

In his émigré publications, Łobodowski repeatedly pointed out that the lack of political unity and the presence of significant disagreements among different factions within the Ukrainian émigré community – disagreements even greater than those among the Polish émigrés – severely undermined the Ukrainian cause, particularly its position on the international stage. The resolution of the independence question for nations such as the Poles or Ukrainians has always depended on the decisions and support of powerful political actors, including the United States, Britain, France, and others. The absence of a unified Ukrainian national front deprived the community of the ability to secure favorable decisions. In the article *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości* (*Against the Vampires of the Past*), he wrote:

No one questions Poland's right to independence. The most debated issue is that of borders. Ukraine's very right to independence, by contrast, is challenged at every turn. Even George Kennan, who recently wrote in the Russian émigré publication *Novy Zhurnal* that Ukraine is, in principle, fully deserving of independence, immediately added that, from an economic

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<sup>51</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Między Muszalskim a Zagłobą* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości...*, p. 216.

standpoint, Ukraine is as much a part of Russia as Pennsylvania is a part of the United States. Let us not forget that the Yankees think primarily in economic terms, and that the model of large federative unions is their ideal, including for Europe. Consequently, Kerensky's concepts will always be viewed quite favorably in the White House. Moreover, the same Kennan, an expert at the State Department on Russian affairs, warns Americans against intervening in the "separatist conflicts" that will arise after the fall of the Soviet regime. "Americans," Kennan says, "should not assume responsibility for taking a position in this sphere."<sup>52</sup>

The fragmented positions within the Ukrainian émigré community prevented them from coming together to discuss the future of Ukraine, just as they hindered Ukrainians from engaging in dialogue with Poles – among whom, unfortunately, there were also many disagreements – about the future of Polish-Ukrainian relations. The constant falsification of the past, perpetuated in the press on both sides – Polish and Ukrainian – caused significant harm to both nations.

Łobodowski urged both Ukrainians and Poles to adopt a more objective and critical approach to their own histories, believing that such reflection would be far more beneficial on the path toward mutual understanding. He maintained that genuine, successful, and lasting political reconciliation could not be achieved without reassessing prevailing misconceptions about the shared historical past. He was convinced that mutual faults and mistakes should be acknowledged – but always to ensure they are never repeated. The writer called on Poles and Ukrainians to undertake a profound examination of conscience – each nation for itself – because while the sins were mutual, the responsibility before history was shared. He urged them to rid themselves of hatred and pursue a path of reconciliation and cooperation.<sup>53</sup>

Soviet propaganda consistently falsified Ukrainian history and defamed the leaders of the Ukrainian people. From Bohdan Khmelnytsky and Ivan Mazepa to Stepan Bandera, Russian sources distort-

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<sup>52</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości*, "Kultura," 1952, nos. 2–3, pp. 38–39.

<sup>53</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Dyskusje polsko-ukraińskie*, "Wiadomości," 1948, no. 22, p. 2.

ed information and maligned the memory of these historical figures. Moreover, Russian agents were responsible for the assassination of numerous Ukrainian leaders in the twentieth century.

In the article *Falszywa legenda* (*The False Legend*), J. Łobodowski debunked the Russian myth portraying Symon Petliura as the organizer of anti-Jewish pogroms – a narrative deliberately propagated by the Russian press. He cited, for instance, a 1927 Paris publication that compiled Petliura's orders and decrees of the Ukrainian People's Republic government, which forbade participation in pogroms and prescribed severe punishment for those who violated them. Despite this evidence and these arguments, the French court acquitted the assassin of the Chief Otaman of the UPR (Head Commander of the Ukrainian People's Republic), who was later revealed to be a Soviet agent.

The writer drew attention to an intriguing coincidence: the assassination of Petliura occurred immediately after the May Coup and the rise to power in Poland of supporters of J. Piłsudski. He believed that this timing was no accident. Łobodowski was convinced that Moscow had been alarmed by the prospect of a new Kyiv offensive. The Bolsheviks had already conducted extensive anti-Petliura propaganda among the Ukrainian population during the years of the civil war. Łobodowski recalled a Bolshevik caricature of Symon Petliura from his childhood years in Kuban, describing it as follows: "I clearly remember the Soviet propaganda of 1920: a pig in a kontusz presenting a manifesto to the Ukrainian nation, signed by Petliura. The commentary added that it introduced the Polish language. The uneducated peasant in the Kyiv region believed it – and therefore did not join Petliura. Petliura had only a few thousand troops."<sup>54</sup>

Among the contributors to the Parisian journal *Kultura*, J. Łobodowski was regarded as the foremost expert on Ukrainian affairs. He played a leading role in covering Polish-Ukrainian issues in the pages of the journal and, throughout his creative career, actively promoted Ukrainian culture and heritage, conveying it to Polish and European readers in diverse ways.

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<sup>54</sup> *Rozmowa z Józefem Łobodowskim* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upirom przeszłości...*, p. 570.

The writer published several dozen articles of various genres devoted to Ukrainian history and culture solely in this émigré journal. Among them were: *Taras Szewczenko 1814–1964* (*Taras Shevchenko 1814–1964*), *Scylle i Charybdy ukraińskiej poezji* (*Scylla and Charybdis of Ukrainian Poetry*), *W stulecie Łesi Ukrainki* (*On the Centenary of Lesia Ukrainka*), *Współcześni poeci ukraińscy* (*Contemporary Ukrainian Poets*), *Poezja Jewhena Małaniuka* (*The Poetry of Yevhen Malaniuk*), and many others. In these works, he analyzed the history of Ukrainian literature, the creativity of writers from different periods, and contemporary cultural trends. He also produced translations and reviewed new book releases. Among Polish translators and critics, Łobodowski undoubtedly made the most significant contribution to the popularization of Ukrainian literature in Europe.

In the article *Scylle i Charybdy ukraińskiej poezji* (*Scylla and Charybdis of Ukrainian Poetry*), the author provides a highly professional analysis of the main trends in twentieth-century Ukrainian poetry and its key figures, while also highlighting the destructive influence of political factors on the creative process. To illustrate his points, J. Łobodowski employed his own excellent translations of poetic works into Polish. He examined Ukrainian artists and their creations within the broader context of global literary and artistic movements, emphasizing their distinctive national characteristics.

The publicist highlighted the uniqueness of creative figures such as Mykola Zerov, Maksym Rylsky, Pavlo Tychyna, Mykola Bazhan, Yevhen Malaniuk, Yurii Lypa, and many others. He demonstrated the connections between the poetic output of the Neoclassicists and poets of other artistic styles, particularly those from ancient and Western cultures – including Polish, Italian, and French – underscoring the influence of European traditions on their work. Through the example of each artist, the author exposed the devastating impact of the Soviet system on the creativity of original Ukrainian poets and on Ukrainian literature as a whole.

This publication also addressed the issue of cultural isolation experienced by émigré artists, which often led to the gradual decline of literary creativity and the psychological burnout of the writer. This applied not only to Ukrainian authors, although many of them were political émigrés. Łobodowski saw a way out of such an internal creative

crisis only through engagement with the national culture of the environment in which the artist found themselves, drawing new creative impulses from it. He was convinced that the artistic development of creators in emigration was possible only through complete openness to other national cultures.

The writer held Yevhen Malaniuk's work in particularly high esteem. Several analytical texts in the journal *Kultura* were devoted to him, including *Poezja Jewhena Małaniuka* (*The Poetry of Yevhen Malanyuk*), *Ostatnia wiosna* (*The Last Spring*), and *Po śmierci Małaniuka* (*After Malanyuk's Death*).

In his review for the journal "Kultura" ("Culture"), J. Łobodowski also highlighted a pivotal event for Ukrainian culture – the publication of Yurii Lavrinenko's anthology *The Executed Renaissance*, which gathered works by Ukrainian writers banned and erased by the Soviet authorities. This anthology represented the first restoration of their names and works to the European cultural space following years of repression and oblivion. Its publication was made possible thanks to the support of the editorial team of the Parisian journal "Kultura" and the personal involvement of Jerzy Giedroyc.

In his review, Łobodowski presented striking statistics regarding the actions of the so-called "modern Genghis Khan" – the Moscow authorities of that era – which had eliminated several hundred Ukrainian cultural figures, including an entire generation of writers, and virtually annihilated all expressions of Ukrainian cultural revival. He asserted that the book was "absolutely indispensable for anyone interested in the fate of Eastern Europe in our time" ("książka absolutnie niezbędna dla każdego, kto interesuje się losami Europy Wschodniej naszego czasu").<sup>55</sup> It serves as a document demonstrating the Bolshevik authorities' attitude toward the cultures of the peoples they had subjugated. Events in the Ukrainian SSR, including the systematic destruction of Ukrainian culture and the persecution of its cultural figures by the Soviet regime, were frequently addressed in J. Łobodowski's émigré publications. He recounted, for instance, the case of the Ukrainian poet Sviatoslav Karavansky, who was sentenced to ten years in Soviet labor

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<sup>55</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Dwie antologie*, "Kultura," 1960, no. 6, p. 134.

camps for disseminating truthful information about the Katyn tragedy. He also covered the arrests of members of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group in his article *Rejtan czy Wernyhora?* (*Rejtan or Wernyhora?*).<sup>56</sup> He recounted the fate of the Ukrainian bishop Josyf Slipyj and detailed the persecution of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church by Moscow in his article *Likwidatorzy Unii* (*The Liquidators of the Union*).

J. Łobodowski wrote about Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky with great respect, portraying him as an outstanding figure and highlighting his family's connections to Polish culture and his aristocratic origins. The writer frequently cited Sheptytsky's remark on the state of Polish-Ukrainian relations during the war, which he regarded as deeply symbolic: "Kiedy džungla płonie, zwierzęta nie gryzą, a ludzie się gryżą" ("When the jungle burns, animals do not fight among themselves, but humans do"). He also highly praised Sheptytsky's moral qualities, which were most prominently demonstrated during the war years: "When the jungle burns, animals do not fight among themselves, but humans do."

He saved Jews at the risk of his life. Communist propaganda attributes pro-German tendencies to him, but this is untrue. Naturally, he had to negotiate with the Germans – just as [Cardinal Adam] Sapięha had to do. Even if he, to some extent, supported Galicia or other formations, it should be remembered that they cooperated with the Germans in the same way that Piłsudski's legions cooperated with the Austrians – they fought in the hope of creating the nucleus of a future national Ukrainian army. They believed what Piłsudski had said in his lecture before World War I: that victory would move from West to East – that is, first the Germans would defeat Russia, and then the West would defeat Germany.<sup>57</sup>

The writer maintained friendly personal contacts with members of the Ukrainian émigré community – Konstantin Zelenko, Yevhen Malaniuk, Natalia Livytska-Kholodna, and others. Memories of J. Łobodowski were preserved by K. Zelenko, the head of the Polish-Ukrain-

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<sup>56</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Rejtan czy Wernyhora?*, "Tydzień Polski," 1981, no. 4, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Rozmowa z Józefem Łobodowskim* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorem przeszłości...*, pp. 578–579.

ian Society in London, whose friendship with the Polish writer lasted over twenty years. Thanks to his efforts, as well as those of representatives of the Ukrainian and Polish émigré communities in London, a poetry evening dedicated to J. Łobodowski was held in 1973, during which his works were read in both languages.

One of the poet's books, presented to K. Zelenko at that time, bears a meaningful dedication: "I shake hands with Konstantin Zelenko, hoping that this handshake will extend from the Vistula to the Dni-pro"<sup>58</sup> – the poet's book, presented to K. Zelenko at that time, bears a meaningful dedication and reflects the enduring spiritual priorities of the Polish writer. In his memoirs, the Ukrainian public figure and publicist noted Łobodowski's multiculturalism, his steadfast commitment to Ukraine, and his exemplary political culture.

"When speaking of Łobodowski's contribution to the formation of Polish-Ukrainian relations, it is clear that his goodwill and comprehensive intellectual and emotional engagement naturally manifested as genuine benevolence toward the Ukrainian people – an affection expressed through poetry, marked by respect and the sincerity of his intentions and endeavors"<sup>59</sup> – K. Zelenko noted.

In 1973, K. Zelenko, along with J. Łobodowski, appeared on the radio program "Wolna Europa" ("Radio Free Europe") to discuss the prospects for Polish-Ukrainian relations. The Polish and Ukrainian publicists emphasized the need to build new bridges of understanding and reconciliation. During the conversation, Łobodowski expressed an exceptionally profound idea: "Much divides us, yet a common goal unites us: to prevent any of us from being swallowed by the Russian-Soviet quagmire."<sup>60</sup>

As history has shown, these words of the Polish writer have remained consistently relevant for Ukrainians, Poles, and all peoples of Europe.

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<sup>58</sup> Konstantyn Zelenko, *Wspomnienie o Józefie Łobodowskim* in: *Józef Łobodowski rzecznik dialogu polsko-ukraińskiego*, red. Ludmiła Siryk, Jerzy Święch, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2000, p. 152.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 153.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p. 155.

## On the Unlearned Lessons of History and Interethnic Relations

J. Łobodowski is regarded as an ambassador and advocate of Polish-Ukrainian understanding. His critical assessments of the activities of Polish and Ukrainian politicians and public figures, as well as their shared past and present, aimed to overcome mistakes and miscalculations, foster awareness of responsibility, and promote co-operation.

He first wrote about the necessity of seeking agreement between Poles and Ukrainians as early as 1932, in his article *Serca za barykadą* (*Hearts Behind the Barricade*) (“Trybuna,” 1932, no. 1). This was the first text in which the writer presented a clear plan and concrete vision for addressing the Ukrainian question in interwar Poland. He outlined the problem of Polish-Ukrainian relations in the Second Polish Republic with remarkable clarity and conciseness, also highlighting the threatening prospects of its rapid escalation. For a twenty-three-year-old, his thoughts and assessments were exceptionally profound, critical, and even prophetic. Łobodowski wrote in a frank and straightforward manner, using precise definitions and leaving no detail unaddressed.

Drawing on facts from their shared past and historical allusions, he argued that the existing barrier of misunderstanding between Poles and Ukrainians was growing at a catastrophically rapid pace and that this process had to be stopped without fail:

Between Polish society and the several million Ruthenians of Podolia and Volhynia, a barricade of misunderstanding and hostility has arisen, behind which the hearts of these fraternal peoples clash. For the most part, we are inclined to place all responsibility for this state of affairs on the Ruthenians’ conscience. Yet we recall Khmelnytsky and the Haidamaks, the death of Potocki and the UNDO, attacks on state authorities and acts of arson; endlessly we insist on the Polishness of Lviv, sing of the land and drops of blood, and treat all the Bondarchuks and Dmytruks as mere bandits who suffered harsh but deserved punishment. The recent grave of Tadeusz Hołówko has only intensified our hostility, leaving little room for a sober assessment of events and

phenomena, and delaying the moment when the ominously crucified barricade might finally collapse.<sup>61</sup>

The author emphasized the necessity of a rigorous analysis and a sober assessment of the situation by both sides. Change must always begin with oneself; therefore, he primarily urged the Poles to examine their own attitudes toward the Ukrainian question. Responsibility for the state of affairs in a country rests with the authorities and the people they represent. Non-state nations, which lack representation in the country's governance, cannot be held accountable for state policy. Consequently, the writer called on Polish society to discard all illusions, acknowledge its own responsibility, and take the initiative in extending a hand of reconciliation to the Ukrainians. He wrote: "We do not truly know our neighbors. We do not wish to know them. We do not want to understand what they think, how they live, what they desire, or what they strive for. We see in them only Haidamaks and daredevils, cutthroats and adventurers. And one more thing: we do not wish to converse with them as equals, on equal terms."<sup>62</sup>

Łobodowski urged the Poles to abandon their unfounded imperial attitude toward the Ukrainians, the reasons for which were unclear to him, as the Poles themselves had only recently lived under the yoke of foreign empires:

It is both absurd and profoundly tragic. Here lies a fatal mistake, a cursed paradox: a people beaten and oppressed for two hundred years, still healing from yesterday's bruises and wiping the imprint of the master's boot from their foreheads, now rush to seize other nations by the throat, waving the banner of imperial ambition and nationalist pretensions.<sup>63</sup>

He argued that if the issue of escalating Polish-Ukrainian relations was not addressed immediately, it could lead to unpredictable consequences. He urged stepping out from behind the barricades with open

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<sup>61</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Serca za barykadą* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości...*, p. 61.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64.

arms, in the spirit of the Jagiellonians, to embrace those who raised voices of agreement and unity. Łobodowski viewed the military deal between J. Piłsudski and S. Petliura, concluded in the spring of 1920, as the beginning of a new stage in Polish-Ukrainian relations, and he believed that this path toward understanding needed to be continued.

The writer concluded the text with a highly symbolic excerpt from Taras Shevchenko's poem *To the Poles*, followed by his own translation of the same passage into Polish. In this fragment, the Ukrainian poet called on the Poles to extend a hand of friendship to the Ukrainians. Łobodowski's choice of both the poem and Shevchenko himself was deliberate. The Poles' perception of Shevchenko had been deliberately distorted by Russian propaganda even during his lifetime. In the Russian Empire, his anti-Russian works were not published and remained virtually unknown in Poland. In contrast, the poem *Haidamaky* was intentionally published without Shevchenko's foreword, in which he urged people not to repeat the historical mistakes of their ancestors, and it was disseminated as an anti-Polish work. Although most Poles had not read Shevchenko's works, they were firmly convinced that he was their enemy for glorifying the Haidamaky uprising.

Łobodowski considered the Ukrainian question to be the most crucial issue in interwar Polish politics. The struggle against the Ukrainian minority and the attitude toward the Ukrainian cause significantly influenced the state's position in the contemporary European balance of power. If Poland regarded the Ukrainians as its enemies, it would inevitably align itself with the USSR, which was suppressing all manifestations of Ukrainian independence within its territory. Yet, once Russia had dealt with the Ukrainians, it would immediately turn its attention to the Poles – a lesson confirmed by historical experience. The publicist was convinced that an unresolved Ukrainian question threatened Poland's future independence and that the stance of Polish politicians on this issue would determine the future strength or weakness of the Polish state. Łobodowski wrote:

In the end, it all comes down to a stark choice: either forge an agreement with the Ukrainians and pursue an independent policy in the East, or oppose the very idea of an independent Ukraine – ostensibly in alliance, yet in reality under the shadow of Moscow's protectorate. There is

no middle ground. The Ukrainian question is paramount, for without its resolution, Poland cannot secure any of its broader objectives: safeguarding the Baltic states from foreign intrusion, drawing the peoples currently under Moscow's heavy hand into the orbit of Western Europe, and asserting active influence in the Danube basin with reach toward the Balkans. These are extraordinary opportunities – and yet we stand poised to squander them.<sup>64</sup>

Throughout his career, J. Łobodowski explored questions related to the construction of interethnic relations, the nature of the “insider–outsider” dynamic, and the paths to mutual understanding between representatives of different cultural and ethnic groups. In the 1930s, he published the majority of such texts in the weeklies “Wiadomości Literackie” (“Literary News”) and “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński” (“Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin”).

In “Wiadomości Literackie” (“Literary News”), from 1935 to 1939, he published fifteen articles and a response to a reader survey, including: *Smutne porachunki* (*Sad Reckonings*), *Adwokatka heroizmu* (*The Advocate of Heroism*), *Uzurpatorzy wolności* (*Usurpers of Freedom*), *Za naszą wolność i waszą* (*For Our Freedom and Yours*), *Tropicielom polskości. List do Bolesława Micińskiego* (*To the Trackers of Polishness: A Letter to Bolesław Miciński*), *Notatki gdyńskie* (*Gdynia Notes*), *Żarty a rzeczywistość* (*Jokes and Reality*), *W obronie zasługi. Do redaktora W. L.* (*In Defense of Merit: To the Editor of W. L.*), *Tragedia żydowska* (*The Jewish Tragedy*), *Nacjonalizm na bezdrożach* (*Nationalism in the Wastelands*), *Paszkwil na Polskę* (*A Pasquinade on Poland*), among others.

In 1937–1938, J. Łobodowski published more than a dozen articles in the journal “Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński” (“Polish-Ukrainian Bulletin”), analyzing the state of the Ukrainian question in the Second Polish Republic and exploring possible ways to resolve it. Among these were *Od bezmyślności do katastrofy* (*From Thoughtlessness to Catastrophe*), *Nieodpowiedzialne pomysły* (*Irresponsible Ideas*), *Historia stosowana* (*Applied History*), *W obliczu rozstrzygnięć* (*In the Face of Decisions*), *Od Małorosji do Mitteleuropy* (*From Malorosia (Little Russia) to Central*

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<sup>64</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Na marginesie dyskusji...*, p. 428.

*Europe*), and others. Most of these publications were signed under the pseudonym Stefan Kuryłło.

In 1937, the editorial board of “*Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński*” announced a survey on the topic *Dokąd zmierzamy w stosunkach polsko-ukraińskich?* (*Where Are We Heading in Polish-Ukrainian Relations?*), inviting all readers – supporters and opponents of Polish-Ukrainian rapprochement alike, regardless of their political views or convictions – to participate.<sup>65</sup> Among the numerous responses published in the journal was a reply by J. Łobodowski, in which he reflected on the current political situation in Poland.

He titled his response *Od bezmyślności do katastrofy. Odpowiedź nr 7 na ankietę* (*From Thoughtlessness to Catastrophe. Response No. 7 to the Survey*).<sup>66</sup> In his view, the main problem and essence of the matter lay in the fact that the Poles were going nowhere in terms of Polish-Ukrainian relations – they had neither a program nor even a basic understanding of the issue. Łobodowski saw the tragedy of the situation not so much in the mistaken approach of the government or individual voivodes, but in the absence of any vision for resolving the matter within society as a whole.

Politicians who came to power viewed the only solution as the Polonization of Ukrainians living in the eastern territories of Poland, where they formed the majority. They believed that any method would suffice, as had already been applied – pacification, closure of Ukrainian schools, destruction of churches, and so on.

No one considered the feasibility of Polonizing approximately 70% of the population – roughly the proportion of Ukrainians in the eastern provinces of the Second Polish Republic. Łobodowski called these plans of the Polish Endeks (who held a parliamentary majority) pseudo-realistic. He was convinced that continuing down this path would inevitably lead to the loss of the five southeastern voivodeships. At the same time, he attempted to show that such a policy toward Ukrainians

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<sup>65</sup> *Dokąd zmierzamy w stosunkach polsko-ukraińskich?*, “*Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński*,” 1937, no. 30, p. 333.

<sup>66</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Od bezmyślności do katastrofy. Odpowiedź nr 7 na ankietę*, “*Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński*,” 1937, no. 34, pp. 377–378.

served Russian imperial interests, as Russia would inevitably pursue its imperial ambitions against Poland after the complete subjugation of Soviet Ukraine. The publicist appealed to historical experience, which demonstrated that the fates of Poland and Ukraine were closely intertwined: when Poland fell, Ukraine fell with it, and vice versa.

At the beginning of 1938, the editorial board of the bulletin proposed continuing the public discussion on Polish-Ukrainian relations. It announced a survey entitled *Jak rozwiązać zagadnienie polsko-ukraińskie?* (*How to Solve the Polish-Ukrainian Question?*) In the sixth issue of the weekly that year, J. Łobodowski's response was published under the title *Zapoznana strona zagadnienia* (*The Familiar Side of the Question*). He analyzed the situation that had developed within Polish society and in Polish-Ukrainian relations by the late 1930s, identifying the real problem as the complete lack of willingness on the part of the Polish authorities at the time to implement the proposed measures in practice:

The only success that the very small circle of press allies, sharing a common position on the Ukrainian question, can point to is a limited dissemination of information about the actual state of affairs among the journalistic elite. And that is all. Beyond this, 99.9 percent of Polish society remains entrenched in old habits of thinking and, under the influence of press alarms – most often unjustified – becomes ever more anti-Ukrainian.<sup>67</sup>

The most severe manifestation of this unresolved issue was the rise of anti-Ukrainian sentiments among the Polish population, particularly in the southeastern voivodeships of the Second Polish Republic, where Ukrainians constituted the overwhelming majority, making the problem especially pressing. The publicist emphasized the decisive role of the contemporary press – both Polish and Ukrainian – in fueling stereotypes in popular consciousness and intensifying hostility. The Polish media deliberately spread a false, unfounded, and fruitless notion of the exclusive autochthony of Poles in the southeastern territories of the Second Polish Republic.

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<sup>67</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Zapoznana strona zagadnienia (odpowiedź Nr. 12 na ankietę)*, "Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński," 1938, no. 6, p. 58.

Łobodowski exposed the baseless nationalist megalomania of the Poles, who considered themselves the sole masters of the eastern lands, and sought to convince everyone of what he regarded as an obvious truth: Ukrainians had always lived in Volhynia and Galicia; they were neither newcomers nor strangers, but rightful inhabitants, autochthons just like the Poles. He understood that the problem could not be resolved until the Poles accepted this reality.

The responses to the survey revealed only the political aspect of the problem, whereas, in the writer's view, resolving social issues had to begin with cultural cooperation. He was convinced that fostering relations between people should start with cultural exchange between Poles and Ukrainians. Łobodowski wrote extensively about the shortcomings of contemporary Polish cultural policy toward national minorities:

They have sealed themselves off as if behind a Chinese Wall, refusing to acknowledge the world unfolding among their neighbors. While daily newspapers overflow with countless reports on events in Soviet Russia, Ukraine remains shrouded in silence. Even today, the Polish reader is largely unaware of the Ukrainian people, their culture, or their artistic achievements. Year after year, bookstores were stacked with translations of Russian literature, while Ukrainian voices went unheard. Ukrainian youth were systematically barred from Polish universities, pushed instead toward the embrace of the OUN. In this way, the possibility of genuine cultural contact and exchange was stifled, and with it, the chance to draw the young Ukrainian intelligentsia into the orbit of Polish cultural life – a deliberate closing of doors that has long cast a shadow over the region's shared future.<sup>68</sup>

In the situation prevailing in Poland at the time, the publicist argued that political decisions alone would achieve nothing without establishing long-term cultural cooperation between Poles and Ukrainians. He believed that Polish society needed to return to its longstanding cultural traditions of coexistence with neighboring peoples. Łobodowski attributed the most significant role in interethnic relations to cultural influence and was convinced that the initiative should begin with the

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p. 59.

Poles, as they had their own state. Yet, he emphasized that the success of this endeavor also depended on the Ukrainian side and its interest in fostering mutual understanding. He wrote:

The cause will gain true momentum only when the grand idea of cultural coexistence between the two peoples – and the close alignment of their political interests – becomes part of our very lifeblood; when the compelling vision of a structurally united Europe – from sea to sea – linked by a Polish-Ukrainian bridge finally sparks our imagination and transforms into the enduring goal and aspiration of generations to come.<sup>69</sup>

History has shown that all political entities formed through the mechanical unification of peoples without shared interests were always doomed to collapse. Only common goals and a shared vision of the future, along with a sense of cultural closeness and kinship, can unite people into a successful political project. J. Łobodowski believed that it was the Promethean idea of uniting the peoples of Eastern Europe that held real prospects for the future. He argued that the principal role in conveying the essence of this idea to society should be played by Polish writers and publicists, as well as the younger generation of Poles. The writer hoped that it would not remain a mere legend but would become a genuine, practical task for the future.

In his article *Ukraina między Wschodem i Zachodem (Ukraine Between East and West)*, he explored the geopolitical dimension of the Ukrainian question in interwar Poland, the prevailing political conjuncture in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s, and the strategic prospects for the national interests of both Ukraine and Poland. He regarded the claims of Poles and Ukrainians to the Western Ukrainian (then Eastern Polish) territories as familiar problems in the relations of neighboring peoples – problems rooted in the very nature of human society and easily resolvable if both sides were willing to compromise. Yet, Łobodowski described the alliance and cooperation of Poles and Ukrainians in the struggle against external enemies, to secure their place on the map of Europe, as a shared strategic goal and a national interest for both peoples:

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

The dispute between Poles and Ukrainians is, in the final analysis, a neighborly quarrel over mutually ploughed boundary strips. By contrast, between Poland and Ukraine on the one hand, and Suzdal–Tsarist–Bolshevik Moscow on the other, there rages a struggle to the death over the very existence of the former and over the European character of the culture that is meant to prevail on the Baltic–Black Sea bridge.<sup>70</sup>

In his assessments of the strategic goals of interethnic relations, Łobodowski shared the ideas and perspectives of representatives of the Promethean movement and Józef Piłsudski's federalist concept. At the time, this was the most realistic and rational approach to resolving Polish-Ukrainian relations, as it relied primarily on Poland's state interests and national security while rejecting political fanaticism, prejudice, and stereotypes. The proponents of the Polish Promethean movement sought to convince society of the necessity, feasibility, and prospects of a Polish-Ukrainian alliance; their program of cooperation encompassed the political, social, and cultural spheres of life.

Łobodowski's stay in Volhynia in 1937–1938 and his work at the weekly *Wołyń* in Lutsk, at the invitation of the Volhynian Voivode Henryk Józewski, provided him with invaluable firsthand experience in direct communication with both Ukrainians and Poles – residents of the voivodeship, members of the intellectual elite, government officials, and representatives of the authorities. During this time, he observed and understood the pressing issues from within, analyzed the situation, and sought ways to address them.

At the beginning of 1938, when H. Józewski was recalled from Lutsk at the request of Polish nationalists, Łobodowski also left Volhynia. He expressed his response to this decision of the authorities in a poem titled *Wiosna zdradzona* (*Betrayed Spring*). The poem referred to the spring of 1920 and its historical symbolism – the military alliance between S. Petliura and J. Piłsudski, concluded for the joint struggle against the Bolsheviks. Łobodowski believed that this alliance had

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<sup>70</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Ukraina między Wschodem i Zachodem*, "Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński," 1938, no. 31, p. 334.

been a turning point and could have initiated a completely different history for Polish-Ukrainian relations. Józefski, like his like-minded colleagues and other supporters of the Promethean movement, sought to act within the framework of cooperation and understanding. In contrast, those who recalled him and accused him of "Ukrainophilism" betrayed the idea of reconciliation and deprived it of its prospects.

Łobodowski analyzed the situation surrounding Józefski's activities in Volhynia and his dismissal from the post of voivode in the article *Legendy wołyńskie* (*Volhynian Legends*). The title of the text is also symbolic, as publications in the contemporary Polish press that massively criticized the voivode's actions had little to do with an objective analysis of his work; instead, they deliberately spread legends or myths intended to justify his ultimate removal from Volhynia.

The political idea of Józefski and its practical implementation differed significantly, and this discrepancy, according to Łobodowski, was primarily determined by the state of Polish domestic politics. He wrote about the absence of basic coordination in political work, the need for objective analysis of the situation, and the prevalence of anarchy and societal disorientation regarding key problems and challenges.<sup>71</sup>

The Poles were categorically opposed to the voivode, accusing him of supporting Ukrainians, establishing Ukrainian cultural institutions, and promoting Ukrainian culture. On this matter, Łobodowski later wrote:

Obviously, Józefski did not himself establish any Ukrainian choirs, theatres, or organizations; it is true, however, that he did not oppose their emergence—and that was precisely the issue. In Lutsk, a Ukrainian theatre performed several times a month, three-quarters of it amateur. That alone was already taken as an offense. The voivode invited Maria Dąbrowska to Ridna Khata for a folk performance – a scandal! The voivode spoke Ukrainian with the people of Volhynia – an unquestionable act of national treason! Colonel Ostrowski had evidently fallen at once into a chauvinist milieu that duly shaped his views. And really, there is no point belaboring it: the Polish administrative intelligentsia

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<sup>71</sup> Stefan Kuryłło, *Legendy wołyńskie*, "Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński," 1938, no. 42, p. 457.

in Lutsk, Rivne, and elsewhere largely formed a nationalist ghetto, completely cut off from the local population. They hated Józewski—and it could not have been otherwise.<sup>72</sup>

To intensify the propaganda against and persecution of the voivode, a special periodical, “Kurier Wołyński” (“Volhynian Courier”), was established. “In Lutsk, people eagerly anticipated each week what Kurier Wołyński would report about Józewski and how Łobodowski would respond,”<sup>73</sup> the writer recalled this later, after the war.

In an effort to influence the situation and create at least some pre-conditions for contacts between Poles, Ukrainians, and other minorities, Józewski actively supported utrakvist (bilingual) schools that included the Ukrainian language and established youth organizations based on principles of economic, social, and cultural cooperation, bringing together representatives of different nationalities. It was precisely these forms of work for which he was most heavily criticized by his political opponents. At the same time, the Ukrainian side considered these steps insufficient to fully address the interests of the Ukrainian population in Volhynia.

The plans of the Volhynian voivode and his far-sighted ideas for resolving the Ukrainian question in Poland were rejected at the time by the majority of both Poles and Ukrainians. Only the representatives of Polish Prometheism recognized the validity of the voivode’s concept, yet their numbers in society were too small to exert any real political influence. The divergence of Józewski’s activities from mainstream Polish national policy, combined with press criticism that generated numerous myths and legends around his figure, led to a sharp increase in the voivode’s enemies, particularly among the Polish part of society. Łobodowski described his dismissal from the post of voivode as a Pyrrhic victory – one that achieved nothing; although the person changed and the name that had irritated everyone disappeared, the unresolved problems remained, and the reality remained the same.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Sprawa rewindykacji – ponownie*, “Zeszyty Historyczne,” 1970, no. 18, p. 187.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>74</sup> Stefan Kuryłło, *Legends wołyńskie...*, p. 459.

J. Łobodowski described the state of public consciousness in Poland regarding the Ukrainian question at the end of the 1930s as chaotic: the absence of a rational approach, reliance on emotionally charged arguments, the rise of Ukrainophobia – particularly among the older generation of Poles – and so forth. All of this reduced the significance of the Ukrainian question in Poland to a regional matter, depriving the state of the capacity to exert decisive influence over the determination of Eastern Europe's geopolitical future.

The publicist regarded the hopes of a particular segment of Polish society for an alliance with Russia in opposing Hitler's Germany as illusory, fueled by unjustified Russophilism, for neither White nor Red Russia had ever wished for an independent Poland. At the same time, he called the desire to Polonize the eastern territories, where the majority of the Ukrainian population lived, naïve and unrealistic – plans that would only provide fodder for numerous Soviet agents in these lands. Łobodowski believed that both peoples had reached a stage in their historical development where their national existence was at stake. Therefore, Poles and Ukrainians, in the name of higher values and fundamental needs, must immediately remove the threatening elements from the points of conflict between their interests.<sup>75</sup>

Ideological prejudices and political objectives were prioritized by the Polish authorities of the time over the interests of the people – that is, above cooperation with neighboring nations in the face of the growing external threat from Germany and the Soviet Union. Łobodowski was convinced that this approach would have tragic consequences.

He dreamed of a genuine brotherhood between the two peoples and their two independent states, seeing both rational foundations and spiritual traditions as a basis for such a union. He acted as a kind of missionary for Polish-Ukrainian understanding, believing that art and artists should change the world and people, making them more perfect.

In his emigration journalism, Łobodowski continued to reflect on Polish-Ukrainian relations in the context of new historical realities. He noted their catastrophic deterioration, even though, at the end of the

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<sup>75</sup> Stefan Kuryłło, *Krystalizujący się chaos*, "Biuletyn Polsko-Ukraiński," 1938, no. 46, p. 495.

1930s, it had seemed to him that matters could not worsen further. He sought to identify the reasons for this state of affairs in the mentality of both peoples, their historical experiences, and their collective psychology.

In 1947, the publicist wrote that the key to the problem lay more in the sphere of collective psychology than in politics. Generations of Poles had been raised on the works of Sienkiewicz, while Ukrainians had grown up on pseudo-historical narratives such as *Taras Bulba*, and the effects were evident. He argued that all attempts at political reconciliation would be futile unless preceded by an honest identification of the causes of hostility.<sup>76</sup>

The deterioration of Polish-Ukrainian relations after World War II did not signify a renunciation of attempts to seek understanding. Łobodowski was convinced that the security of both peoples in the future depended precisely on their mutual relations. He consistently arrived at this conclusion after carefully analyzing events in their shared history. If Poles and Ukrainians did not develop a common plan of action in the event of sudden changes in the European political landscape, both nations would face yet another defeat. The events of 1918 served as confirmation: the existence of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict allowed Russia to seize southern Ukraine and reach the Black Sea. The battle for Lviv led to the Riga Peace Treaty, which, in the publicist's view, became a harbinger of September 1939.

This has always been the course of history. Ukraine falls first, as it is directly exposed to a blow from Moscow; Poland comes next. Poles should therefore remember that the independence of Warsaw without an independent Kyiv is unstable, while Ukrainians should abandon the misguided notion that Russia can be effectively resisted while maintaining a constant conflict in the West with all neighboring states – states which, at the decisive moment, will prefer to reach an understanding with Moscow rather than accept a frontier along the San, the Tisza, and the Prut. Such a danger is always present, and the Russians would readily agree to some new Riga-style border, provided they retain their position in Kyiv and Odesa. Ukrainian political thought must take these possibilities into account, since it can hardly ignore the existence of pro-Russian

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<sup>76</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Sprawa ukraińska...*, p. 2.

tendencies among circles that hold the view that coming to terms with Ukrainians is either impossible or unnecessary;<sup>77</sup>

– wrote J. Łobodowski in 1948.

In the Polish emigration press of the late 1940s and early 1950s, a long and heated debate continued regarding J. Łobodowski's publications on Polish-Ukrainian relations. In 1952, he published the article *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości* (*Against the Phantoms of the Past*) in the periodical "Kultura" ("Culture"), which is still considered a key work addressing the issue and a programmatic statement for the magazine's editorial stance. On the first page of the publication, the editorial board added a note: "J. Łobodowski's position on Ukrainian affairs, as presented in this article, reflects the broader perspective consistently upheld by the editorial team of Kultura (Culture)."<sup>78</sup>

In this work, Łobodowski provided a thorough analysis of Polish-Ukrainian relations, outlined his own vision for resolving the issue, offered well-reasoned responses to his opponents, and made recommendations for future generations. Analyzing the state of Polish-Ukrainian relations after World War II, he was fully aware that on both sides, numerous individuals existed who would never hear or accept any arguments. Yet he considered it vitally necessary to examine the criticisms of both sides and respond to them.

The writer traditionally referred to facts from Ukrainian history, citing examples of cultural figures who, as early as the 19th century, sought to foster Polish-Ukrainian cooperation, such as P. Kulish and T. Shevchenko, among others. He also mentioned the Polish pacification of Volhynia in the 18th century, for which King Stanisław August accused the arbitrary nobility of carrying out mass executions of peasants. Łobodowski argued that peasant uprisings and rebellions were provoked by the existing unjust social system and systematic oppression, rather than by the hatred of poor peasants toward their lords merely because they were ethnically Polish.

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<sup>77</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Dyskusje polsko-ukraińskie...*, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości*, "Kultura," 1952, nos. 2–3, p. 14.

The writer provided numerous examples of outright lies and the falsification of historical facts employed by his opponents, such as W. Studnicki and E. Giertych, among others, to deny the existence of the Ukrainian people and their desire for independence. He recalled past events in which the Polish nation and other European peoples also failed to defend their freedom, emphasizing that such challenges were part of every nation's history. Łobodowski argued that nationalist Polish publicists cynically falsified historical facts to serve their own ideological purposes and, at times, even promoted pro-Russian theses.

Comparing the outcomes of the First and Second World Wars, Łobodowski noted that the results of the Riga Agreement, signed between the Poles and the Bolsheviks, represented a betrayal of Ukrainian interests, just as the Yalta Agreement after the Second World War became a betrayal of Polish interests.

The publicist cited numerous examples of the persecution and discrimination of Ukrainians in Poland: pacifications, revindications, sabotage (repeatedly mentioned in his earlier articles), the harassment of Voivode H. Józewski, and false propaganda in the press. He referred not only to events in Volhynia but also in the Lviv region. In particular, he wrote about the death of the Ukrainian activist Olha Basarab, who was tortured by the Polish police in 1924 while imprisoned in Lviv. Summarizing his analysis of the interwar period, Łobodowski noted:

The misfortune of prewar Poland lay chiefly in the fact that Piłsudski's camp failed to create a coherent ideology and never became a political party in the true sense of the word. Once the former Legion "eaglets" began to grow fat, there remained only clique politics; from immature ideological eggs emerged nothing but anniversary slogans, and from the leaves falling off the wreath of a withering legend one could brew no more than a thin soup of personal careerism. The Polish Ukrainophile camp consisted of individuals rather than a movement. Some, like Hołówko and Wasilewski, departed forever. Others, like Łoś and Dunin-Borkowski, took up the pen less and less often. Still others, like Pruszyński, betrayed the cause; the rest floundered helplessly within imposed constraints and entangling networks. And now Giertych comes along and claims that it was precisely these "Ukrainophiles,"

supposedly offended by Ukrainian obstinacy, who invented the pacification, Bereza, the revindication campaign, and the burning of Orthodox churches.<sup>79</sup>

However, the publicist consistently sought to convince the Poles that, unlike Germany and Russia, Ukraine would always be Poland's ally, as its geopolitical position compelled it to adopt such a stance. Moreover, he believed that a few years of independence would give Ukrainians the strength and confidence needed to make them much harder to defeat.

Polish nationalist propaganda constantly frightened Poles with the specter of a German-Ukrainian alliance. Łobodowski responded with irony, noting that the Berlin-Moscow alliance had existed for two hundred years and posed a continual threat to Poland.<sup>80</sup>

The writer also engaged in polemics with representatives of the Ukrainian emigration. In particular, he did not deny that the events in Yanova Dolyna were preceded by terrorist actions carried out by Poles against Ukrainians in the Hrubieszów and Chełm regions between 1939 and 1941, conducted with the tacit support of the German occupiers. In the text, he also mentioned the little-known and almost undocumented negotiations between Ukrainians and Poles in 1942, which yielded no positive results. One likely reason was that the Polish side, even under occupation, was not prepared to recognize the Ukrainians' right to Volhynia and Galicia.

Polish and Ukrainian publicists who manipulated information and avoided objective assessments were labeled by Łobodowski as "seasonal" politicians – incapable of responsible action or strategic planning. He hoped that such individuals would never constitute a majority on either the Ukrainian or Polish side, as he believed that historically, Poles and Ukrainians were destined to cooperate in the future for their own security.

In the final sections of his extensive article, the writer provided a detailed analysis of Polish-Ukrainian relations from the earliest times

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p. 28.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p. 32.

up to the 20th century. He examined conflicts and cooperation, as well as shared and contradictory episodes in history, noting that all neighboring peoples experienced periods of coexistence alongside periods of confrontation. Turning to the interwar years, Łobodowski once again highlighted the flawed Polish national policy toward national minorities. Still, he also emphasized the significant cultural mission of the Poles, as Poland had long served as a conduit for Western cultural ideas into Ukrainian territories. He wrote:

Sin begets sin, yet three centuries of contact with Western culture – flowing not only through Poland, but mainly from it – were by no means fruitless. As Bohdan Lepky rightly observed in his essay on Ukrainian literature, Ukraine bequeathed to Poland vast treasures and brilliant minds, while Poland offered Ukraine ideas. Despite its imbalances and conflicts, this mutual exchange fostered a cultural dialogue that profoundly shaped the intellectual landscapes of both nations.<sup>81</sup>

Łobodowski placed greater blame for the deterioration of Polish-Ukrainian relations in the 1930s and 1940s on the Poles, who had their own state and authority but lacked the willingness to understand Ukrainians and meet them halfway, even on matters of everyday life. Moreover, the “Ukrainian-eater” hatred was fueled by the Polish nationalist press, led by the Kraków-based “*Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*” (“*Illustrated Daily Courier*”), which at the time had the largest circulation in Poland and was the most popular. This hatred, he noted, continued to grow.

With sadness and regret, Łobodowski observed that the Poles refused to recognize Ukrainians’ equal right to their own state, seeing them as inferior because they had no Copernicus or Chopin – an expression, he argued, of pride and disdain.

The writer also urged Ukrainians to critically examine their own past, the historical role of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and to compare its system of governance with the status of the Ukrainian people under Russian rule. He encouraged a critical assessment of

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

the interwar period and the Second Polish Republic, striving to see and understand events from the Polish perspective as well.

In polemics, each side typically selects arguments to its own advantage; however, Polish-Ukrainian relations must be considered by taking into account both positions and perspectives. "And while the extreme nationalists on both sides of the barricade yearn for a "rigid" border, though they cannot agree on it, I will persist in maintaining that true historical reconciliation will only be possible when accomplished facts are undone, the wrongs inflicted are redressed, and the crimes committed are atoned for,"<sup>82</sup> – Łobodowski believed.

The writer saw the path to understanding between Poles and Ukrainians as lying in an awareness of historical and geopolitical realities, rational dialogue, and a shared desire for future security. He was convinced that if territorial disputes could not be resolved, only a federal approach to administering the borderlands could provide a fair solution to the unresolved problems. For him, these issues needed to be addressed without the involvement of Russia and beyond its influence.

The publicist emphasized that both Poles and Ukrainians themselves must resolve all contentious issues, rather than waiting for a third party to act on their behalf.

Łobodowski argued that without overcoming all prejudices, resentments, and complexes, and without renouncing pride and disdain, which weighed heavily on both peoples and formed the psychological foundation of the problem, agreement would be impossible. He also highlighted the ethical dimension of Polish-Ukrainian relations, particularly during the period from 1939 to 1945. He emphasized that the stance of the majority of Polish publicists (such as J. Giertych, W. Studnicki, W. Wasutyński, and others) was unacceptable, as they placed responsibility for the crimes solely on Ukrainians, which he deemed a blatant lie.

The writer cited factual events demonstrating that the seeds of fratricidal war had already been sown during the interwar years. These tensions were later exacerbated by the occupation forces, whose actions on both sides led to conflicts in Chełm, Hrubieszów, Polissia, Volhynia, and Galicia, with the scale of violence increasing dramatically by 1943.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 51.

Łobodowski held the authorities responsible for these tragic events, particularly the Polish émigré government, which, in his view, instead of seeking understanding and alliance with Ukrainians, fought against the shadow of Piłsudski and even reformed the national anthem. Both the writer and the Polish military personnel with whom he retreated south in 1939 asserted that at the beginning of the war, it was still possible to seek understanding and resolve issues of the Polish-Ukrainian accord. However, there was neither the political will nor the desire to prevent the killings of civilians on both the Polish and Ukrainian sides.

Local conflicts in Volhynia often escalated beyond the control of the principal commanders, yet occurred with their tacit consent. In the article, the writer provides numerous specific examples of the killings of peaceful Ukrainian and Polish peasants, which he had learned of firsthand from witnesses. One death would trigger another, creating a chain of violent, bloody revenge that continued long after anyone could recall how it had begun. “What is the way out of this bloody cycle of hatred, which spawns nothing but tragedy? To argue endlessly over who struck first, who is more to blame, who shed more blood? Or perhaps to aspire to another kind of precedence – the precedence of the outstretched hand?”<sup>83</sup> – the publicist asked.

From his somber reflections arose another pressing question, which he directed to both Poles and Ukrainians: can those who aimed machine-gun fire at unarmed women and children truly call themselves Christians? “The vestibule of hell is paved with patriotic sentiment, yet heaven is reached only on the wings of lucid thought and deliberate action,”<sup>84</sup> – wrote J. Łobodowski.

What troubled him most, however, was that, seven years after the end of the war, the press continued to propagate Polish-Ukrainian hatred, at times even intensifying it. On both sides, many people remained unable to overcome old prejudices or change their views. Despite this, the writer believed that within the émigré community there would be individuals capable of looking bravely and realistically-

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p. 59.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 61.

ly toward the future, fully aware of the dangers once again looming over both nations.<sup>85</sup>

J. Łobodowski warned that time was relentlessly passing, and no one knew what storms awaited the two peoples in the future. He was convinced that little time remained for genuine dialogue, the pursuit of understanding, and the establishment of forms of coexistence. The writer was a realist, fully aware of the difficulties along the path he advocated. Yet he was sure that it had to be followed so that, with a sense of responsibility before God and his own nation, everything possible could be done to overcome mutual hatred. At the conclusion of the article, he wrote:

When there is no chance of victory, there always remains the pride that comes from the conviction that one defended one's idea even in a hopeless situation. "My struggle is my victory; let my defeat bear witness to my truth."

Quixotism? Perhaps... But the windmills against which the knight of La Mancha blunted his lance long ago crumbled to dust, while the monument to the errant madman still stands today in Madrid's Plaza de España. When I copy these final words out neatly, I will go and sit beside him on a bench and look at his foolishly inspired face. Perhaps he will advise me how to persuade Ukrainian "butchers" and Polish "pacifiers" to join a knightly order.<sup>86</sup>

At the end of his life, in 1986, J. Łobodowski gave an interview to Piotr Jęglinski and Jan Stepka, in which he summarized his many years of reflections on Polish-Ukrainian relations. Once again, the writer revisited historical facts, demonstrating that armed conflicts between Poles and Ukrainians had occurred frequently since the 17th century – a pattern also observed in the histories of many other peoples. Yet over time, these nations always returned to normal neighborly relations. He regarded the fact that the Polish-Ukrainian confrontation reemerged with even greater intensity during World War II as the result of utterly senseless policies toward Ukrainians in Poland before 1939.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

<sup>87</sup> *Rozmowa z Jozefem Łobodowskim* in: Józef Łobodowski, *Przeciw upiorom przeszłości...*, p. 565.

In the late 1980s, in one of his final interviews, when asked whether there had been pivotal moments in the past when the history of Polish-Ukrainian relations could have taken a different course, the writer replied:

The first critical moment came immediately after the Union of Lublin. All the Cossack uprisings preceding Khmelnytsky were merely foreshadowings of the catastrophe to come. This outcome could – and should – have been prevented, yet the Polish nobility remained politically blind. The second decisive moment occurred during the Northern War. On the Ukrainian side stood Mazepa; on the Polish side, Stanisław Leszczyński. Had Leszczyński been able to dispatch even a few thousand Polish cavalry to Poltava, Charles XII might have won the battle, and the course of history – not only of Poland, but of Europe and the entire world – would have been radically altered. Yet Mazepa received minimal support from the Ukrainian side, and the Zaporozhian Sich remained inactive – a suicidal error. After Poltava came the first destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich under Peter I, followed by its final annihilation under Catherine II. This litany of absurdities in Polish-Ukrainian politics could be extended further – but to what end? The futility of this policy persisted for four hundred years. The time has come for it to end.<sup>88</sup>

J. Łobodowski was never afraid to assess events critically: to call wrongs what they were, lies for what they were, and killings for crimes. He was not poisoned by nationalist hatred, for in his ethical code, the highest value was, above all, the human being, with national affiliation coming only afterward.

In both his literary works and journalism, Łobodowski wrote about the one true path for both nations – unity and cooperation – which he believed would bring peace and prosperity. He regarded the cause of fostering understanding between people as the most worthy mission of his life. The writer noted with regret that, unfortunately, his contemporaries did not heed his words, but he hoped that future generations would listen.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 580.

## AFTERWORD

Józef Łobodowski was a Polish writer and publicist who, through the power of his poetic word, the depth of his thought, and the force of his political argument, sought to change the world. A humanist, anti-communist, and Ukrainophile, he was throughout his life a tireless advocate for dialogue, cooperation, and understanding among nations.

In his work, he consistently stood at the crossroads of multiple national cultures, was fluent in several languages, and demonstrated profound sensitivity to and understanding of sociocultural processes. With a rich palette of artistic means, he engaged with the pressing questions of human existence.

He was a steadfast defender of European values, a devoted patriot of Poland, and a missionary for dialogue and cooperation. Ukraine held a special place in his creative endeavors. He considered himself an envoy for Polish-Ukrainian understanding and was described as a “builder of dialogue between the Polish and Ukrainian peoples.”<sup>1</sup> He devoted his entire life and a significant part of his creative work to this cause.

A poet of the elements, a fiery publicist, and an unparalleled translator – these are how literary critics and scholars of his work have evaluated the artist.

He quickly realized that the homeland of the world revolution was, in reality, a great prison for nations; consequently, he consistently defended the idea of a “Commonwealth of Many Nations.” Throughout his life, he upheld unchanging spiritual values, took responsibility for his writing, and shaped the creative direction of public discourse. He

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<sup>1</sup> Ludmiła Siryk, *Україна в житті та творчості Юзефа Лободовського* in: *Śladami pisarza. Józef Łobodowski w Polsce i w Hiszpanii*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2016, p. 79.

saw the prospects for the liberation of nations only in their purposeful unification and joint efforts.

Józef Łobodowski's ideas were far ahead of their time, and his thoughts continue to resonate as sharply and relevantly today as they did during his lifetime.

In his journalistic work, he advocated fair and objective assessments of both his own and others' mistakes, seeking opportunities in all endeavors, tolerance and compromise, and the rejection of hatred and contempt. He viewed his creative work primarily as a social mission.

The Polish researcher Jadwiga Sawicka called Łobodowski "the poet of the outstretched hand," emphasizing that his most valuable achievement was the dialogue he himself fostered with Ukraine.

Józef Łobodowski was always a great mediator and ambassador who – on the one hand – brought our nations closer to one another, and – on the other – revealed the most beautiful possible forms of Ukrainian culture to his fellow countrymen [...]. It would certainly not be an exaggeration to say that no other contemporary Pole has rendered greater service in carrying out this immense pioneering work than Łobodowski [...].

For us Ukrainians, he will remain forever a representative of the finest stratum of Polish society—one distinguished by a broad intellectual horizon and a clear vision of the future,<sup>2</sup>

– wrote Konstantin Zelenko, Chairman of the Ukrainian-Polish Society in London.

Through his literary and journalistic work, Józef Łobodowski contributed to the development of a system of European values grounded in understanding and cooperative partnership. With the depth of his political thought, he shaped the consciousness of ordinary citizens, affirming the importance of coexistence and the mutual exchange of diverse national cultures within a single multinational community.

He maintained a clear hierarchy of values, placing the human being at its center: freedom, a sense of dignity, responsibility for one's actions, and respect for others. In the paradigm of social relations, he

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<sup>2</sup> *Kalendarium życia Józefa Łobodowskiego* in : *Józef Łobodowski, tom 1: życie, twórczość, publicystyka, wspomnienia*, "Scriptores," 2009, no. 35, p. 79.

prized above all love and reverence for one's neighbor, sought historical truth, and emphasized the significance of historical memory, folk traditions, collective well-being, and the importance of equal opportunities.

From a geopolitical perspective, the writer advocated for the unification of European nations' efforts to ensure a common standard of security. He understood the complexities of Polish-Ukrainian relations and sought to convince both sides of the necessity of mutual concessions, respect, and rational decision-making. He called for sustained and diligent work in developing interethnic relations, taking responsibility for the future, forgiving past transgressions, and building an optimistic vision of cooperation on mutually beneficial grounds.

Through his literary and journalistic works, Łobodowski sought to shape his readers' social consciousness, guiding their thoughts and actions. His images, plots, motifs, and ideas were carefully crafted to cultivate tolerance, nobility, and mutual respect.



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The book presents the most important stages in the life of the renowned 20th-century Polish writer Józef Łobodowski and selected aspects of his journalistic work. It explores his views on the geopolitical situation in Europe on the eve of and after the Second World War. The publication outlines his main ideas concerning the future of Europe and its security, highlights his reflections on the principles of building interethnic and interstate relations, and examines Poland's place and role in European geopolitics, particularly in Eastern Europe.



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