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## **Personnel policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the period of formation of the foreign service of the Second Polish Republic – contract staff, statistical characteristics, political interference**

### **Introductory remarks**

It was a long way for the Polish state to regain independence. It is significant that before the rebirth of the Polish state in 1918, some unofficial efforts had been made in order to recognise Polish sovereignty<sup>1</sup>. It should be noted that the origins of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be traced back to the times of the Regency Council, in the Provisional Council of State, and later the Prime Minister's Office had the beginnings of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the form of the Department of Political Affairs (from 31 January 1918 – the Department of State), but on 26 October 1918, it formally became the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There were also more or less formal foreign representations of the Regency Council. The newly organised Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs had to deal with some problems related to the personnel policy in the period of the formation of the foreign service<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See more in J. Słyszewska, *The history of Polish diplomacy. The Supreme National Committee in the period of 1914–1918 and some unofficial efforts to recognize the Polish sovereignty*, „Studia Prawnoustrojowe” 2022, Vol. 58, pp. 505–512, DOI: 10.31648/sp.9283.

<sup>2</sup> According to subject related literature, the employees of the newly formed ‘headquarters’ and its branches were taken over by the authorities of the Second Polish Republic that was emerging under new circumstances. It should not be forgotten that the administration of the Second Polish Republic (including foreign affairs) did not arise out of nowhere in November 1918. See more in Z.J. Winnicki, *Rada Regencyjna Królestwa Polskiego i jej organy (1917–1918)*, Wrocław 2017, pp. 71 ff.

The present article is a part of wider research on the development and activities of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the interwar period. The main purpose of this article is to present some chosen aspects of the personnel policy (contract staff, statistical characteristics, political interference) performed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1918 to 1926. The network of foreign diplomatic and consular posts had been created, as well as the basic normative acts had been drafted up to 1926. Unfortunately, because the modest scope of this article does not allow for an exhaustive treatment of the subject, the present work is contributory in nature. Several questions regarding the development of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the interwar period remain to be addressed. Only several planes of the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are taken into closer consideration.

The main questions the present study aims to answer are: How did the process of employment of the contract staff develop? What was the number of Polish diplomats, and what was the gender ratio? Did political influence play a significant part in the employment policy? The work consists of three parts. The paper begins with a short description of the contract staff employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Then, statistical data of the personnel and identified political influences on the process of recruitment are taken into closer consideration. In this study, the historic-descriptive method of theoretical analysis and legal methods (including formal legal methods) were applied to address the research questions and to reach the conclusions.

Although the activities of the Polish foreign service in the interwar period have been the subject of rich scientific literature, a more systematic and theoretical analysis is required in order to fill some research gaps. As has been previously reported in subject-related articles, there is a considerable body of literature referring to the Polish diplomacy in the interwar period<sup>3</sup>. There are synthetic studies concerning a wide variety of activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' headquarters, diplomatic and consular staff, as well as diplomatic and consular posts<sup>4</sup>. Memoirs are particularly

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Słyszewska, *Personnel policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the period of formation of the foreign service of the Second Polish Republic – posts and official ranks, remuneration, dismissal of the staff*, „*Studia Prawnoustrojowe*” 2024, Vol. 66, p. 479, DOI: 10.31648/sp.10504; eadem, *Personnel policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the period of formation of the foreign service of the Second Polish Republic. Recruitment of the staff and requirements for candidates to work in the department*, „*Studia Prawnoustrojowe*” 2023, Vol. 62, pp. 460–461, DOI: 10.31648/sp.9283.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g. P. Długolecki, K. Szczepanik (eds.), *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych II Rzeczypospolitej. Organizacja, polityka, ministrowie*, Warsaw 2014; E.J. Pałyga, *Stosunki konsularne Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw 1970; P. Łossowski (ed.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, Vol. 4: 1918–1939, Warsaw 1995; P. Łossowski, *Dyplomacja Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej. Z dziejów polskiej służby zagranicznej*, Warsaw 1992; idem, *Dyplomacja polska 1918–1939*, Warsaw 2001; W. Skóra, *Służba konsularna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej. Organizacja, kadry i działalność*, Toruń 2006; idem, *Czy resort spraw zagranicznych II Rzeczypospolitej był zdominowany przez arystokrację i ziemiaństwo?*, [in:] R. Wapiński (ed.), *Polacy i sąsiedzi – dystanse i przenikanie kultur*, part 3, Gdańsk

valuable<sup>5</sup>. “Dziennik Ustaw RP”, “Dziennik Urzędowy MSZ RP”, and “Dziennik Praw Państwa Polskiego” are important published sources. In Archiwum Akt Nowych in Warsaw (the Archive of New Files in Warsaw, hereafter: AAN) we can find interesting subject-related documents. Such sets of files as “Kancelaria Cywilna Naczelnika Państwa”, “Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych 1918–1939”, “Komitet Narodowy Polski”, the sets of Polish diplomatic and consular representations, as well as “Akta Leona Wasilewskiego” (The files of Leon Wasilewski), and Archiwum Ignacego Paderewskiego (Ignacy Paderewski Archive) are of high importance while pondering the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## Contract staff

It should be taken into account that at the beginning of the development of the Polish foreign service, any systematic personnel policy. Recruitment for the head office, consular service, or diplomatic service was not separate. After their acceptance, the candidates were assigned to individual divisions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>6</sup>. Political connections and familiar circles were then significant<sup>7</sup>. Over time, certain criteria were developed, although favouritism was an everyday occurrence. The criteria for admission to work

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2002; idem, *Rekrutacja kadr do służby konsularnej w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1939)*, [in:] W. Hładkiewicz, M. Szerbiński (eds.), *Nadzieje, złudzenia, rzeczywistość. Studia z historii Polski XX wieku. Księga dedykowana profesorowi Tadeuszowi Wyrwie*, Gorzów Wielkopolski 2004; T.G. Jackowski, *W walce o polskość*, Kraków 1972; A. Wasilewski, *Polska Służba Konsularna 1918–1939 (akty prawne, organizacja, działalność)*, Toruń 2004; K. Szczepanik, *Dyplomacja Polski 1918–2005: struktury organizacyjne*, 2 edn., Warsaw 2005; P. Wandycz, *Aleksander Skrzyński – minister spraw zagranicznych II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw 2006; M. Gmurczyk-Wrońska, *Stanisław Patek w dyplomacji i polityce (1914–1939)*, Warsaw 2013.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. W.T. Drymmer, *Wspomnienia*, part 2–4, „Zeszyty Historyczne” 1974, Vol. 28–30; *Jana Drohojowskiego wspomnienia dyplomatyczne*, Kraków 1972; K. Morawski, *Wspólna droga z Rogierem Raczyńskim. Wspomnienia*, Poznań 1998; idem, *Tamten brzeg. Wspomnienia i szkice*, Warsaw 1996; idem, *Wczoraj: pogadanki o niepodległym dwudziestolecu*, London 1967; A. Wysocki, *Tajemnice dyplomatycznego sejfu*, ed. W. Jankowerny, Warsaw 1988; idem, *Na placówce dyplomatycznej w Sztokholmie 1924–1928. Wspomnienia*, ed. P. Jaworski, Toruń 2004; S. Schmitzek, *Drogi i bezdroża minionej epoki. Wspomnienia z lat pracy w MSZ (1920–1939)*, Warsaw 1976; J. Gawroński, *Dyplomatyczne wagary*, Warsaw 1965; idem, *Moja misja w Wiedniu*, Warsaw 1965; idem, *Wzdłuż mojej drogi. Sylwetki i wspomnienia*, Warsaw 1968; W. Günther, *Pióropusz i szpada. Wspomnienia ze służby zagranicznej*, Paris 1963.

<sup>6</sup> W. Skóra, *Rekrutacja kadr...*, s. 81; J. Słyszewska, *Personnel policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the period of formation of the foreign service of the Second Polish Republic. Recruitment of the staff...*, p. 466.

<sup>7</sup> J. Łaptos, *Dyplomaci II RP w świetle raportów Quai d’Orsay*, Warsaw 1993, p. 11; J. Słyszewska, *Polityka kadrowa Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w kształtowaniu się służby zagranicznej w II RP*, [in:] E. Hull, E. Sokalska (eds.), *Państwowość konstytucyjna XIX i XX wieku*, Olsztyn 2015, pp. 36–37.

in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were defined more precisely under the Act on the State Civil Service of 17 February 1922 (ustawa z dnia 17 lutego 1922 r. o państwowej służbie cywilnej)<sup>8</sup>, and they came into force on 1 April 1922. The act regulated the rules of access to the civil service, its organisation, functioning, and development, and it defined the rules for performing state tasks in a professional, reliable, impartial, and politically neutral manner<sup>9</sup>.

It is significant that not only employees with diplomatic or consular status were employed in the foreign service. The effectiveness of diplomatic and consular missions also depended on the administrative staff, which included secretaries, clerks, typists, accounting staff, and support staff for diplomatic and administrative personnel. Support staff included porters, chauffeurs, messengers, telephone operators, butlers, etc. This category of employees had no legal status. In the event of dismissal, after a one-month notice period, they received no benefits or pension. However, not every function mentioned above was reserved for the contract workers. Some blue-collar workers, messengers, and secretaries were employed on a full-time basis.

The contract officials were employed and dismissed by the head of the office. Initially, there was a certain degree of freedom – consulates received a specific budget from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was not allocated to any specified number of employees<sup>10</sup>. Their relationship with the state was regulated by private law contracts, signed with the head of the office, concluded according to a set template<sup>11</sup>. The practice was slightly different, as in some foreign offices, contract officials were employed without signing any contract, e.g. at the Consulate General in Berlin, during an inspection

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<sup>8</sup> Dz.U. RP 1922, No. 21, item 164. Amendments to the Act: Act of 28 July 1922 (Dz.U. RP 1922, No. 67, item 606); Act of 21 March 1924 (Dz.U. RP 1924, No. 29, item 286); Act of 31 March 1925 (Dz.U. RP 1925, No. 43, item 294). Before the Act of 1922, the provisions of the Rescript of the Regency Council of 20 June 1918, containing temporary service regulations for civil servants, had been applied in the matters of personnel policy (Dz. Pr. Król. Pol. 1918, No. 6, item 13, Tymczasowe przepisy służbowe dla urzędników państwowych [Temporary service regulations for public servants]).

<sup>9</sup> For more see in J. Słyszewska, *Personnel policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the period of formation of the foreign service of the Second Polish Republic. Recruitment of the staff...*, pp. 466–470.

<sup>10</sup> In November 1919, the Ministry agreed to make transfers within the budget of institutions and to transfer sums intended as the salary of the permanent office staff to the salary of the contract staff, if it was necessary. This was cost-effective, as the salary of the contract employees had been significantly lower than that of the permanent employees, and the head of offices were able to employ a larger amount of the staff. See Okólnik No. 202 z dnia 17 listopada 1919 r. Pobory urzędników kontraktowych [Circular of 17 November 1919 on the salary of contract officials] (Dz. Urz. MSZ 1920, No. 1, item 17).

<sup>11</sup> Okólnik z dnia 7 lutego 1924 r. w sprawie zawierania umów z pracownikami kontraktowymi w podległych MSZ urzędach za granicą [Circular of 7 February 1924 on concluding contracts with contract employees in offices abroad subordinate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] (Dz. Urz. MSZ 1924, No. 2, item 16).

carried out on 14 February 1924, based on a review of the personnel files of contract staff, it was found that it had been rare to find a contract with an employed person in the files, and none of the officials whose files were reviewed had taken the oath of office<sup>12</sup>. In 1925, the freedom of the head of diplomatic missions to employ the contract staff was restricted – the contracts were valid only after the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>13</sup>. The restriction was introduced to prevent the employment of family members and friends in diplomatic missions, and it also provided an overview of the employment status of contract officials in the diplomatic missions.

### Statistical characteristics

As far as the number of full-time employees is concerned, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was one of the smallest ministries in Poland. In January 1919, 253 full-time officials were employed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This number included the ministry's management, the heads of individual organisational units, the substantive staff, and the office personnel<sup>14</sup>. The first data on the number of staff at foreign missions' dates to 1 January 1920 (it does not reflect the actual number of employees in the entire ministry but only full-time employees of the foreign missions, excluding headquarters employees and contract employees)<sup>15</sup>.

The number of full-time employees in the foreign service had been steadily increasing. In 1921, the Ministry employed a total of 632 full-time officials, including 153 officials employed at foreign diplomatic missions, and 185 in the foreign consular service. The peak in the number of full-time staff was in 1923. At that time, the Ministry employed 730 full-time employees (including 168 at diplomatic missions and 252 at consular missions). In the following years, mainly due to austerity measures, there were some staff reductions: in 1924, a total of 600 employed officials, and 605 in 1925<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> AAN, MSZ, sygn. 11773, k. 71. Raport dr. Wacława Gawrońskiego, zastępcy Naczelnika Wydziału K.III. Departamentu Konsularnego MSZ, dla Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych z 29 lutego 1924 r.

<sup>13</sup> Okólnik MSZ No. 95 z 30 maja 1925 r. w sprawie umów zawieranych z pracownikami kontraktowymi w podległych MSZ urzędach zagranicznych [Circular No. 95 of 30 May 1925 on contracts concluded with contract employees in foreign offices subordinate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] (Dz.Urz. MSZ 1925, No. 4, item 42).

<sup>14</sup> J. Sibora, *Narodziny polskiej dyplomacji u progu niepodległości*, Warsaw 1998, pp. 260, 328–338.

<sup>15</sup> Dz. Urz. MSZ 1920, No 1, pp. 33–43.

<sup>16</sup> The data based on: Dz. Urz. MSZ 1920, No. 1; AAN, MSZ, sygn. 274, k. 208. Polska sieć placówek dyplomatycznych, stan z dnia 1 września 1921 r.; Spis urzędników Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych według stanu z dnia 1 marca 1923 r. (Dz. Urz. MSZ 1923, No. 6, item 72); W. Skóra, *Służba konsularna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej...*, p. 238; *Prowizoryczne zestawienie przychodów*

As for gender, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was undoubtedly a male-dominated department. In the interwar period, it was common situation – lack of women in senior positions, both at headquarters and in the foreign offices<sup>17</sup>. Work in the foreign service was usually done by men. Women were generally employed in the lower, support positions. They were most often secretaries, stenographers, translators, and clerks. If they were full-time civil servants, they usually held the lowest ranks (from X to VIII). For example, Dr Irena Lerczyńska, employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1919, worked at the Polish Delegation and later at the consulate in Geneva. Despite her high qualifications and long service in the ministry, she was a contract employee<sup>18</sup>.

The higher demand for office work meant that the highest number of women was employed in headquarters and consular offices, and the lowest – in diplomatic missions. There were many problems with the employment of women in missions located in exotic countries, mainly in the East. For example, in Turkey, women were treated by the locals exclusively as wives or concubines. For this reason, the female staff of the mission in Ankara lived as if in a convent. After several awkward situations, the embassy secretary has never left the embassy alone (as it had been previously warned, the solo outings could give the impression of seeking adventure and cast a bad light on the embassy)<sup>19</sup>.

Comparing the age of the Polish diplomats who were appointed to foreign posts for the first time, the youngest was 28, and the oldest was 68<sup>20</sup>. The youngest was Cezary Pruszyński (born on 2 May 1890 in Żytomierz). He had been working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1918 (previously he had been a representative of the Regency Council to Hetman Skoropadski). On 17 December 1918, he was appointed *chargé d'affaires* in Belgrade, then he was a member of a special mission and an expert of the Polish delegation to the peace conference in Paris. From June 1919 to 1921, he served as an envoy in Norway, and then since 1922 to 1924 as an envoy in Brazil. Aleksander Ładoś (born on 27 December 1891 in Lviv) was slightly older. He was a collaborator of the Polish Press Agency in Lausanne, and since 1919, he

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*i wydatków budżetowych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej za 1921 rok oraz zestawienie ilości pracowników we władzach, urzędach i przedsiębiorstwach państwowych za styczeń i grudzień 1921 roku i za styczeń i grudzień 1922 roku*, Warsaw 1923; *Preliminarz budżetowy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na rok 1922. Przedłożenie rządowe. Ustawa skarbowa za czas od 1 stycznia do 31 grudnia 1922*, Warsaw 1922; *Funkcjonariusze państwowej Służby cywilnej. Wyniki spisu ze stycznia 1923 r.*, Warsaw 1925.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. E.J. Pałyga, op. cit., p. 61, ref. No. 2.

<sup>18</sup> W. Skóra, *Służba konsularna...*, p. 373.

<sup>19</sup> W. Günther, op. cit., p. 82

<sup>20</sup> B. Grzełowski, *Posłowie i ambasadorzy II RP w latach 1919–1945*, „Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny” 2005, Vol. 5, No. 4, p. 123.



was the head of the Press Department, and the head of the Central Europe Department (1922) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the period of 1920–1921, he was a secretary of the Polish delegation to the negotiations with the Soviet Russia in Minsk and Riga, and since October 1923, he was an envoy in Riga. The oldest diplomat was Erazm Piltz (born on 3 August 1851 in Warsaw) – a member of the Polish National Committee in Paris, since June 1919 – the ambassador in Belgrade, in February 1920 he was appointed ambassador in Prague (he did not take up the post). On 6 April 1920, the Polish government sent him on a special mission to Paris<sup>21</sup>. During the term of Minister E. Sapieha, he served as a political director with the rank of a deputy minister<sup>22</sup>. In autumn 1922, he was appointed advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (although in his memoirs, Stanisław Schmitzek did not recall whether his advice had been ever sought)<sup>23</sup>.

### Political influence on the personnel policy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Unfortunately, political influence often played a significant part in filling senior positions and promotions<sup>24</sup>. This is evidenced by the words of Kajetan Morawski: “(...) personnel matters were subject to constant interference of clubs, and even individual members of parliament. Some attempts were made to impose a party key on the Ministry while filling positions. It was examined whether the ruling party had enough supporters in individual departments or divisions, and pressure was exerted to promote this or that official, perceiving him as a socialist, a member of the People’s Party or the National Democracy. And whole this pressure from the parties was not exerted behind the scenes or indirectly but quite openly (...)”<sup>25</sup> [trans. J.S.].

<sup>21</sup> J. Łaptos, *Dyplomaci II RP...*, doc. No 48, p. 84.

<sup>22</sup> W. Günther, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>23</sup> S. Schmitzek, op. cit., pp. 54–55.

<sup>24</sup> The following individuals had no party connections: the priest Kazimierz Lubomirski, a talented *businessman*, who was appointed ambassador to Washington, as it was expected that he would secure a loan for Poland from the United States – P. Wandycz, *MSZ w okresie międzywojennym: odpowiedzi na ankietę*, „Zeszyty Historyczne” 1976, Vol. 38, p. 127; the priest Eustachy Sapieha – ambassador in London, professor Józef Wierusz-Kowalski – ambassador to the Vatican, previously a lecturer in Freiburg, and well connected in Catholic circles.

<sup>25</sup> *Z pierwszych lat Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych*, „Przegląd Współczesny” 1932, Vol. XL, No. 119, pp. 312–313. Thanks to the protection of the People’s Party, Józef Okołowicz was appointed Consul General in Brazil on 14 June 1919 (the appointment decree was signed on that day by the Head of State). Ignacy Paderewski revoked this appointment. An open letter was then sent to him. The pressure on the Prime Minister was successful – although Okołowicz did not receive the previously proposed position, he was appointed Consul General in Montreal – AAN,

Initially, the higher positions were entrusted to the people of Piłsudski or those who had his approval<sup>26</sup>. At the ministry, left-wing influence was concentrated in the Eastern Department (Roman Knoll, Juliusz Łukasiewicz, Mirosław Arciszewski)<sup>27</sup>. In turn, in the initial phase of their creation, the branches were staffed with people associated with the Polish National Committee (Komitet Narodowy Polski). The committee either nominated its own protégés or accepted candidates proposed by the Warsaw government<sup>28</sup>.

Józef Piłsudski, as Jan Gawroński writes in his memoirs, to have greater control over the foreign missions and diplomats, tried to 'put his own man' in every foreign representation<sup>29</sup>. It was even agreed that in the missions where the leadership was held by a 'right-wing man', a 'left-wing man' would have been appointed as first counsellor, and vice versa<sup>30</sup>. For example, in the embassy in Rome, where Konstanty Skirmunt served as ambassador, Władysław Baranowski was appointed secretary; Michał Sokolnicki and Tadeusz Halpert, both supporters of Piłsudski, were assigned to the embassy in London; and Anatol Mühlstein was assigned to Brussels (where Władysław Sobański served as an ambassador).

The undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Władysław Skrzyński – was a proponent of such a personnel policy. Its main objective was to neutralise and depoliticise the foreign service in the interests of the young state, but it did not promote any unified foreign policy. There was mutual animosity and suspicion, and professional criteria were replaced by political criteria in the appointment of personnel. It is appropriate to agree

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Archiwum Paderewskiego, sygn. 825, k. 36–40, Pismo J. Okołowicza do Paderewskiego z 25 lipca 1919 r.; List otwarty do premiera Paderewskiego z 29 lipca 1919 r.)

<sup>26</sup> In a letter from Leon Wasilewski to Prime Minister Ignacy Paderewski it is written that: „I am enclosing a list of left-wing candidates for diplomatic posts, revised in accordance with our recent conversation – Wasilewski” (the appendix contained some proposals for the appointment of specific individuals to selected posts, e.g. Stanisław Patka was suggested as ambassador to Washington, possibly Prague or Tokyo, or counsellor in Paris; W. Baranowski as ambassador to Switzerland, possibly ambassador or counsellor in Rome; Sokolnicki as ambassador in London or Romania; Czesław Pruszyński as ambassador in Copenhagen – AAN, Archiwum Paderewskiego, sygn. 825, k. 7–8, Pismo L. Wasilewskiego do premiera Paderewskiego z 8 maja 1918 r.

<sup>27</sup> P. Wandycz, *MSZ w okresie międzywojennym...*, p. 127.

<sup>28</sup> In January 1919, Prime Minister Ignacy Paderewski appointed Dr Zygmunt Rawita-Gawroński as consul and trade agent in Belgium. The Polish ambassador in Brussels – Władysław Sobański (an KNP activist) – refused to apply to the Belgian authorities for exequatur for the consul, and then he requested that the government's candidate's nomination to be withdrawn. He proposed Franciszek Wrotnowski, the former head of the KNP Civil Affairs Office in Brussels, to be appointed to the position. The proposal was accepted and Wrotnowski was appointed head of the Consular Department at the embassy in Brussels – W. Skóra, *Służba konsularna...*, p. 292).

<sup>29</sup> J. Gawroński, *Dyplomatyczne wagi...*, p. 37.

<sup>30</sup> AAN, Adiutantura Belwederu, sygn. 2, k. 32, Odpis pisma S. Patka, M. Sokolnickiego, L. Wasilewskiego i Wł. Baranowskiego do J. Piłsudskiego z 2 maja 1919 r.



with the opinion of Jan Gawroński that such an arrangement was beneficial “wherever tact and good manners allowed two very different horses to pull the same cart equally, but it led to hellish situations where petty intrigue dominated patriotism”<sup>31</sup> [trans. J.S.].

The biggest problem was the protection in parliamentary parties and factions, which were keen to place ‘their people’ in the foreign service. According to Maciej Rataj, the influence of the parties on the personnel policy meant that “officials, both at headquarters and in our embassies, considered themselves ambassadors of the parties, in which they sought support and inspiration, and to which they provided the most confidential information (...) In the departments and divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in foreign missions, based on a tacit agreement, one ‘right-winger’, a trusted member of the former National Committee, and one ‘left-winger’, a Belweder supporter, were appointed, who kept an eye on each other and outdid each other in their zeal to leak confidential information to the outside world”<sup>32</sup> [trans. J.S.] – in this way, any confidential information that entered or left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not a secret. In addition, cost-cutting measures in personnel policy and the inability to create additional positions often meant that valuable employees were removed from service to make room for the others<sup>33</sup>.

Some major personnel changes were made at the turn of 1923/24, after National Democrats had come to power. Minister Seyda handed over personnel matters to the new deputy director of the Administrative Department, Stanisław Zieliński, an active member of the National Democracy, who immediately began purging institutions of elements considered ‘inappropriate for the new national course’<sup>34</sup>. This was followed by what Andrzej Skrzypek described as an ‘intensive brain drain’ in the ministry. “A purge was carried out in all departments and institutions, removing officials who were favourable to Marshal Piłsudski”<sup>35</sup> and of Jewish nationality<sup>36</sup>. Under the pretext of cost-cutting measures, officials, who had already earned the right to retirement, were dismissed or transferred to the state of availability<sup>37</sup>. According to some, the ‘policy not of the state, but of the party’ prevailed in the Ministry

<sup>31</sup> J. Gawroński, *Dyplomatyczne wagary...*, p. 37.

<sup>32</sup> M. Rataj, *Pamiętniki 1918–1927*, Warsaw 1965, p. 81.

<sup>33</sup> P. Łossowski, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>34</sup> S. Schimitzek, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>35</sup> A. Skrzypek, *Związek Bałtycki, Litwa, Łotwa, Estonia i Finlandia w polityce Polski i ZSRR w latach 1919–1925*, Warsaw 1972, p. 213.

<sup>36</sup> P. Wandycz, *MSZ w okresie...*, p. 128.

<sup>37</sup> J. Łaptos, *Organizacja, personel i funkcjonowanie polskiego Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w latach 1918–1939*, [in:] M. Nowak-Kielbikowa, H. Bułhak, Z. Wójcik (eds.), *Z dziejów polityki i dyplomacji polskiej. Studia poświęcone pamięci Edwarda hr. Raczyńskiego Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na wychodźstwie*, Warsaw 1994, p. 335.

of Foreign Affairs at that time. Mass purges and expulsions then began<sup>38</sup>. A lot of people were quickly dismissed<sup>39</sup>.

Over time, many officials dismissed during Seyda's tenure returned to the ministry (e.g. Władysław Baranowski, who was dismissed from his position as a Polish representative in Sofia, appealed against the ministry's decision in the Administrative Court. He won the case and was reinstated to his post<sup>40</sup>. In many of the appointments made at that time, positions were entrusted to completely incompetent people. Jan Gawroński sets the example of Stanisław Koźmiński, writing an unflattering opinion about him: "(...) he made his political career on the local machinations of the National Democracy, which, having come to power, rewarded him with an unexpected and undeserved promotion to the complicated position of a Polish representative in the Netherlands"<sup>41</sup> [trans. J.S.].

The further reductions and personnel changes took place at the turn of 1925 and 1926. In February 1926, Stanisław Kozicki, a publicist of National Democracy and long-time editor of "Gazeta Warszawska", was appointed a Polish representative in Italy. His predecessor, August Zaleski, a supporter of Piłsudski who "at that time was a persona grata in the ministry"<sup>42</sup> [trans. J.S.] was offered a distant, insignificant position in Polish politics as ambassador in Tokyo. According to August Zaleski, Aleksander Skrzyński (Minister of Foreign Affairs) did this to support National Democracy in forming the cabinet (the National Democracy justified the demand to have its own ambassador in Italy to learn about the organisation of fascism)<sup>43</sup>. Kozicki had no diplomatic experience – according to some diplomats, he felt insecure and uncomfortable at the post, contenting himself with analysing the phenomena around him, which was fitting for a journalist but not a diplomat, and "it was not a happy transaction either for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or for Ambassador Kozicki"<sup>44</sup>. Significantly, Kazimierz Świtalski called the appointment of Kozicki as Polish envoy to the Italian government 'indecent'. He quoted Piłsudski's opinion that "a person, who, for some reason, is impressed by the country to which he is accredited, may be a poor representative of Poland. He will unwittingly absorb a foreign mentality, foreign ways of thinking, and, considering someone else's point of view to be

<sup>38</sup> The personnel policy of Stanisław Zieliński was sharply criticised in „Kurier Polski”, see, e.g. *Nienawistna czwórka*, „Kurier Polski”, 7 April 1924, Vol. 97.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. A. Skrzypek, op. cit., p. 214; B. Grzełowski, op. cit., p. 124; S. Schimitzek, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>40</sup> P. Wandycz, *MSZ w okresie...*, p. 128

<sup>41</sup> J. Gawroński, *Dyplomatyczne wagary...*, p. 104.

<sup>42</sup> W. Jędrzejewicz, *Wspomnienia*, Wrocław 1993, p. 147.

<sup>43</sup> P. Wandycz, *Z Piłsudskim i Sikorskim. August Zaleski – minister spraw zagranicznych w latach 1926–1932 i 1939–1941*, Warsaw 1999, p. 32.

<sup>44</sup> W. Günther, op. cit., p. 85.

correct, he may fail to notice the incompatibility with our interests”<sup>45</sup> [trans. J.S.].

## Concluding remarks

It should be taken into closer consideration that the assessment of the policy of human resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its early years is difficult because of the staff turnover, frequent changes of ministers, and constant reorganisation of the structure. Personnel changes made under the influence of political groups without regard to professional criteria cannot be perceived positively.

In 1925, in an internal memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an unknown author (probably Tadeusz Romer) described the situation in the Polish foreign ministry as follows: “Polish foreign policy has had no clear direction; it has been a matter of dealing with issues on a case-by-case basis, depending on the circumstances, with varying degrees of success. Our foreign policy lacked clearly formulated principles, consistency, and continuity. Foreign ministers have changed almost every six months, and they were appointed to this position not exactly based on the state policy, but more often, based on their party affiliations. This has a destructive effect not only on the line of our foreign policy and its strength, but it also disrupts the apparatus itself, i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, due to the fluidity of its composition and constant personnel changes made under various external influences” [trans. J.S.]<sup>46</sup>.

Similar observations referring to the personnel policy of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs were conveyed in reports to the Quai d’Orsay by French diplomats accredited in Warsaw. They usually reported critical comments. They blamed the authorities, accusing them of being unable to detach themselves from party criteria and personal arrangements concerning the recruitment of positions<sup>47</sup>.

In conclusion, after the May Coup in 1926, contrary to the fears of some officials of the Foreign Ministry, no major purges were carried out in the ministry. Even those who condemned the Coup kept their positions<sup>48</sup>. However, Józef Łaptos expresses a different view, giving examples of dismissals from posts of people associated with National Democracy or the People’s Party<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> K. Świtalski, [in:] A. Garlicki, R. Świętek (eds.), *Diariusz 1919–1935*, Warsaw 1992.

<sup>46</sup> AAN, MSZ, sygn. 190a, k. 12.

<sup>47</sup> M. Pasztor, *Polskie Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych z francuskiej perspektywy (1924–1939)*, „Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej” 2000, Vol. XXXV, p. 194.

<sup>48</sup> S. Schimitzek, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>49</sup> J. Łaptos, *Organizacja, personel i funkcjonowanie...*, p. 339.

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## Summary

### **Personnel policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the period of formation of the foreign service of the Second Polish Republic – contract staff, statistical characteristics, political interference**

**Keywords:** diplomatic law, foreign politics, personnel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic missions, contract staff.

The main purpose of this article is to present some chosen aspects of the personnel policy (contract staff, statistical characteristics, and political interference) performed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1918 to 1926. The network of foreign diplomatic and consular posts had been created, as well as the basic normative acts had been drafted up to 1926. The assessment of the policy of human resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its early years is difficult because of the staff turnover, frequent changes of ministers, and constant reorganisation of the structure. Personnel changes made under the influence of political groups without regard to professional criteria cannot be perceived positively.

## Streszczenie

### **Polityka kadrowa MSZ w okresie kształtowania się służby zagranicznej II RP – personel kontraktowy, charakterystyka statystyczna, ingerencje polityczne**

**Słowa kluczowe:** prawo dyplomatyczne, polityka zagraniczna, kadry, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, placówki dyplomatyczne, personel kontraktowy.

Głównym celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie wybranych aspektów polityki kadrowej (pracownicy kontraktowi, charakterystyka statystyczna, wpływy polityczne) realizowanej przez Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych w latach 1918–1926. Do 1926 r. utworzono sieć zagranicznych placówek dyplomatycznych i konsularnych oraz opracowano podstawowe akty normatywne. Ocena polityki kadrowej Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w początkowym okresie jego działalności jest trudna ze względu na rotację personelu, częste zmiany ministrów i ciągłą reorganizację struktury. Zmiany kadrowe dokonywane pod wpływem grup politycznych, bez uwzględnienia kryteriów zawodowych, nie mogą być postrzegane pozytywnie.