ACTA HISTORICA
UNIVERSITATIS KLAIPEDENSIS

BALANCE OF POWER OR PRINCIPLE OF NATIONALITY? THE EVOLUTION OF FRENCH PLANS TOWARDS EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE DURING THE WAR

Isabelle Davion

Abstract
In August 1914, France had already defined a pattern of war aims which would be shaped and amended during the next four years. Regarding East-Central Europe, two approaches present themselves to the French policy-makers: the classic system of alliances to maintain the balance of power, and the new internationalist doctrine implying the priority application of the principle of nationality. Both these concepts reacted to the geopolitical evolutions which occurred during the Great War. The article analyses these evolutions of the French concept of a 'world order' in East-Central Europe between 1914 and 1918 primarily through an examination of the case of Poland.
Key words: First World War, security policy, alliances, self-determination, war aims, successor states.

Anotacija
1914 m. rugpjūčio mėn. Prancūzija buvo sumodeliavusi karo tikslus, kurie toliau formuosis ir bus taisomi per vėlesnius ketverius metus. Prancūzijos politikai turėjo dvi pagrindines prieigas dėl Vidurio Rytų Europos, kurių viena buvo klasikinė sąjungų sistema, siekiant palaikyti galių balansą, kita – nauja internacionalinė doktrina, implikavusi nacionalinio principo pirmenybinį taikymą. Abi šios koncepcijos plėtojosi reaguodamos į geopolitinius pokyčius, vykusius Didžiojo karo metais. Straipsnyje analizuojami šie Prancūzijos „pasaulio tvarkos" sampratos pokyčiai Vidurio Rytų Europoje 1914–1918 m., daugiausia aptariant lenkiškąją bylą.
Pagrindiniai žodžiai: Pirmasis pasaulinis karas, saugumo politika, sąjungos, apsisprendimo teisė, karo tikslai, valstybės įpėdinės.

Isabelle Davion, PhD, lecturer (maître de conférences), Université de Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV), U. F. R. d'Histoire, 1, rue Victor-Cousin F-75 005, Paris, France. Email: isabelle.davion@paris-sorbonne.fr.

Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis XXXI, 2015, 32–45. ISSN 1392-4095 (Print), ISSN 2351-6526 (Online)
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15181/ahuk.v31i0.1198

The balance of power relates to traditional European practices of diplomacy and security, in order to assure stability, that is to say, a state of no-war. But emerging all through the 19th century as what Pierre Renouvin called a *force profonde* (the 'profound forces' of history), the principle of nationality, which had been neglected by the negotiators at the Congress of Vienna, had become the great European liberal cause. At the outbreak of war, the internationalist doctrines implying 'peaceful cooperation between states under a regime of international law [enforced] by international institutions',[1] had spread. In his inspiring recent book, Peter Jackson demonstrates that internationalist doctrines had more influence on France than is usually thought: during war, considering the huge sacrifice that is being made, a purpose has to be provided, which can be no less than a brand-new start, a promise to 'end all wars': this offers room for the 'internationalist doctrines of peace and security'. For Paris, the principle of nationality, reinforced by the discourse of self-determination, appears as an extension of the French Revolution's legacy and its proclamation of the people's right to govern themselves. Thus, the syncretism of both these approaches, a balance of power and a transformed international order, constitutes the cultural context of the French policy-making process. During war, its conceptions of security are developed in external interaction provided by the allies and their own strategies, as well as by the surfacing of new international norms. Regarding France's security, East-Central Europe constitutes the 'near abroad', implying commitment but also responsibilities: its reshaping has to be supervised, and therefore prepared before any victory, with political leaders who have emerged from national forces appearing propitious from the French perspective. All these stakes shape the French conception of a 'world order' in East-Central Europe, whose evolutions between 1914 and 1918 can be assessed through an examination of the case of Poland.

I

Among the French war aims, we have to distinguish between those which were set as early as August 1914 and would not change, and those which would emerge or progress during the war. The first may be described as 'structural aims':[2] these purposes were pre-established before the war, as a legacy of the 19th century; the war episodes therefore had little impact on them. The obvious example is the return of the Alsace-Moselle region. But this is also the case for the left bank of the Rhine, which France had possessed at the times of the Revolution and the Empire: secu-

1 JACKSON, P. *Beyond the Balance of Power. France and the Politics of National Security in the Era of the First World War*. Cambridge, New York, 2013, p. XI.

2 SOUTOU, G.-H. *La Grande illusion. La France et la Paix, 1914-1920*. Paris, 2015, p. 133.

ring the western German frontier was always an absolute priority, only deepened by the French feeling to bear most of the consequences of war. The reflections on Germany had begun in 1871, a period when, for instance, the question of its unity was first asked. Again at the end of 1916, the French senior administration started to look for legal breaches which would allow a challenge of the existence of 1870 Germany,[3] with the idea that the decentralisation of Germany would go together with its democratisation. How solid is German unity? The controversy about this question was initiated at the end of the 19th century in the press – the division of the German Empire was not a rare theme in nationalist or even rightist columns – and in well-informed circles, and two schools of thought emerged from the reports regularly received by the Quai d'Orsay.[4] To some observers, the persistence of dissolving idiosyncrasies was obvious, especially within the 'Catholic belt';[5] to others, the majority, the Prussians had to successfully unify and acculturate the different parts of the Reich.[6] In 1918, however, the dismemberment of Germany was not seriously considered any more: only partial or provisional solutions were proposed, such as the occupation of the Saar basin or the whole left bank of the Rhineland. This status would allow for the demilitarisation and the 'deprussification' of the territory, and match the French hidden agenda in the economic field, for the lack of coal was an important stake in the 'structural aims': it was clear that the military victory had to lead to a German economic defeat.[7]

This ambition complied with the Russian plans. On 13 September 1914, Sergei Sazonov had expressed his views to the French ambassador Maurice Paléologue and his British counterpart George Buchanan: the Allies' mutual goal had to be the destruction of the political and military power of Germany. In Sazonov's plan for territorial settlement, which strongly challenged the unity of the Reich, France would keep a part of the Rhineland and the Palatinate. The tsar himself supported this during an audience granted to Paléologue on 21 November, a discourse to which the French government reacted with 'interest as much as sympathy', as Théophile Delcassé, the minister for foreign affairs, said.[8] But the Russian wish to seize a part of Eastern Galicia, and also to widen the Kingdom of Poland, worried French circles, as we will see later.

---

3 Ibid, p. 137.

4 *Archives du Ministères français des Affaires étrangères* (*AMAE*, Archives of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs), Série : NS 5, Sous-série : Allemagne, Politique extérieure, Fédération germanique I, 1897-1901.

5 Rapport de la légation de Munich, 1er juillet 1897. Ibid.

6 Rapport du consulat de Stuttgart, 6 novembre 1901. Ibid.

7 BARIÉTY, J. Le rôle de la minette dans la sidérurgie allemande et la restructuration de la sidérurgie allemande après le Traité de Versailles. In *Centre de recherche Relations internationales de l'université de Metz. Travaux et Recherches*, 1972, nº III. Metz, 1973, p. 233-277.

8 President Poincaré was more cautious: SOUTOU, G.-H. *La Grande illusion*..., p. 96.

Another 'structural' war aim that the French government had long set, consisted of the progression of the 'republican ideology': the Great War was seen as a struggle between Civilisation, personified by France, the home of Human Rights, and the Germanic *Kultur*. This 'republican ideology' can have many avatars, and appeared under the notions of freedom, justice, and the rule of law: it therefore matched people's right to practise self-determination. From this point of view, France's concern with the Polish cause, for example, corresponded with both the defence of a French political vision on democratic legitimacy and the purpose of an alliance.

Following on from the balance of power as it was practised in the 19th century, the alliances were seen as mechanisms which would assure the security of the European continent. The project was then during the war to promote East European states which would cooperate with France when faced with an external, and mutual, threat. Meanwhile, there was a growing consensus that the international system had to be reformed to prevent another such conflict, that there had to be a new system which would emphasise the commitment to democracy and self-determination. Among France's war aims was its design to entrench a more favourable strategic balance in a new body of international treaties.[9] In order to do so, the primacy of a traditional balance of power gestated between 1914 and 1916, and the principle according to which the postwar order should not only be safe but also 'fair', would develop in the second half of the war: the rule of law was then to combine a transformed international order and an environment of security which would make cooperation possible. But before that, at the outbreak of the war, there was no room to promote the principle of nationalities, nor any precise plan about Eastern Europe for that matter; only strictly patriotic purposes were audible, as France was attacked by its 'traditional' enemy.

II

The second category of war aims could be named 'evolving aims', for they were shaped by the war experience, and reacted to the different changes in the international system. Within this category, the principle of nationality takes first place: it was defined long before the war as the radical contestation of plurinational empires, but a contestation which would rest on a historical and dynastic legitimacy. The emancipation of nationalities was thus to occur strictly within the framework and the values of the balance of power,[10] a position that was kept during the first phase of the war:[11]

[9] JACKSON, P. Op. cit., p. 81.

[10] *AMAE*, Série : Papiers d'Agents, Sous-série : Aristide Briand, vol. 17 : « conférence de la Paix », f. 103 : article du 24 octobre 1918.

[11] SOUTOU, G.-H. Les grandes puissances et la question des nationalités en Europe centrale et orientale pendant et après la Première Guerre mondiale : actualité du passé ? *Politique étrangère*, 1993, 58 anné, nº 3, p. 697-711.

the practical application of self-determination remained dependent on the interests of the Great Powers, as it used to be within the Concert of Europe, and on their vision of the postwar balance of power: '[their] conceptions in terms of nationalities and their geopolitical goals played a decisive part: they used national claims at least as much as they helped them.'[12]

As we saw, among the Entente states in 1914, the Russian Empire was the most proactive regarding the definition of war aims. As early as 14 August 1914, the Proclamation of Petrograd, announced by Grand Duke Nicholas, the commander-in-chief of the Russian armies, called for the Polish people to be organised as a 'self-government' who would be 'united under the sceptre of the Russian emperor'.[13] And it is well known that it was the tsarist government that took the initiative in discussions on postwar planning.[14] As a result, the 5 September 'Pact of London' established that no separate peace and agreement on peace conditions could occur before any negotiations. Sazonov's 'Thirteen Points' was the next step: the Russian foreign minister's document suggested rolling back the frontiers of the German and Habsburg empires, in Galicia, the province of Poznan, southern Silesia and East Prussia. Austria-Hungary would lose Polish, Ukrainian and South-Slav subjects, and Germany would be kept united but reduced both in the west and the east. In this case, German power would be dismantled, providing the basis for French security, but the principle of nationality would be no less than totally ignored. On the other side of the continent, the difficulty of the French position came from the fact that the existence of an Austro-Hungarian Empire in the middle of Europe was very precious to the government's views on security: the Dual Monarchy was seen as the pivot on which the balance of Europe was assured.[15] This vision began to change with the 'Peace Note' of the Central Powers, which was greeted with hostility by the Allies on 12 December 1916. This note showed without any doubt that Austro-Hungarian ambitions were directed against Russian power; in fact, it appeared later that their programme included annexing at least half of Serbia and the coastline of Montenegro, and uniting the Russian and Austrian parts of Poland into one semi-autonomous kingdom under Habsburg sovereignty.

---

12 SOUTOU, G.-H. *L'Europe de 1815 à nos jours*. Paris, 2007, p. 138.

13 SCHRAMM, T. La question polonaise au cours de la première guerre mondiale. In *Penser le système international XIX^e^–XXI^e^ siècles, autour de l'œuvre de Georges-Henri Soutou*. Dir. É. BUSSIÈRE, I. DAVION, O. FORCADE et al. Paris, 2013, p. 15-29.

14 In July 1914, Russian diplomacy was very present already: Sazonov supported the idea of direct talks with Austria-Hungary, a perspective which the Russian ambassadors in Paris and London had to talk their host governments into: OTTE, Th. G. *July Crisis, the World's Descent into War, Summer 1914*. Cambridge, 2014, p. 290.

15 DAVION, I. Conceptions et visions de l'Europe centrale et orientale, des Empires multinationaux à l'entre-deux-guerres. In *L'Europe de Versailles à Maastricht, Visions, moments et acteurs des projets européens*. Dir. N. BEAUPRÉ, C. MOINE. Versailles, 2007, p. 51-67.

It is generally acknowledged that the Allies' statement of 10 January 1917, in response to the Woodrow Wilson note published three weeks earlier, constituted an unreserved acceptance of the principle of nationality: in fact, the 'liberation of the Italians, Slavs, Romanians and Czechoslovakians from foreign domination' was a very ambiguous slogan. From the Allies' point of view, it was nothing but a gesture for their partisans from Austria-Hungary, especially the Czech National Committee. It did not automatically imply a destruction of the Dual Monarchy, but was fully compatible with its transformation into a federal state.[16] Neither the French nor the British authorities were, at this point, in favour of suppressing the empire.[17] And as for Prime Minister Aristide Briand, this was a short-term manoeuvre, aiming at worrying Vienna and thus weakening the adversaries.[18] 'Slavs' was indeed a very vague word, which rather referred to the Poles anyway ... the Yugoslavs, for instance, were not concerned here, because of the Italians' opposition. Therefore, all these statements were mostly intended to thwart German policy. But in the spring of 1917, the loss of its main prewar ally, Russia, changed the whole environment of France's security policy. Meanwhile, the involvement of the United States as a belligerent prepared the 'transnationalisation' of the postwar order: the American views on the international system to come had to be taken into consideration, and they could be different to the European perspective on many points regarding East-Central Europe. This combination of the Russian Revolution and American commitment reinforced the vision of a struggle between western democracy and eastern autocracy. As Peter Jackson puts it: 'Democratisation gradually became a central war aim of the Allied and Associated Powers over the course of 1917-18. This opened the way for discourse of self-determination to play an ever more influential role in shaping conceptions of the post-war order.'[19] The 'war for civilisation' had now crystallised into a struggle between an archaic understanding of the world (the Central Powers) and an open commitment for geopolitical reform (the Allies).

Thus in July 1917, the French government did not react when the 'Corfu Declaration' formalised the project for a Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; nine months later, it officially acknowledged the line adopted by the 'Congress of Oppressed Nationalities' in Rome: the delegates Edvard Beneš, Milan Rastislav Štefánik and Ante Trumbić, first of all managed to convince the Allies that a democratic and ententophile alternative to Austria-Hungary existed. Nevertheless, in the eyes of Western powers in general, and France in particular, the principle of nationality was not absolute but relative, and so could not apply indiscriminately. As a consequence, the

16 SOUTOU, G.-H. *L'Or et le Sang. Les buts de guerre économiques de la première guerre mondiale*. Paris, 1989, p. 397.
17 ROTHWELL, V. H. *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy 1914-1918*. Oxford, 1971, p. 79.
18 SUAREZ, G. *Briand*. T. IV : *Le pilote dans la tourmente, 1916-1918*. Paris, 1940, p. 114-115.
19 JACKSON, P. Op. cit.,p. 83.

big issue remained to establish how to discriminate … thus to answer the question: what is it that makes a nationality? Which human groups could be concerned with self-determination?[20] In France, the notion appeared during the Second Empire in order to allow a selection: the notion of 'big nationality', which targeted 'wide historical groups […] based on a well-established "general will"'.[21] This definition tended to mix with the notion of 'community of civilisation', with the idea, which was widespread at the end of the 19th century, that the emergence of a national consciousness implies a rather 'achieved level of civilisation' following certain criteria: the development of an education system, flourishing arts and culture, and the appearance of an intellectual class. With its multicentenarian history and its experience of statehood, Poland, for instance, was an ideal candidate; and because of their strategic interests, the Great Powers could only, at the beginning of the war, delay their recognition of the legitimacy of the Poles' claims. The events of 1917, and the armistices in Eastern Europe during the spring of 1918, helped to clarify the necessity to defend the principle of nationality, for it was clear the continent would never go back to the prewar Concert of Europe. But even so, as in 1918 the nationalities became an unavoidable fact, geopolitical considerations kept their importance for the French authorities, who included them in their policy: self-determination was strongly adjusted to the necessity of a 'Barrière de l'Est', a postwar alliance system in Eastern Europe against Bolshevism. And all hope was not yet lost of witnessing the reunion of a democratic, in its Western meaning, Russia, on which to build a stronger alliance. Only in the spring of 1918 did the Western Powers give up their dream to watch the Russian Revolution fail. Until then, no precise commitment about eastern frontiers could be made.

III

The foreign and security policy of France thus kept on following traditional practices, such as the balance of power, implying what Keith Neilson calls 'old-fashioned alliance diplomacy'.[22] This approach remained at the heart of all projects, but a growing number of Quai d'Orsay officials, belonging to a new generation, believed in a multilateral security system establishing the rule of law, and promoted greater economic cooperation. From this point of view, 'the need to enforce the rule of law in international society as one of France's major war aims'[23] entailed the building of a whole

[20] *AMAE*, Série : Papiers d'Agents, Sous-série : Stephen Pichon, vol. 6 : « Note sur les réglements de la paix du 23 décembre 1918 », f. 175.
[21] SOUTOU, G.-H. L'Europe de 1815…, p. 137.
[22] NEILSON K. *Britain, Soviet Russia and the Collapse of the Versailles Order*, *1919–1939*. Cambridge, 2006, p. 318.
[23] JACKSON, P. Op. cit., p. 9.

new architecture in East-Central Europe. Of course, as Peter Jackson demonstrates, traditional conceptions of security dominated the cultural reflexes of diplomats and many political leaders. But the internationalist principles which gained in popularity within the parliamentary and public spheres all through the war had an influence which can be detected in the prescriptions of the Charles Benoist committee.

In order to solve the contradictions existing between the various interests which were raised by the French policy, a confidential committee was organised in 1917, as it was in England (the Admiralty War Aims Committee) and in the United States (The Inquiry): the Charles Benoist Committee (or Comité d'études), named after the MP who was asked by Aristide Briand in January 1917 to set up a group of scholars from the fields of history and geography, was in charge of cogitating about war aims and territorial settlements.[24] Their heavy task was to anticipate the key problems and defuse them.[25] From the summer of 1916, the French government was involved in the clarification of its war aims: the missions led by the secretary Gaston Doumergue in Petrograd, and the diplomat Paul Cambon in London, illustrated this process. In Russia as in England, two directions were guaranteed for French diplomacy: a free hand for the northeastern frontier, and an occupation of the Rhineland providing 'serious guarantees' of security.[26] In France, discussions took place at the highest levels of the executive and the general staff, and priority was predictably enough given to issues of strict national security. But they also led to questioning an eventual rapprochement with Austria-Hungary, even a separate peace, in order to put pressure on Germany. Therefore, the future of the Dual Monarchy was still open, and so was the place given to the principle of nationality.

Among the Comité d'études, where the greatest French specialists gathered to summon historical, geographical and philological knowledge, the same debates were discussed. To prevent any conflict between Triple Entente members, who promised in September 1914 to agree previously to any peace treaty, Charles Benoist and his colleagues had to detect and explain the eventual sticking points. The reactions of the Third Republic's most prominent intellectuals are eloquent: the great historian of the Slav world Ernest Denis thus asserted during one session, that 'everyone is a little bit of an imperialist in Poland.'[27] But distinguishing between the east and the west of the future borders, he recognised even so, that 'our interest is not that [Poland] get on with Germany, but, accordingly with a long-term tradition, that it stays with us against the Germanic danger.' The Polish case brought out so many contra-

[24] BENOIST, Ch. *Souvenirs*. T. III : *1902-1933. Vie parlementaire, vie diplomatique*. Paris, 1934, p. 325.

[25] All its minutes have recently been published in extenso: *Les Experts français et les frontières d'Après-guerre. Les procès-verbaux du comité d'études 1917-1919*. Introduction et notes par I. DAVION. Paris. 2015.

[26] SOUTOU, G.-H. La France et les marches de l'Est, 1914-1919. In *Revue Historique*, 1978, t. CCLX, fasc. 2 (528), p. 341-388.

[27] Comité d'études, session du 3 décembre 1918. In *Les Experts français...*, p. 162.

dictions regarding postwar Europe that it could not be taken as a whole, but had to be divided into many questions, each bringing its own framework. For example, the issue of free access to the sea, a war aim of the Allies, carried the idea of responsibility in the face of history: as Danzig was economically underdeveloped, the historian Louis Eisenmann concluded that: 'We have the right to tell the Germans: "We are taking away from you a harbour that you lost interest in, of which you even prevented the development."'[28]

The Comité d'études archives also illustrate the French vision of the Baltic states, which were, at this time, not considered in themselves, but analysed through the prism of both the German threat and the Russian benefits: if the largest autonomy were granted to them, asked the experts, what would be the benefits to a federal, even confederal Russia?[29] In this case, as in others, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk clarified the situation, giving the Quai d'Orsay the latitude to support directly Baltic independence. But even then, the expedition by the Whites in Siberia during the summer of 1918 dictated prudence,[30] and Baltic issues still responded to contradictory aspects, such as keeping the Soviets away from the area, letting the White Russians organise themselves there, and supporting self-determination.

IV

As we know, the issue of Polish independence came up at a moment when this political cause seemed forgotten. This eclipse was partly due to the fact that during most of the 19th century, this was not a question which threatened peace, as did, for example, the Belgian question during the 1830s, or nationalism in the Balkans at the end of the 19th century. But it was also a consequence of France's redeployment of its priorities: the French authorities, who used to be the most important and progressive supporters of the Polish cause until 1870, withdrew into their own national struggle about the Alsace-Moselle region.[31] But as we saw, whereas the principle of nationality was not indiscriminately welcomed by French officials, it won unanimous if cautious support regarding the Polish situation. For historical as well as sentimen-

[28] Session du 14 mai 1919. In *Les Experts français...*, p. 231.
[29] Session du 22 janvier 1919. In *Les Experts français...*, p. 193-194.
[30] GUESLIN, J. La France face aux indépendances baltes, de Brest-Litovsk à la conférence de la Paix. *Relations Internationales*, 1998, n°°93, p. 53.
[31] Every link was far from being cut, though. In 1889, at the Second International Socialist Workers Congress of Paris, Józef Piłsudski met Alexandre Millerand and Aristide Briand: JEDRZEJEWICZ, W. *Jozef Pilsudski, une biographie*. Lausanne, 1986, p. 29.

tal and religious reasons, the question of the rebirth of the Polish nation arose as early as 1914.[32]

Some aspects of Sazonov's 'Thirteen Points' caused tension between the tsar and René Viviani's government: the demand for Constantinople and the Straits of course, but the Polish question especially. The suggestion of self-government under the Russian sceptre hurt the French elite's sympathy for the cause of Polish independence, even if, as we saw, these opinions remained discreet. Aware of this reticence, Russia warned the French government against any interference: Poland was a matter of Russian internal policy.[33] There had to be, however, some adjustment in French circles between Polish tropism and the necessity for a military alliance with Russia: the resurgence of an independent Poland could not be supported for as long as St Petersburg did not. Like others, the Polish nation would have to make its way between the interests of the Great Powers, by seizing opportunities and adapting to the context. But the will to convince Russia to grant the largest possible autonomy became more insistent in the autumn of 1916, when Germany and Austria proclaimed their plan for the reconstitution of Poland.

The geopolitical evolutions in Russia and among the Central Powers rushed things: in order to oppose Germany's projects for Polish volunteer troops, on 4 June 1917, the French president, Raymond Poincaré, signed a decree creating the Polish army in France. Three months later, Roman Dmowski's Polish National Committee was *de jure* acknowledged as an official authority by the Allies: by France in September, the United Kingdom and Italy in October, and the United States in December. Thanks to the Bolshevik Revolution and the fall of Austria-Hungary, the Polish cause had eventually fully met what had become the key principle among the Entente's war aims: the principle of nationality. The unmovable basis of the Western Powers' conception of a future Poland was thus recapitulated through the statement pronounced at the Versailles Inter-Allied Conference on 3 June 1918: 'A united and independent Polish state with free access to the sea constitutes one of the conditions of a strong and fair peace and of the rule of law in Europe.'[34] However, if the Poles' right to reestablish their own state was settled for good, the issue of its geographical boundaries caused huge difficulties, above the reluctance that the composition of the Polish National Committee had already aroused among Western policy-makers.[35] One of the main reasons why French circles were so cautious about independence was the wides-

[32] LAROCHE, J. *Au Quai d'Orsay avec Briand et Poincaré, 1913–1926*. Paris, 1957.

[33] The socialist minister for munitions Albert Thomas, during a mission to Petrograd in April 1916, commented ruefully on 'this Polish question which has troubled Franco-Russian relations for so long': JACKSON, P. Op. cit., p. 99.

[34] FILASIEWICZ, S. *La question polonaise pendant la guerre mondiale* (Recueil des Actes diplomatiques, Traités et Documents concernant la Pologne, t. 2). Paris, 1920, note nº 212.

[35] Erasm Piltz excepted. *AMAE*, Série : Z-Europe 1918-1940, Sous-série : Pologne, vol. 130, f. 1 : note pour le ministre du 26 novembre 1918.

pread suspicion about separatists in East-Central Europe: would they not be, in fact, allies of Germany? The rebirth of a nascent Polish state on enemy soil, the Regency Kingdom of Poland in November 1916, had not helped. Otherwise, the suspicions turned out to be strongest about the Ukrainian and Baltic leaders, even if Western leaders found it difficult to follow the political evolutions of the whole East-Central area: the Poles and Ukrainians, especially, happened to be very divided, and disparate information was provided about them by self-proclaimed experts. This complexity maintained Britain's circumspection towards Slav affairs in general, and Polish ones in particular: on 4 November 1918, as the Quai d'Orsay took advantage of Dmowski's departure for America, to have the Comité National Polonais officially recognised as a *de facto* government, the Foreign Office did not approve of the move.

Above the complexity of the political situation, the territorial stakes were first to shape the position of the Western Powers. This tricky issue of borders led them to be very cautious, even when, as in the Polish case, they had already acknowledged the political existence of the state: on 3 December 1917, the Inter-Allied Conference, following Wilson's slogan, advocated the formation of 'a united and independent Poland': a formulation which allowed the launch of a smokescreen over the precise definition of its territorial sovereignty … Everything still had to be interpreted, and as the application of the principle of nationality implies making nation and state coincide, it required rules in order to determine the frontiers, a very difficult task if ever. In his Fourteen Points, Wilson recommended drawing 'clear demarcation lines' between nationalities; he also spoke of the 'genuinely Polish' lands, an expression he had taken from David Lloyd George. Until the spring of 1918, the Allies thus produced a body of tactical promises about territorial questions, which did not give full approval and adoption of the Polish programme. The treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest changed this order in March 1918, for the notion of self-determination now helped to assure the balance of power by allowing the (re-)birth of states which, like Poland and Czechoslovakia, were going to counterbalance postwar Germany.[36] This priority given by France to the *alliance de revers* dictated its support for Polish territorial claims in the west: a support which was far from unconditional, but limited by the necessity to draw borders which responded to self-determination as much as ethnographic limits.[37] But these categories did not match the Polish programme, which referred to the 1772 situation, whose pluriethnic, multicultural Poland alarmed the Allies: the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth drew a line which included Vilna and its region, and Minsk. This programme was therefore far from corresponding to the 'genuinely Polish lands' mentioned by the Fourteen Points.

---

[36] *AMAE*, Série : A-Paix, Sous-série : 1914-1920, vol. 61, f. 14 : 20 décembre 1918.

[37] DAVION, I. *Mon voisin, cet ennemi. La politique de sécurité française face aux relations polono-tchécoslovaques entre 1919 et 1939* (Enjeux internationaux / International Issues, Vol. 4). Bruxelles et al., 2009.

Concluding Remarks

The French hesitations between the balance of power and the principle of nationality found their resolution during the spring of 1918, when both these strategies gathered in one single project of 'ententophile' successor-states. Their insertion into the new normative standards of 'Wilsonian diplomacy' would have to wait until the mid-1920s though. Only after the Ruhr failure in 1923 would France truly advocate collective security and its project of enmeshing the enemy, Germany or Russia, in a net of multilateral responsibilities and collective guarantees. But these plans would imply cooperation between the Successor States themselves, as well as between those actors and their former, but still potential, adversary.

List of previous studies quoted in the article

BARIÉTY, Jacques. Le rôle de la minette dans la sidérurgie allemande et la restructuration de la sidérurgie allemande après le Traité de Versailles. In *Centre de recherche Relations internationales de l'université de Metz. Travaux et Recherches*, 1972, nº III. Metz, 1973, p. 233-277.

DAVION, Isabelle. Conceptions et visions de l'Europe centrale et orientale, des Empires multinationaux à l'entre-deux-guerres. In *L'Europe de Versailles à Maastricht, Visions, moments et acteurs des projets européens*. Dir. Nicolas BEAUPRÉ, Caroline MOINE. Versailles, 2007, p. 51-67.

DAVION, Isabelle. *Mon voisin, cet ennemi. La politique de sécurité française face aux relations polono-tchécoslovaques entre 1919 et 1939* (Enjeux internationaux / International Issues, Vol. 4). Bruxelles et al., 2009.

GUESLIN, Julien. La France face aux indépendances baltes, de Brest-Litovsk à la conférence de la Paix. *Relations Internationales*, 1998, nºº93, p. 53-65.

JACKSON, Peter. *Beyond the Balance of Power. France and the Politics of National Security in the Era of the First World War*. Cambridge, New York, 2013.

JEDRZEJEWICZ, Wacław. *Jozef Pilsudski, une biographie*. Lausanne, 1986.

NEILSON Keith. *Britain, Soviet Russia and the Collapse of the Versailles Order, 1919–1939*. Cambridge, 2006.

OTTE, Thomas G. *July Crisis, the World's Descent into War, Summer 1914*. Cambridge, 2014.

ROTHWELL, Victor H. *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy 1914-1918*. Oxford, 1971.

SCHRAMM, Tomasz. La question polonaise au cours de la première guerre mondiale. In *Penser le système international XIXe–XXIe siècles, autour de l'œuvre de Georges-Henri Soutou*. Dir. Éric BUSSIÈRE, Isabelle DAVION, Olivier FORCADE, Stanislas JEANNESSON. Paris, 2013, p. 15-29.

SOUTOU, Georges-Henri. *L'Europe de 1815 à nos jours*. Paris, 2007.

SOUTOU, Georges-Henri. La France et les marches de l'Est, 1914-1919. In *Revue Historique*, 1978, t. CCLX, fasc. 2 (528), p. 341-388.

SOUTOU, Georges-Henri. *La Grande illusion. La France et la Paix, 1914-1920.* Paris, 2015.

SOUTOU, Georges-Henri. Les grandes puissances et la question des nationalités en Europe centrale et orientale pendant et après la Première Guerre mondiale : actualité du passé ? *Politique étrangère*, 1993, 58 année, nº 3, p. 697-711.

SOUTOU, Georges-Henri. *L'Or et le Sang. Les buts de guerre économiques de la première guerre mondiale*. Paris, 1989.

SUAREZ, Georges. *Briand*. T. IV : *Le Pilote dans la tourmente, 1916-1918*. Paris, 1940.

GALIŲ BALANSAS AR NACIONALINIS PRINCIPAS? PRANCŪZIJOS PLANŲ DĖL VIDURIO RYTŲ EUROPOS EVOLIUCIJA PER PIRMĄJĮ PASAULINĮ KARĄ

Isabelle Davion

Santrauka

Prancūzijai nacionalinis principas, sustiprintas tautinio apsisprendimo diskurso, yra tarytum Prancūzijos revoliucijos ir jos šūkio dėl žmonių teisės valdyti save patiems palikimo tąsa. Todėl abiejų prieigų – galių balanso ir transformuotos tarptautinės tvarkos – sinkretizmas formavo kultūrinį Prancūzijos politinės veiklos proceso per karą kontekstą.

Vertinant Prancūzijos tikslus kare, būtina atskirti tuos, kurie buvo nustatyti jau 1914 m. rugpjūčio mėn. ir vėliau nekito, nuo tų, kurie atsirado ir progresavo karo metu. Pirmieji gali būti apibūdinti kaip „struktūriniai tikslai“: juos suponavo ikikarinė situacija, XIX šimtmečio palikimas, dėl to karo epizodai turėjo jiems maža įtakos. Antrąją karo tikslų kategoriją galima pavadinti „besiplėtojančiais tikslais“, kadangi juos formavo karo patirtis ir reakcijos į įvairius tarptautinės sistemos pokyčius. Būtent šioje karo tikslų kategorijoje nacionalinis principas užėmė pagrindinę vietą – jis buvo nustatytas gerokai iki karo kaip radikalus daugianacionalinių imperijų užginčijimas, bet užginčijimas, kuris rėmėsi istorine bei dinastine legitimacija. Tautų emancipacija tokiu būdu turėjo įvykti griežtai galių balanso rėmuose ir laikantis jo vertybių, ir tokios pozicijos laikytasi pirmajame karo etape.

Išplaukiant iš galios balanso, tokio, koks jis buvo praktikuojamas XIX amžiuje, sąjungos buvo regimos kaip mechanizmai Europos žemyno saugumui užtikrinti. Todėl karo metu formavosi projektas paskatinti Rytų Europos valstybes, kurios galėtų bendradarbiauti su Prancūzija, susidūrus su bendra išorine grėsme. Be to, į Prancūzijos karo tikslus įėjo ir jos projektas įtvirtinti palankesnį strateginį balansą naujų tarptautinių sutarčių bloku. Siekiant tai įgyvendinti, pirmumo teikimas galių balansui nuo 1914 iki 1916 m. buvo prasmingas. Nei Prancūzijos, nei Britanijos valdžia šiuo periodu nesiekė susilpninti imperijų. Tačiau Rusijos revoliucijos ir Amerikos įsitraukimo į karą kombinacija sustiprino kovos tarp Vakarų demokratijos ir Rytų autokratijos viziją.

1917 m. įvykiai, paliaubos Rytų Europoje 1918 m. pavasarį nuskaidrino būtinybę ginti nacionalinį principą, kadangi tapo aišku, jog žemynas niekuomet nebegrįš prie ikikarinio „Europos koncerto“. Bet netgi suvokus tai, kai 1918 m. nacionaliniai savitumai tapo neišvengiamu faktu, geopolitiniai sumetimai Prancūzijos valdžiai toliau vaidino svarbų vaidmenį. Ji rėmėsi jais, nustatydama savąją politiką: apsisprendimo teisė buvo stipriai derinama su būtinybe suformuoti „Barrière de l’Est“ – pokarinę sąjungų prieš bolševizmą sistemą Rytų Europoje. Maža to, dar nebuvo prarasta viltis sulaukti demokratinės (vakarietiška prasme) Rusijos susivienijimo, kad ja būtų galima remtis formuojant pajėgesnę sąjungą. Tik 1918 m. pavasarį didžiosios Vakarų valstybės nustojo sapnuoti, kad Rusijos revoliucija patirs nesėkmę. Todėl iki tol dėl Rytų Europos nebuvo žadama nieko preciziško.

Nors karui persiritus į antrąją pusę Vakarų valstybės ir Prancūzija vis labiau pripažino nacionalinį principą, jų akimis, tas principas buvo ne absoliutus, bet santykinis, taigi nebūtinai taikytinas visuotinai. Antrosios imperijos metais Prancūzijoje susiformavo pažiūra,

leidusi šiuo klausimu daryti tam tikrą selekciją – pažiūra apie „didžiąsias tautas“. Turėdama kelių šimtmečių valstybingumo patirties istoriją, Lenkija šiuo atveju atitiko tokią pažiūrą idealiai, ir dėl savųjų strateginių interesų didžiosios valstybės karo pradžioje negalėjo sau leisti ilgai atidėlioti lenkų pretenzijų teisėtumo pripažinimą. Tačiau Prancūzijos sluoksniuose tuo metu dar reikėjo pasiekti tam tikrą suderinimo tarp simpatijų Lenkijai ir būtinybės turėti karinę sąjungą su Rusija, todėl nepriklausomos Lenkijos atgimimas negalėjo būti remiamas tol, kol to nerėmė Sankt Peterburgas. Viena pagrindinių priežasčių, paaiškinančių, kodėl Prancūzijoje labai atsargiai žiūrėta į nepriklausomybes, buvo plačiai paplitę įtarimai dėl Rytų Europos separatistų, esą jie iš tiesų galėję būti Vokietijos sąjungininkai. Regentinės Lenkijos karalystės sukūrimas Vokietijos ir Austrijos sutarimu 1916 m. lapkričio mėn. išsklaidyti tokių įtarimų nepadėjo. Stipriausiai tokie įtarimai buvo reiškiami dėl ukrainiečių ir rytinės Baltijos lyderių, nors Vakarų lyderiams išties buvo sudėtinga suvokti visos Vidurio ir Rytų Europos politinius vingius. Iš dalies dėl to lenkų nacijai reikėjo atrasti sau vietą tarp didžiųjų valstybių interesų, naudojantis galimybėmis ir adaptuojantis prie konteksto. Visgi pasiryžimas įtikinti Rusiją suteikti Lenkijai plačiausią, kokią įmanoma, autonomiją 1916 m. rudenį, Vokietijai ir Lenkijai įgyvendinus savąjį Lenkijos atkūrimo projektą, tapo įkyresnis. Rusijoje prasidėjus revoliucijai, geopolitinio jos vaidmens kaita paskubino įvykius: siekiant sudaryti atsvarą Lenkijos projektui sukurti lenkų savanorių dalinius, 1917 m. birželio 4 d. prezidentas Raymondas Poincaré pasirašė dekretą dėl Lenkijos kariuomenės steigimo Prancūzijoje. Po trijų mėnesių Romano Dmowskio Lenkijos nacionalinis komitetas buvo *de jure* sąjungininkų pripažintas kaip oficialius įgaliojimus turintis organas. Dėl bolševikų revoliucijos ir Austrijos-Vengrijos žlugimo, Lenkijos klausimas galiausiai visiškai atitiko tai, kas tapo pagrindiniu Antantės karo tikslų principu, – nacionalinį principą. Vis dėlto nors lenkų teisė atkurti savąją valstybę buvo laiminama, Lenkijos geografinių sienų klausimas kėlė milžiniškų sunkumų.

Prancūzijos svyravimai tarp galių balanso ir nacionalinio principo, išsisprendę 1918 m. pavasarį, kai abi šios strategijos susijungė į vieną projektą – skatinti Vidurio Rytų Europoje Antantei palankias valstybes įpėdines. Jų įtraukimo į naujus „vilsoniškosios diplomatijos“ normatyvinius standartus, tiesa, reikėjo palaukti iki 3-iojo dešimtmečio vidurio.