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Silesia and Poland in the first years of the thirty years' war

The issue of Polish-Silesian relations in the first years of the Thirty Years' War has been discussed numerous times in Polish, German, as well as Czech literature. From the Polish perspective, the subject has been described by A. Mosbach, who authored several publications on the subject¹. Almost at the same time, German scholar, H. Palm, in his numerous treatises published in *Zeitschrift des Vereins f. d. Geschichte und Altertum Schlesiens* and devoted to the stance of Silesia in the Thirty Years' War, also provided a detailed commentary of the contemporary attitude of Silesia towards Poland². The results of research performed by both aforementioned historians were collected and discussed quite extensively and thoroughly by A. Szelaḡowski in his famous book entitled *Śląsk a Polska wobec powstania czeskiego*, Lwów, 1904. Finally, immediately prior to the outbreak of World War II much attention was devoted to the issue by Czech historian Josef Macůrekin in his work entitled *České povstání r. 1618-1620 a Polsko*, Brno, 1937, thereby considerably extending source basis for research on the subject and publishing formerly unknown acts, both in total or in extensive excerpts.

In this context, our decision to discuss this matter once again has been made for three reasons. Firstly, interesting findings presented in the work by Macůrek, published, as we see, shortly before the war, have not yet been thoroughly discussed in the Polish literature and its results are still unknown among wider circles of historians. Secondly, our familiarity with printed sources on the subject convinced us that all historians, including Szelaḡowski and Macůrek, failed to make a full use of the available source material and failed to draw final conclusions on its basis. And thirdly, during our search of archival contents for materials to include in the planned monograph of Charles Ferdinand, Bishop of Wrocław, we have come across acts which have been so far unknown to all researchers of the issue and which present it in an interesting light.

The fact that, as we have mentioned, the issue has already been given much attention in a vast number of publications, releases us from the obligation of discussing in detail the course of Bohemian-Silesian uprising against the Habsburgs. Nonetheless,

¹ August Mosbach. 'Kilka kart z dziejów austriacko-śląsko-polskich mianowicie za Zygmunta III', Poznań, 1869. 'Wiadomości do dziejów polskich z archiwum prowincji śląskiej', Wrocław, 1860. 'Dwa poselstwa do Polski przez Ślązaków odprawione w r. 1611 i 1620', *Rocznik Tow. Przyjaciół Nauk w Poznaniu*, vol. II, p. 254.

²H. Palm, 'Das Verhalten d. schlesischen Fursten und Stande im ersten Jahre der bohmischen Unruhen', *Zeitschrift d. Vereins f. d. Geschichte u. Altertum Schlesiens*, vol. V, p. 251; 'Das Verhalten d. schlesischen Fursten und Stande bei der Wahl Friederichs V. von Pfalz zum Konige von Bohmenim Jahre 1619', *ibidem* vol. VII, p. 227; Die Konfederation der Schlesier mit den Bohmenim Jahre 1619 und die nachsten Folgen, *ibidem*, VIII, p. 265; Schlesiens Anteil am dreissigjahrigen Kriegevm Julibis Dezember 1620, *ibidem*, XII, p. 285, Die Vervicklung der Schlesiermit Polen in den Jahre 1618-1620, *Zeitschrift fur preuss Geschichte und Landeskunde*.X, p. 424. – Among more important treatises devoted to this subject one should also mention the paper by Roepfel, 'Das Verhalten Schlesiens z. Zeitbohmischen Unruhen', 1, 1-30.



in order to ensure the clarity of our presentation, we decided it would be reasonable to remind the reader of the most important issues connected with the movement, as well as its stages.

What needs to be mentioned is that there are two, closely related aspects of the Czech uprising: a religious one (for the action attempted to defend Protestant denomination, threatened by victorious and intolerant Catholicism) and a political one (because it was a fight for the rights and political freedom of the Czech nation against the absolutist policy of the Habsburgs). From time to time, the uprising, in the face of national differences between the majority of insurgents and Czech kings, gained also a dimension of national war, a war of the Slavs with the Germans. We do not need to add that this complicated character of the uprising made it easier for the Polish nobility to understand the war waged at its western frontiers, raised compassion for the fellow nation.

When it comes to the course of the uprising, its timeline may be divided into two distinct segments.

The first one covers the period from the outbreak of the Bohemian uprising, that is, from the Defenestration of Prague of the 23rd of May 1618, to the dethronement of Ferdinand of Habsburg and the election, on the 26th of August 1619, of Frederic, Elector of the Palatinate to the throne of Bohemia. The second period is the time from the election of Frederic as King of Bohemia to the final conclusion of the uprising at the outset of 1621.

In the initial period, both the Czechs and their allied nations of the Habsburg monarchy, though they openly oppose the Emperor, do not yet decide to burn all the bridges behind them. Hence, this particular period is the time of warfare, Bohemian armies commanded by Thurn and Hohenlohe fight against the Imperial armies, the Emperor even at the time finds himself in a difficult situation, yet the insurgents assure the ruler of their loyalty, claiming that their only intention is to defend the rights they had been awarded. At the same time negotiations take place between both sides of the conflict.

Adequate is also the contemporary position of Silesians. Namely, still in June, although Holy Roman Emperor Matthias was at the time already engaged in an open war with Bohemia, the sejm of Silesia refused to provide aid to the Czechs and sent envoys both to Prague and to the Emperor, calling both sides alternately to reach agreement and solve the conflict peacefully. It was only during the sejm convention held in September that very year, that is, four months after the outbreak of the Bohemian uprising, when the decision was made to provide military support to the Czechs with the reservation that the intention behind it was not the need to break bonds with the Holy Roman Empire but the need to defend religious privileges, and most notably the Letter of Majesty. And indeed, neither of the sides of the conflict considered this act to be the breaking of the relations with the Empire. And so, the Silesians sent a letter to the Emperor where they solemnly declared their readiness to put a peaceful end to the dispute, whereas the Emperor, to whom the decision of Silesians was quite a blow, in spite of this fact issued an answer, where he both called them to withdraw their armies from Bohemia and explained his behaviour regarding religious matters. When not long later, at the close of 1618 and at the outset of 1619 the hopes emerged that the conflict be settled thanks to the mediation of Elector of Saxony, the estates of Silesia sent their envoys equipped with relevant instructions to Prague, and attempted to prevent the Czechs from taking offensive actions against their enemy. When, finally, the 20th of



March 1916 saw the death of Emperor Matthias, official mourning was declared in Silesia, and when at the sejm convention in April Ferdinand's envoy called the estates to pay homage to his master—who was elected King of Bohemia already in 1917—the estates did not openly refuse to fulfil this order but justified their actions with the necessity to maintain agreement with remaining Bohemian states with which they were bound by the pact on mutual defence of their religious freedoms.

The course of the uprising in Silesia was undoubtedly not without influence on the attitude of Poles towards the Silesian case. Nonetheless, this affair should not turn the historians' attention away from the true core of the issue. For it was clear from the very beginning that the freshly started battle was centred on two principal, interrelated issues: whether the Habsburgs manage to weaken, if not drive Protestantism out of the provinces of the Kingdom of Bohemia, and whether, in connection with this fact, these countries evolve into absolutist countries, or whether they subject themselves to the principle of considerable restriction of royal authority in line with the spirit of democracy, permit the participation of estates, principally of the nobility and the magnates, in the government.

This matter was totally clear even for moderate opponents of the Czech insurgents at the Viennese court. Cardinal Klesel, who was over time gradually ousted from power, wrote already in June 1618 to the Austrian envoy in Madrid about the necessity of him obtaining aid for the Emperor, for, otherwise 'Bohemia shall become a state modelled after the Netherlands' (ist Bohmeneinholandish Gouvernement)³.

These two moments were also crucial for the Sigismund III's position towards the issue of Bohemian-Silesian uprising. The first one of them was, undoubtedly, a religious moment. For, Sigismund was a ruler who, as proves A. St. Radziwiłł, would not long later state as follows at the senate session: 'I would rather see the Polish State and myself die than see religion and God's honour insulted and harmed'⁴. The other was moment was a political one: reluctance towards Fuch, which for many reasons reminded the King of the recent rebellion of Zebrzydowski. Finally, not of minor significance was, most probably, the fact that the weakening of the Habsburgs' position in Europe was coupled with the narrowing of their perspectives for regaining the throne of Sweden.

As a consequence of all these circumstances, Sigismund III, from the moment of the uprising's outbreak, became interested in the events that were taking place in Bohemia and Silesia and showed readiness to support the Emperor based on the alliance of 1613⁵. On the other hand, the contemporary political situation of Poland, at the time in a state of war with Russia and threatened by attacks from the Tatars and Turks, prevented the king from providing active military support and, eventually, Sigismund III was forced to restrict his aid only to diplomatic measures⁶. For this purpose he also made use of the letter of the estates of Silesia addressed to himself and to the members of the Polish senate⁷ where armaments in Silesia were justified by the necessity of defence against military attack, and on the 10th of September wrote a letter regarding this matter to the estates of Silesia.

³ Roeppel, quoted paper, p. 21.

⁴ Memoriale St. Al. Radziwiłła rok 1640, May 25th. Rps. Bibl. Czart. 2356.

⁵ Eugeniusz Barwiński, *Przymierze polsko-austriackie z r. 1613*, Lwów 1890.

⁶ Macurek, *České povstání r. 1618-1620 a Polsko*, Brno 1937. p. 17

⁷ The letter of John Christian, Duke of Legnica, to Sigismund III, July 9th, 1618, Mosbach, *Wiadomości* pp. 257-8.



The document was a clear act of diplomatic intervention. The King, unable to provide military support to the Emperor, intended at least, as he himself told the Emperor, 'to make a threat that would deter' the Silesians from taking actions against the Emperor⁸. This threat was to involve a warning that Sigismund, under alliance formed between himself and the Emperor in 1615 (where 'it was emphasized that support against rebellious subjects will be provided' in the event of their determined opposition against the Emperor) would not refuse to help his ally. Therefore, the King called Silesian citizens to come to an agreement with the Emperor, to suspend military support for Bohemia and, at the same time, expressed views, which adequately illustrated both his and his collaborators views. 'Arms—he wrote—are at times provoked by arms. What is left to the subjects is the glory of obedience. It is not hard to predict what dangers may await those who weaken and violate the power appointed by God'. If in this letter the King did not place adequate emphasis on the matters of religion, it was only for the fact that he was addressing Protestants⁹. Silesians did not wait with their answer to the king. In their letter, as a matter of fact addressed not to the king but to the senators, they justified their position, defended their behaviour. The letter was also a sort of an apology of the Silesians, and this apology was addressed, undoubtedly, to wider circles of Polish nobility. What also needs to be admitted is that the reasoning of Silesians was logical and not devoid of legal motivation. Therefore, they justified their support for the Czechs by the mutual arrangement concluded already in 1609 and obliging them to provide support in the event of breaching the Czech's privileges guarding complete religious tolerance. Silesians emphasized with force that at a particular time, the arrangement enjoyed full approval of the Emperor. Their help also included protection of existing privileges. They were unwilling to participate in military offensives against the Emperor: 'we only take actions within—as they wrote—the limits of the accepted and approved union, whereas we defend what was granted and permitted to us by the Imperial Majesty'. In connection with this, they also emphasized that they could not be considered rebels as they abode by the binding laws and treated the Emperor with due respect. On the other hand, they recounted numerous pacts obliging Poland and Bohemia to harmonious coexistence and contended that 'pacta publica privatis omino esse praeferenda', at the same time refused to treat the pact concluded between the monarchs in 1613 as a public pact, introducing a bond between both nations. Finally, in letters addressed to particular Polish dignitaries, they ensured that their armies were stationed on the Polish-Silesian border only due to the difficulties concerning food supplies and that they were ordered to behave in a proper manner¹⁰¹¹.

The letters discussed above contain more or less explicitly communicated main arguments of both sides of the conflict, and, as we see, the king of Poland sympathized with the arguments of the Imperial camp. Of these two—the first one holding that the only weapon of the subjects is absolute obedience to authority, and the other one holding that the nation may and ought to defend the rights received from the ruler—it

⁸ Macurek, *op. cit.* str. 25.

⁹ H. Palm, *Acta publica*. I. 288–9, in spite of this fact, the King also wrote a letter to Margrave of Karniów, Bucki sch, Schlesische Religionsakten, vol. III, Cap, 14, Membr. 2, Copy obtained from the Archdiocesan Archive in Wrocław.

¹⁰ The letter of Silesian princes and estates to the Polish voivodes and senators, 13th of October, 1618, Vratislaviae, Palm, *Acta publica*, I, 286–8.

¹¹ The letter of Silesian princes and estates to the general of Greater Poland, 13th of October, 1618, Palm, *Acta Publica*, I, 280–290.



was the second one which was undoubtedly closer and more pleasing for the Polish nation. After all, it was in the name of this thesis that the recent rebellion against the king was launched and also in the name of this thesis even the regalists forgave the rebels their riot.

Unfortunately, there survived none except two answers of particular senators to the letters of the Silesian estates: the Primate's and Czarnkowski's, general of Greater Poland. Of these two answers, the one by Czarnkowski may be to certain extent perceived as an expression of the position of the nobility. Namely, the general of Lesser Poland informed Silesians that he had read their letter to the nobility assembled at the sejmik convention and warned them that military levy campaign launched in Poland and placement of troops nearby the border may bring about feuds between the two armies, the Silesian and the Polish one. At the same time he also calmed them that the Polish estates believe that the Silesians are not intending to attack the Poles and assured them that the Polish nobility would neither attack them without a justified reason¹².

The letter of the primate may not be treated as an expression of unconstrained opinion, even that of the regalistically-inclined nobility. For, the loyal primate sent the draft of this letter to the king and considered all king's amendments and additions to its content¹³. That is why, in the letter addressed to Silesians, he called them not to join the rioting Czechs, for the Emperor would probably fulfil all humble requests that were submitted to him. His response to Silesians' remark that the Czechs cannot be considered rebels, recounted that the movement was set off with the act of throwing the Imperial governors out of the window, annexation of Catholic churches by the Protestants, stirring the entire nation against the Emperor. 'If this is not mutiny—he added ironically—then nothing in this world could not be called mutiny'. As regards the pacts concluded between the Emperor and the King, he strongly emphasized that these pacts were 'neither new nor private' and that they were accepted by the estates of both countries¹⁴.

Such was the exchange of views between both sides of the conflict in 1618. It was only the following year that saw events which brought about a radical shift in the situation. As we know, on the 20th of March 1619 Emperor Matthias died, whose successor—both in the Reich as well as in the Kingdom of Bohemia—was to be Ferdinand II. The perspective of giving the Bohemian throne to a fervent Catholic seemed rather unattractive both for Bohemian and Silesian estates. Therefore, though it took some time for the estates of Silesia to take decisive steps, one could expect that it will not be long before extreme reactions, aiming at the breaking of bonds with the Habsburgs and old lands of the Crown of Bohemia, emerge both in Silesia and Bohemia. Already in June 1619, the estates of Silesia agreed to send envoys to the general sejm, convened by the Czechs to take place in July in Prague. This spurred an avalanche of events. At the June sejm assembly, a confederation of Bohemian, Moravian and Silesian estates was established, being a sort of constitution or *pacta conventa* of the future, federal state. In the second half of August, Ferdinand was dethroned, and not long later, on the 27th and 28th of August, the throne was offered to the Calvinist Elector of the Palatinate, Frederic.

¹² Adam Sędziwój Czarnkowski's letter to the estates of Silesia. 6th November 1618, Pyzdry, Palm, *op. cit.* I. 348.

¹³ Macurek *op. cit.* p. 26.

¹⁴ Primate's letter to the estates of Silesia, 11th of November, 1618, Palm, *Acta Publica* I, 346–7.



One needs to bear these facts in mind in order to understand further developments in Polish-Silesian relations, which as we have observed so far, involved peaceful exchange of ideas and mutual observation. At the same time what needs to be also mentioned is that on the 3rd of January 1619, Poles had finally managed to call truce with Moscow, which made it possible for Sigismund III to pay more attention to events taking place in the neighbouring country.

At this point, the arena of mutual relations between the two countries was entered by prince Ladislaus, elected tsar of Moscow, who following the failure of the quest to take over Moscow was forced to suspend his efforts to assume the Moscow throne. In May that very same year, the prince visited Nysa, where he stayed for a longer period of time at the estate of his uncle, the Bishop of Wrocław, Archduke Charles¹⁵. On his way there, the prince spent a while in Częstochowa. His journey and sojourn in these two locations deserve our greater attention. Ladislaus travelled to Częstochowa in order to make a certain kind of pious vow or to celebrate a religious service. He left Warsaw already on the 13th of May and, most probably on the 15th or 16th, he appeared in Jasna Góra, where he stayed, at least until the 20th, and perhaps even some time longer. On the 28th he reached Nysa¹⁶. Prince's time at Jasna Góra was not entirely filled with prayer. What we know is that he was visited there by the primate's envoy, priest Madaleński, with whom he held a certain conference, most probably devoted to political matters¹⁷. We otherwise also know that he was also surprised there by unexpected visitors. For, papal nuncio Diottalevi informed somewhat later that at the time of prince's stay in Częstochowa, Silesian and Bohemian envoys appeared in the town to tell him that the gross part of the estates would be glad to see him occupy the throne of Bohemia. What exactly was the content of the envoys' message? Was their purpose only to feel the prince discreetly on the matter, or did they present him any particular proposals? This we do not know.

The message, unconfirmed by any sources that are currently known, could at first glance seem unlikely and suspicious. What weighs in favour of its being true, is first and foremost the fact that the nuncio, claims also that at the time a document was published in German which contained information on a similar project. Admittedly, the nuncio failed to come into possession of the entire publication, yet someone submitted to him a translation of one of its chapters, which was then attached by the nuncio to the letter he sent to Rome¹⁸. Apart from this, a thorough knowledge on the potential candidates to the throne of Bohemia of the time as well as familiarity with the contemporary feelings among the Czechs and Silesians prevent us from rejecting this message.

For, as we know, principal candidates to the throne of Bohemia were three princes: Elector of the Palatinate (Frederic), Elector of Saxony (John George) and prince of Savoy (Charles Emanuel). Although, we are familiar with the fact that it was the first of the candidates who eventually turned to be the winner, yet we also need not to forget

¹⁵ Szelański, *op. cit.* 64–66.

¹⁶ The date of the Prince's departure from Warsaw is provided by the papal nuncio Diottalevi in a letter of the 17th of May 1619. The collection of the Polish Academy of Learning, the Roman file no. 59; on the twentieth of May the prince is still in Częstochowa, Breftil Laurentius Gembicki, Riksarkivet in Stockholm. The draft of the letter of the 28th of May 1619 is located in Archdiocesan Archive in Wrocław, Cat. no. I. A. 4, S-V.

¹⁷ See aforementioned letter of the prince to primate Ciembicki in Riksarkivet in Stockholm.

¹⁸ The letter of nuncio Diottalevi of the 24th of June, 1619, the Roman file no. 59. The translation is not attached to the file.



that this news was not received with much enthusiasm, mostly for the fact that Frederic was a Calvinist. The candidacy of Elector of Saxony was turned down principally because John George did not decide to fight with the Habsburgs. And eventually, what was against the last candidate of Savoy was his weakness as a ruler and his remoteness from the theatre of war events¹⁹. In this situation it is possible that more moderate circles could put forward the candidature of a Catholic prince who was also famous for his tolerant nature, raised in democratic and tolerant Poland. Indeed, Ladislaus was the son of Anne of Austria and Sigismund III, sworn in as ally of the Habsburgs, yet it was probable that by proposing his candidature the Czechs and Silesians were hoping to set both, formerly allied families at variance.

Therefore, politics could have been the primary reason behind this candidature. What we also need to do is to provide the answer to the fundamental question whether the idea of this candidature could have been inspired by the general contemporary attitude of Czechs and Silesians towards Poland. When it comes to the Czechs, Macurek provides us in his paper with thorough information on the fact that at the time there took place a major revival of the sense of national community between the Poles and the Czechs. What was the case with Silesians?

Well, there is no doubt that if the entire population of the contemporary Silesia was to decide about the region's attitude towards Poland, then due to a considerable 'Polishness' of Upper Silesia and the presence of a considerable population of Poles in Lower Silesia, the territory would probably weigh towards Poland. Yet the contemporary revolution, just like the Bohemian one, according to Mark's classical definition was a movement of the minority in the interests of minority. The contemporary attitude of Silesia was determined first and foremost by the Silesian princes, then, to a certain degree by the Silesian nobility, and, finally, most probably in the smallest dimension by the burghers. These circles were at the time, as it was frequently pointed out, strongly Germanized. Yet, besides this fact two other crucial moments also need not to be forgotten. And so, both the Silesian movement and the Bohemian movement were to a large extent induced by religious reasons, the fear of the growing Catholic reactionary movement. These very reasons resulted in the fact that Evangelical estates looked at its neighbour, Rzeczpospolita, where people of different religions enjoyed extensive tolerance and freedom. That is why a year later, in a letter to the estates of Poland, the estates of Silesia claimed that their defence of Evangelical denomination was modelled on the Polish example. 'For, how many sejm acts devoted to freedom of religion have you got? How many *pacta conventa*? Is it not so that all the successors of King Henry were obliged under a solemn pledge to guard peace among people of various religions? Therefore, an example which is never unworthy to mention is that of the wisest and bravest king Stephen, who admitted that he was the king of people, not of their souls'²⁰.

Yet, what impressed Silesians in spite of the matters of religion was the democratic and liberal political system of Rzeczpospolita. The princes and the nobility, most important social groups of Silesia, were probably encouraged by a prospect of being promoted to the status similar to that enjoyed by the magnates and nobility in

¹⁹ See aforementioned treatises of Palm and M. Ritter, *Deutsche Geschichte in Zeitalter der Gegenreformation u. d. dreissigjahren Krieges*, Stuttgart 1908.

²⁰ The letter of the princes and estates of Silesia to the Polish senators, Mosbach, *Wiadomości*, 279, and Palm, *Acta Publica* III. 103-112.



Poland. What was characteristic for the quest of Silesians to obtain Polish rights was, among others, the fact that when they demanded the right to take part in royal election, they stressed that 'the land of Silesia enjoyed the right of election *votum* already at the time when it was ruled by Rzeczpospolita²¹. During the following year's meeting of the Polish sejm, the representatives of Silesia also highlight with certain recognition that towards the end of the sejm session, participants did not hesitate to point out to the king in front of all the estates the mistakes he committed during his rules, 'like in the free Rzeczpospolita, where free votes were usually respected'²².

Finally, it would not be unreasonable to direct one's attention to the current lively cultural relations between Silesia and Poland. Libraries of individual princes, book collections of priests—even those of the Wrocław Canons Regular who were rather unfavourable towards Poland—included numerous works by Polish historians and feature writers who praised the libertarian political system of Poland²³.

That libertarian political system was to a large extent favoured by the contemporary leaders of the Silesian movement is proved by their unanimous acceptance of the provisions of the confederation of Bohemian, Moravian and Silesian estates adopted on the 31st of July, which contained a number of points almost identical with the Henrician Articles. Indeed, according to point no. 31 of the confederation the right to declare war and launch military levy was reserved to the estates, point no. 23 forbade conducting elections *viventerege*, and according to point no. 30 in the event of breaching the provisions of the confederation by the king, the estates were to be released '*ipso facto*' from the obligation of remaining obedient to the king and in the future they were to be immune from the responsibility for any actions undertaken by them in defence of their rights²⁴.

There is yet another moment we must not forget about. Namely, there is no doubt about the fact that in the 17th century, considerable part of the Silesian nobility was Germanized. Yet, this surely did not prevent them from maintaining lively and frequently familial relations with the Polish nobility. The issue of Silesian nobility being akin to its Polish counterpart has not yet been thoroughly examined, yet modern sources present it in a different light. And so, when in 1620, the envoys of estates of Bohemia, Silesians Kochticki and Maltzan travel to Poland, it turns out that Marcin Zaremba, an influential nobleman in the area of Greater Poland and starost of Grabowiec is a relative of Kochticki, and marshal of the Piotrków tribunal, Maniecki, is a relative of both Kochticki and Maltzan.²⁵

In the context of these remarks proving strong ties between the Polish and Silesian community, it becomes obvious that putting forward the candidature of prince Ladislaus by a certain fraction of Silesian community was neither an impossible nor an unexplainable phenomenon. We do not exactly know the prince's reaction to the proposal. Nonetheless, he was not very much enthusiastic about it and took a negative

²¹ Palm, *Acta Publica* II. 367–85.

²² A report of Silesian envoys of their visit in Poland, 22th of December 1620, Palm, *Acta Publica* III. 276–306.

²³ What we are referring to here is mostly the Chapter Library in Wrocław, which following its destruction by the Swedes during the Thirty Years' War, was rebuilt thanks to the donations of individual canons and which houses a large collection of Polish written works from that period.

²⁴ Palm, *Acta Publica* II. 367–85.

²⁵ The report of envoys of Silesia... 22th of December 1620, 1. c.



stance on the issue. This was most probably mainly caused by the fact that the prince did not feel strong enough to contest the policy of his father and take the position of the leader of the Protestant countries of the Bohemian Crown.

It is also possible that the prince did not expect the authors of the project to be strong enough to win their fellow citizens over his cause. Just that he appeared towards the end of May with completely different plans in Nysa. What were these plans?

Admittedly, negotiations conducted by the prince following his arrival in the capital of the bishopric with his uncle are shrouded in mystery. What is nonetheless certain is that he offered him on the occasion support of King Sigismund in the shape of permission to levy regiments of Cossacks, the so-called Lisowczycy, who were left unemployed following the Moscow war. It is more than probable that he was simultaneously planning to assume command of the troops²⁶.

The bishop of Wrocław accepted this offer with enthusiasm and negotiations in this respect related only to the date and form of support. Eventually, the prince's stay in Nysa was unexpectedly protracted. Prince's departure was initially cancelled due to his illness²⁷, and then, it seems that the prince found that Nysa makes a much more convenient location to observe the course of events in Bohemia than Poland, and he decided to remain there for a longer while. As it was possible that Sigismund III would protest against this protraction, Archduke Charles asked him by letter not to dismiss his son, for it was thanks to his presence that he felt safer from the attack of heretics²⁸.

During the prince's stay in Nysa, Archduke Charles wrote a famous letter to the Polish primate Gembicki on the 14th of August 1619. The letter, imprecisely translated by Mosbach, quoted in parts by Szelągowski, deserves to be more closely examined owing to its unique content. The Bishop firstly described the current sad condition of the Polish Catholic church in Silesia and presented the doings of Silesians, stating finally that the only help in this difficult situation would be foreign intervention. This, as the Polish church was dependent from Gniezno, was expected by him to be done firstly by the Polish side. How did he imagine this intervention? Well, according to his views, the princes of Silesia whom he considered to be not only imitating the Czechs' behaviour but even, to a large extent, the makers of the rebellion, 'having committed a felony whilst being vassals, according to the law they have lost their fiefdoms and what needs to be done is an execution'. He proposed this execution to be performed by the Poles. Yet, being aware of the fact that the Polish community may not be too keen to become flunkies of the Emperor, he came up with the following solution: at the last meeting of the sejm a decision was made to fortify the Polish-Silesian border by building, here and there, earthworks and trenches. 'Whereas, when it comes to the issue of the border, we are dealing with such confusion that the border is everywhere both uncertain and disputed. In such case, nowhere can it be done without contention, damage and disturbance of Polish property. This new and suspicious thing may be considered injustice by the famous Polish kingdom, and those who reside on the borders of the kingdom, seeing their property damaged, may consider these acts adequate reason for argument. Using this opportunity king Ferdinand would commission the aggrieved

²⁶ Points presented by baron Adam Wolckensteinto one of the Archdukes, b. d., Mosbach, *Wiadomości*, 263. Such assumption is highly probable with regard to the fact that some time later the prince declared his readiness to take command over the armies directed to Silesia, see Wł. Dzięgiel, *The loss of the Duchies of Opole and Racibórz by Marie Louise in 1666*, Kraków 1936, str. 8 and further.

²⁷The letter of nuncio Diottalevi of the 28th of June 1619, The Roman File no. 59.

²⁸ The letter of nuncio Diottalevi, 30th of August 1619, *ibidem*.



residents of the kingdom, or others, to strike at the borderland of the princes' property on account of execution, with the reservation that, based on their rights and at their expense, they annex fiefdoms which are legally and really lost (*caduca*) and (under superior rights of Ferdinand) keep them for as long as these fiefdoms bring them that much benefit that would remunerate their former damage'²⁹.

We have purposefully cited word for word the main passages of the letter, for both Mosbach and Szelągowski treated the text rather unceremoniously and oversimplified the matter. In the light of the original text the issue also gains a rather characteristic shape. Nonetheless, it is hard to resist a conviction that the Bishop's plan to annex the duchies smacked of legal tricks was calculated more for the convenience of the Emperor than for the benefit of the Poles. Naturally, we may not prejudge the matter. Even on the basis of the so concocted plan it was possible to come into possession of the Silesian duchies and keep them for good. For, as we know, history abounds in cases where foreign territories were annexed even for more trivial reasons. Yet, in this case one needs to remember that Sigismund III, who was bound by an alliance with the Habsburgs, would surely bring himself to violate the arrangement and in view of this fact, the reward for the support would be temporary possession of several Silesian duchies by particular magnates, optionally, by prince Ladislaus. Another issue that remains is the question of authorship of the letter and the project. Polish and German historians have so far passed this question lightly, suspecting that the project was the idea of Archduke Charles. Szelągowski even assumes that Charles put this project forward in agreement with the Emperor. That it was not the case is proved by the very content of the letter, where the Bishop states that 'before we shall communicate in this matter with His Majesty King Ferdinand, we consider it appropriate to ask Your Highness (namely, the Primate) for Your prudent advice and help.' From other sources we know that the Emperor accepted this project, and as a matter of fact, with no particular enthusiasm and much more later³⁰. Therefore, the project came into being in Nysa, and what is more, in our opinion it was no one else than prince Ladislaus who was its author.

Already the very fact that the project emerged when the Bishop's court was visited by the prince, who was the Bishop's close friend and who came there to discuss with his uncle various forms support for Silesian Catholics, is strong evidence that the prince was at least a co-author of this project. Even stronger evidence for the princes' authorship of the plan is another thing, namely, his other projects of similar kind. It is enough to recall other former projects of his authorship: the idea to trade Polish crown to Swedish one, the idea to urge Denmark to declare war on Sweden for the price of being granted rather illusory rights to the Swedish crown, obtaining in exchange compensation from the Emperor, which lets us claim that this particular project of the Bishop rather strongly resembles other plans of Ladislaus³¹.

Yet another evidence for this fact is that at the time, the prince suggested that regiments of Lisowczycy (under his command) be recruited to help the Emperor. The letter contains a clear mention of entrusting this action to '*allis qui ad hoc negotium apitores videantur*'. It is then more than probable that Ladislaus himself was

²⁹ The letter of Charles, Bishop of Wrocław, to Primate Laurentius Gembicki, the 14th of August 1619 Nissa, Stef. Damalewicz, *Series Episcoporum Gnesnensium*, Varsaviae 1649, pp 365–8, Mosbach presented only a imprecise translation of this letter in the cited work *Kilka kart... 23–24*.

³⁰ J. Macurek, op. cit., 84 reference.

³¹ Wł. Czapliński, Władysław IV's attitude towards the Thirty Years' War, Kraków 1937, pp 46–7.



probably considering taking the lead of the execution of properties of Silesian princes, in order to secure the Silesian fiefdoms for himself.

But before the prior and then the Polish government could take a stand towards this proposal of the Wrocław Bishop, events took a faster pace. Nysa received news of the dethronement of Ferdinand and soon afterwards of the election of King Frederic. It was tantamount with the ultimate breaking off the relationship between the rebels and the Habsburgs and absolute triumph of the radical camp. It was clear that at that point the Protestant estates would demand from the Catholics and principally from the Bishop of Wrocław total submission to the new authorities. The fact of driving out the Jesuits, which took place in June, did not herald anything good³². Not strong enough to defend himself and not eager to assume a martyr's crown, the Bishop decided to leave Silesia. Having appointed new administrators of the Bishopric and taken all his valuables, Archduke together with the prince left Nysa on the 27th of September, and headed to Poland, to the court of Sigismund III³³. His departure was followed by the issuing, on the 30th of September, of the patent of the Silesian governor, Duke John Christian of Brzeg, who informed the entire state about Ferdinand's dethronement and of the election of a new king. Silesian Catholics raised protests against this move but in fact they were far too quiet. More eminent representatives of the Catholic estates followed the king's example and left the country, whereas the rest submitted to the new authority. Even the Wrocław Chapter, which five years later would contest the election of the Polish prince Charles Ferdinand as coadjutor bishop of Wrocław, which was perceived as breach of the privileges of the cathedral, currently called to make a pledge of allegiance to the Calvinist ruler, after a short period of hesitation did make the pledge, and Archdeacon Herman even ensured the estates that 'the canons are willing to pledge not only with their words but also with their heart'³⁴.

The news of this all, brought by the Wrocław Bishop and his project of intervention into Silesian relations made a great impression on King Sigismund III. While in the past year it were ideological reasons that were the main impetus for his engagement in Silesian relations, currently, in the face of the conclusion of the war of Moscow, he found that it was about time to take active intervention in Silesian relations and use this opportunity to one's own advantage. Admittedly, the project proposed by the Bishop did not indicate much advantage. Nonetheless, such was the king's idea to come into possession of certain duchies in Silesia, which would be over time inherited by his sons. The fact that these duchies were to be also fiefdoms of the Emperor did not seem all too uncomfortable to him given his close relations with the House of Habsburgs. All the more so that his primary focus were the interests of the state but those of his own family. Yet, what remained was the issue of obtaining the consent of the people for the potential intervention. In this matter, Sigismund decided not to address the sejm, which represented the whole of the nobility, but according to his usual practice, he addressed the senators, expecting, which was perfectly justified, that those dependent and more connected with the court would be more willing to support his initiative. In view of this fact, towards the end of September, the king issued a circular letter to the senators, in which he asked them to present their opinion so as to the possible intervention into Silesian affairs. In order to win the senators over his cause, he emphasized that it is not

³² Palm, *Acta Publica* II, 198–200.

³³ Nik. Pols, *Jahrbucher d. Stadt Breslau* V. 179–180.

³⁴ H. Palm, *Die Konfederation d. Schlesier mid d. Bohmen* 1. c.



only about friendship and consanguinity with the Imperial family but also about the interests of the Catholic religion. Finally, he added: 'what we also need to bear in mind is that Archduke Carolus in his letter to Archbishop of Gniezno wrote that it would be desired that as a reward for our military levy provinces, Silesia and Bohemia return provinces that were separated from Poland long ago'³⁵. Having roughly formulated the proposals of the Bishop of Wrocław, and having made a general statement that 'now both the weather and moment is right to reclaim Silesia'³⁶, the king made efforts, as we know, not quite in line with the truth, to make the impression that it was about nothing else than regaining the entire Silesia, which was once separated from Poland. In other words, his doings were dishonest. Indeed, we could suspect that Archduke Charles made also other far more promising proposals, but in the light of documents presented by Macurek, it seems utterly improbable. We are familiar with the fact that even modest proposals of Archduke had been made with no prior agreement with the Emperor. Today, we already know that, somewhat later, the Emperor accepted his brother's proposal, together with reservations, in all their aspects, and emphasized that only individual and less important Silesian duchies would be taken into account in this deal³⁷.

What we still need to discuss is the reaction of senators to the King's proposal. Yet, before we do so, we need to discuss the position of the primate, who was the only one who knew exactly the details of the original project by the Bishop of Wrocław. So, a particularly characteristic thing is that even Gembicki, otherwise a famous supporter of the court, was not particularly delighted with the idea. He thought it to be a premature project and drew Bishop's attention to the fact that its execution could only force the Evangelicals to seek vengeance on the Catholic church of Silesia. They then encouraged the Bishop to focus rather on the question of the strengthening of bonds between the Wrocław Diocese and the Archdiocese of Gniezno. And to do so, knowing that the canons of Wrocław would be rather reluctant to see any steps in this direction, they advised him to appoint several Poles as chapter's canons³⁸.

Remaining senators were equally cautious towards the project presented by the king, although the majority were not familiar with the original project of the Habsburgs. Hence, Łukasz Opaliński, castellan of Poznań, permitted the possibility of launching the recruitment of volunteers in Greater Poland, but at the same time, he rather advised to solve the issue in a peaceful way. 'I dare—he wrote—out of honesty which is my innate quality and which is due to Your Majesty, as Your servant, to present my humble opinion for Your Majesty's consideration, remembering that it was once said: *Omnia priusverbis quam armis experiri debent*'. He advised to force individual lands of Silesia, and especially the lands of Głogów, to submit voluntarily to the Polish protection. 'If Our Holy Lord was generous enough to bless our Głogów initiative, we would feel much more confident in extending protection over the Crown's borders than to leave our troops here, within the Crown'³⁹.

³⁵ Sigismund III to hetman Żółkiewski, the 30th of September, 1619, J. U. Niemcewicz, *Dzieje panowania Zygmunta III*, Warszawa 1898.vol. III, 235–7.

³⁶ Szelaǳowski, *op. cit.* 93.

³⁶ Szelaǳowski, *op. cit.* 93.

³⁷ Macurek, *op. cit.* 84 (note).

³⁸ The letter of Primate Gembicki to Archduke Charles, the 2nd of September 1619, Macurek, *op. cit.*, footnotes pp. 144–5.

³⁹ Macurek, *op. cit.* 58 note I.



Another eminent senator, Ligęza, who indeed later vocalized his opinion, well understood the nature of the king's interest with these matters and his willingness to intervene in Silesian affairs. 'Yet, how this could be done and how this is to be done, this is the issue. Firstly, due to the specific status of our Polish State, we would need to obtain consent of all the parties to do it. Secondly, we are not in possession of valuables, which in the face of such danger—in case we decided to engage in it—would be necessary, as it wrote *primus politicorum: opus est pecunia, quia sine illa non erit opus*. And obtaining them now would be very difficult...'. Therefore, he rather advised to conduct a diplomatic intervention in order to reconcile the opponents⁴⁰.

In December that same year, the leader of the Crown Protestants, Rafał Leszczyński, voivode of Bełz, finally took a stand on the matter. His letter of the 26th of December has been discussed by Szelaǳowski and Macurek, but they understood it wrongly. Both of them took the writings of Leszczyński at face value. Indeed, in his letter the voivode criticized both Gabor Bethlen, who at the time was engaged in a military conflict with the Emperor, and leaders of the Bohemian-Silesian revolt whom he described as people who do not respect the rules of the Gospel, which 'teaches to observe the rules of religious faith, serfdom, obedience and any sort of control'. Yet, although he did not spare rough words to Silesians, as those who once broke away from Rzeczpospolita, and he assured them of his kindness towards the Habsburgs, he eventually stated that the issue of possible intervention in Silesia may be approved only by the sejm⁴¹. Yet, what was the consequence? Simply: the annihilation of king's plans. For, it was indeed unlikely that the nobility, who were reluctant towards the Habsburgs, mistrustful towards the king, and in fact somewhat enthusiastic towards the Bohemian-Silesian movement, decided to support the action⁴². This was unexpected even by most fervent regalists, even more so that towards the end of December a publication on the matter was issued, authored by a famous oppositionist Jerzy Zbaraski, who not only named as many as 70 arguments against the intervention in Silesia but also published the original letter of prince Charles, he somehow came in possession of⁴³.

⁴⁰Macurek, *op. cit.* 63 note I.

⁴¹Macurek, *op.cit.* 66 note I. Szelaǳowski *op. cit.* 105 and following. Should we then evaluate the voivode's loyal confessions in the opening part of his letter as honest and sincere, as it maintains Szelaǳowski, or as being an expression of deep religious convictions, in line with the views of Macurek. Neither of these seems to be the truth. After all, they were written by a man who remained in best possible relations with Silesian rebels, who himself allied with Gabor Bethlen and who, finally, by himself opposed to his monarch, while hatching a plot with the French court. We must then consider this letter to be fundamentally dishonest, calculated for concealing one's true intentions from the king.

⁴²Some of the senators most probably remained in closer relationship with the king and who were ready to support the king's intervention, yet their status among the nobility and influence on this group was rather insignificant. Normally they were not openly supportive of his plans. One of them was Żółkiewski, who, having received the news of the coronation of Frederic as King of Bohemia, wrote: 'to see this and not to be able to do anything about it is neither and honest nor a comforting thing. Who knows what may be made-up by these heretics, especially when they see us mermes, opportunos injuriae' (Pisma St. Żółkiewskiego, str. 352). Yet in the written response to the king's letter he did not mention the intervention openly. Also Bishop of Krakow, Szyszkowski, and prince Janusz Ostrogski in letters to Archduke Charles assured him of their friendliness towards the Austrian family (Mosbach, *Wiadomości* 270–1), yet it has not been confirmed that they openly supported the king in his plans.

⁴³ This document, entitled '*Septuaginta graves et arduae rationes, ob quas regem Poloniae nec non senatores et nobilitatem regni, defensionem in Hungaria, Bohemia et alibi locorum inevitabili necessitate implicentur. Quarum nonnullae ad regem a dn. generali missae, postea vero a generoso quodam, Deo, regi et patriae fidei Polono, pacis avido, auctae et informando unicuique germanica et latina lingua publicatae sunt*' was issued towards the end of 1619, most probably in November or December.



The document, entitled '*Septuaginta graves et arduaerationes*' ... also needs to be examined in our paper, both as an expression of the opinion of an eminent senator and printed publication, whose function was to form public opinion. Also this document has been discussed by Szelągowski and Macurek but some of its characteristic features escaped the attention of both of them. This is by no means a work of uniform value but despite its somewhat chaotic nature and certain irregularity of arguments presented by the author, it still had considerable propaganda value⁴⁴.

And so, the author, knowing that he speaks to the affluent landed community satisfied with their lifestyle, he first and foremost emphasized that Poland should avoid warfare at all costs. If one of the principal features of successful propaganda is constant repetition of one and the same watchword, then the document may be considered such example, for its main thought is echoed throughout the entire document in all possible variations. The climax falls to the statement: 'to bring others to slaughter and destruction is rather an animal-like not human-like behaviour. And yet another part of the work comprises evidence brought up with the intention to support the claim that Poland should rather avoid interference with Silesian affairs. The author, with no reservations whatsoever, accepts the thesis that the Czech-Polish alliances had been concluded not between the kings but between the nations (24) and aptly states that each war requires not only arms but also certain moral justification (25) and, to support this statement, he recounts the story of king Warneńczyk. At the same time, the author masterfully touches the reluctance and distrust of the nobility towards the Habsburgs, the fear of the strength of confederated nations, and eventually, the typical for the noble mentality providential fatalism, when he attempts to use historical argumentation to convince the nobility that the fall of the House of Habsburg—predicted by God's providence—inevitably draws on, and that this fall may not be prevented by any human force, and certainly not with Polish support (26).

From among a number of arguments, of most vital importance are those relating to Polish-Silesian relations. The author uses here the argument concerning the closeness of these two countries to Poland in an opposite sense to the regalist politicians. 'The Czechs—he writes—and we ourselves stem from one root, from brothers Czech and Lech. Silesian princes are natural heirs of Polish kings. Should we then persecute them for no reason?' What is more, according to the author, the Czechs had the right to oppose their rulers as the latter ones strove to transform electoral state into hereditary one. 'If that what happened to Bohemia and its allies happened to us from king's initiative—he argued—I am sure that not a single person in Poland would fail to consider introducing such changes'. When it comes to Silesians, the author claimed that the fact of their sending army to support Bohemia, in line with the existing Silesian-Bohemian union, may not be considered rebellion. Finally, knowing that the king had some hopes for regaining Silesia, he rightly asked: 'Even if we assume that we will win, will the archdukes be really willing to get rid of the beautiful Silesian country?'

The statement, so frequently repeated at the court, that Catholic religion is persecuted in Silesia was refuted by him with the argument that the articles of the confederation ensured for the Catholics full religious tolerance. He drew attention to the

⁴⁴ For technical reasons I have used the version of the text published in Londorp, *Acta Publica I*, published in 1668, p 851. Macurek discusses this work in his paper, already mentioned in this paper, on p. 65 and following. Szelągowski does so too in his treatise, already mentioned in this paper, on p. 112 and following.



fact that the Wrocław Bishopric may not be considered as subordinate to the Archdiocese of Gniezno since the Wrocław canons do not recognize this supremacy. Finally, in view of the fact that one of the arguments presented by the court members was that it was the Bishop himself who asked for the intervention, the author cited the aforementioned letter to the Bishop and wrote: 'I ask every truthful Pole, independently of his religion, how would we, Poles, react, if he sent a letter of similar content to a foreign lord, if he put his homeland to risk, showing enemies ways and means to attack it and to harm it? Would we be able to put up with this fellow? Would not the entire kingdom rise against him no matter how high his status was? Would not we deprive him of all his property?'

When it finally comes to the alleged right of Poland to Silesia, postulated by the king and his supporters, the author claimed that the Poles have renounced this land perpetually. When it comes to the Bishopric of Wrocław and his foundation, the author treating history rather unceremoniously, claimed that, although the Bishopric has been established by Mieczysław 'it currently belongs to Bohemia, and initially it was only a school and the first bishop was only a teacher who in a primitive manner taught people the fundamental principles of faith'. The Bishopric owed its actual properties, according to the author, to the later princes of Silesia.

The meaning and the impact of this booklet, at the same time both tendentious and convincing, must have been immense. Its renown is proved by the fact that soon after publication, it was translated to Czech and French. Szelański may not be wrong in stating that the arguments contained in the text were soon adopted by the nobility. Also what soon came to light was that the court was forced to resort to counteractions and sought to refute the principal arguments, presented by Zbaraski. This task was taken up by the scholarly and placid priest Stanisław Łubieński, regent of the crown chancellery, who wrote two booklets, namely, *De rebus Silesiacis discursus* and *Responsio as septuaginta rationes*⁴⁵.

These documents, as a matter of fact published only in 1620, far exceeded the imprecise and biased booklet of Zbaraski in terms of their scientific level, yet, they were far behind it in terms of their propaganda value. What was particularly characteristic for the public moods at the time was that the author, although being a regalist, dissociated himself from the war. 'I gladly listen to the opinion—he wrote—that one should not prompt war, I will even add that one that attempts to involve us in foreign affairs is simply delirious.' In reference to the Bishop Charles's project he claimed: 'we are not that greedy for someone else's property to use every occasion to try to claim it.'

Yet, the most interesting parts of treaties are deliberations on the subject of historical rights of Poland to Silesia and its sovereignty over the Wrocław Bishopric. What needs to be admitted is that this section of the document, though longish, was interesting and, as for the current relations between the countries—remarkably accurate. As we are unable to devote our attention to the entire argumentation, we shall highlight the most important details. And so, having rejected the views—which failed to withstand criticism—of Zbaraski on the beginnings of the Bishopric, the author recounted the fact that the Wrocław Bishopric not only recognized the sovereignty of

⁴⁵ This document was brought to attention only by Macurek, who discussed them in the aforementioned treatise, yet only partially referring to the question of our particular interest, St. Lubieński, *Opera Posthuma*, Antverpiae, str. 159 and 162.



the Archbishopric of Gniezno, but also frequently used its support⁴⁶. He recounted that when in the 13th century, Boleslaus the Bald imprisoned the Wrocław bishop Thomas, the archbishop of Gniezno forced the prince to negotiate with the Bishop⁴⁷, that Archbishop Świnka supported Bishop Thomas II in his fight with Henry the Righteous⁴⁸, and finally, that Casimir the Great opposed the idea to make the Bishopric of Wrocław subordinate to that of Prague⁴⁹.

Equally interesting were his arguments that were to convince public opinion that Poland had never renounced its rights to Silesia. And so, according to his opinion, the act issued in 1330 by Casimir the Great, while not having been approved by the nation, could not be binding for the nation. For, by relating the contemporary terms to the medieval period, the author considered that the king had no title to renounce these lands, which 'constitute the body of the kingdom' without the consent of the estates. The author reminded further that Weneclaus of Luxembourg, on concluding the treaty with Ladislaus Jagiellon in 1395, promised him, on behalf of the princes of Silesia, to grant him military support, and that the Silesian princes, at the outset of the 15th century, participated in the fight between the Poles and the Teutonic Knights⁵⁰, and that the estates of Silesia, calling the sons of Casimir Jagiellon to the throne of Bohemia, did so on the basis of hereditary rights⁵¹. Eventually, the author also does not forget about the fact that it was Ladislaus Jagiellon who, having assumed the throne of Bohemia, kept endowing his brothers with duchies in Silesia, which made them improve their status: 'in societam eius haereditatis'.

His deliberations on the subject are concluded by the author with a distinctive remark, directed most of all to Zbaraski. 'Do not think that I mention this in order to

⁴⁶ The author believes, most probably based on Jan Długosz's (*Chronicon episcoporum Wratislaviensium*) that the Wrocław bishopric was founded by Mieczysław.

⁴⁷ According to the author, Bishop Thomas owed his liberation from imprisonment by Boleslaus the Horned to the anathema which was put on the latter one by the bishop of Gniezno. This fact is accurate in the sense that the archbishop had indeed put an anathema on the prince, yet, actually, Bishop Thomas freed himself from imprisonment thanks to paying to the duke an immense ransom (*Historia Śląska*, Wyd. PAU, T. Silnicki, vol. 2, p. 154).

⁴⁸ According to the author, Świnka put an anathema on Prince Henry IV, and in this way he forced him to make concessions. Today, we know that although Świnka indeed did so, he nonetheless attempted to bring about reconciliation between the disputing parties by winning concessions even from Bishop Thomas. (Silnicki, *op. cit.* p. 175).

⁴⁹ The author admits that Bishop of Wrocław Preczlaw of Pogorell (Przeclaw of Pogorzela) proclaimed the king of Bohemia patron of the Bishopric. Also for him Preczlaw was the so-called 'Polonus', which only partially corresponded with the truth, for Preczlaw was in fact attracted to the German culture (Silnicki, *op. cit.* 239). The statement on the opposition of Casimir the Great towards the inclusion of the Wrocław Bishopric to the established in 1344 Archdiocese of Prague entirely corresponds with the truth. The dispute over this matter fell to the years 1348–1360, (Silnicki, *op. cit.* 246–7).

⁵⁰ The author refers to the year 1414. He names here, most probably after Długosz, (*vide* E. Maleczyńska. 'Udział Śląska w zmaganiach polsko-niemieckich pierwszej połowy XV w.' *Sobótka* 1946, I, p. 32) princes of Silesia who participated in this expedition. The fact that Łubieński refers to episodes quoted by the contemporary historian is a firm evidence of high scholarly level of his paper.

⁵¹ The author maintains that Casimir Jagiellon was appointed to the throne of Bohemia, to a large extent under the impact of the princes of Silesia, which nonetheless does not correspond with the truth (Grodecki, Zachorowski, Dąbrowski, *DziejePolski*) w 1467. On the attitude of Bohemia towards Poland the author writes that the Silesian estates in a letter to the king 'Elisabetham reginam Poloniae filiosque Casimiri Regis, veros et legitimos Regni Bohemiae... haeredes agnoscunt'. When it comes to the appointment of Ladislaus to the throne in 1471 he writes: 'Regni Bohemiae ordines in comitiis Cutnensibus Vladislaum Casimiri filium uti haeredem Regni – verba expressa in privilegio electionis – Regem Bohemiae renuntiant'.



encourage also the Poles to enforce laws with arms, but I did so in order to show that you are not enough acquainted with the topic and erroneously claim that the control we have lost over Silesia cannot be regained'. At the same time, he adds, almost prophetically: 'There surely comes the day when either Silesians, conscious of the fact who they separated themselves from, will return to their fathers, or the Poles will find enough reasons to enforce their rights which may not be abolished by unofficial agreements nor become overdue'.

We have devoted much of our attention to the deliberations of Łubieński for he strongly and decidedly highlights the issue of the rights of Poland to Silesia. Another thing is that the views of the learned regent, what is more than certain, did not convince the nobility, for despite its remarkably high scholarly level, they did not possess the same force of persuasion as the work of Zbaraski.

Opinions of the senators, as well as the entire discussion initiated in writing over this matter, led to the situation when the king at that point did not decide to officially intervene in Silesian affairs. It was also not without significance that the Emperor himself requested to direct his recruited ranks of Lisowczycy not to Silesia but to Hungary. So, in view of this fact, the king limited himself to sending envoys to Silesians, calling to non-violation of the rights of the church of Wrocław and offering them his personal intermediation in their dispute with the Emperor. A relevant document in this matter was taken to Wrocław by the royal secretary Remigian Zaleski⁵². However this mission, as this was easy to predict, brought no results, for the estates of Silesia issued no answer to the letter and sent the envoy directly to Prague⁵³.

At the same time, the ranks of Lisowczycy recruited by Emperor Ferdinand set off to Hungary, thereby considerably contributing to the rescue of the Emperor from dire straits. That very same year the king received remuneration for his support granted to the Habsburgs in the form of the appointment by Bishop Charles six-year-old son Charles Ferdinand to the office of coadjutor bishop of the Bishopric of Wrocław. Was it then nothing more than remuneration? The nomination was made by the Bishop Charles himself in Warsaw after receiving the news of the annexation of Nysa by the Silesians, the moment when he was unable and not willing to consult his chapter, when he had grounds to fear that the Protestants will consider his appointed administrators of the Bishopric and return cathedral's estates under the management of one of the Protestant princes⁵⁴. In such circumstances, the archduke must have been making efforts to arouse king's interest in the affairs of the Bishopric and to prepare firm foundations for his possible acting in defence of the Catholic church in Silesia.

Therefore, what is more than certain is that the words used by Archduke Charles in the act of nomination, namely, 'he could not think of any better solution for the maintenance and defence of this church than the appointment of the son of the King of

⁵²Sigismund III to the estates of Silesia, the 18th of October 1619, Mosbach, *Wiadomości*, pp. 266–79. Palm, *Acta Publica II*, 396–8.

⁵³Buckisch, *op. cit.* p. 479.

⁵⁴ Already in December 1619 many different documents were circulating in Silesia, which criticizing bishop Charles for his sojourn in Poland and accusing him of inciting Poland against Silesians (see Letter of Bishop Charles to the estates of Silesia of the 16th of December, 1619. Buckish, *op. cit.* cap. 17 ###ni membr. 1.) In the letter, addressed to the estates, Bishop explained in detail that he was not involved in any machinations within the territory of Poland. The idea to entrust the administration of the bishopric to a Protestant is mentioned once again in March, 1620 (Jodocus Debir to J. Schelib, the 3rd of March, 1620, Archdiocesan Archive in Wrocław I, A. 4. W–Z).



Poland as coadjutor bishop', were not a merely platitudes, but they corresponded with his firm conviction, all the more so that in view of the address delivered by Gabor, Duke of Transylvania, Ferdinand was not able to offer him effective support⁵⁵.

The new year of 1620, which for Poland was to conclude in utter military failure in the fields of Moldavia, saw first serious charges of Polish soldiers against Silesia. The units of Lisowczycy, recruited by the king, following their withdrawal from Hungary—under the agreement between the king and the Emperor—headed off through Cieszyn Silesia to Austria, wreaking havoc and putting in flames the estates of Silesian landed gentry. According to contemporary records, nearly 50 estates fell victim of barbarized soldiers, who were viscous enough to inflict a great deal of suffering even to women and children.⁵⁶ The second raid of Lisowczycy, most probably incited by Bishop Charles, with king's consent, charged the lands of Racibórz and Opole. According to the testimonies of local landed gentry the invading army committed deeds which were far more cruel than those committed by their worse enemies. And who fell victim of these soldiers? Members of the nobility, who were either Polish or sympathized with Poland, as well as Polish burghers and peasants. Havoc was wrought to beautiful wooden buildings, raised there by devout Upper Silesian people⁵⁷.

We shall close the subject of military attacks, by mentioning that not long later, in April, Lisowczycy once again invaded the lands of Silesia. This time, however, they were crushed by Silesians, for the latter ones were much better prepared to battle than formerly. Many of the Lisowczycy were captured and soon executed by in the wetlands near the Odra river at the outskirts of Wrocław. Twenty or so soldiers, with old names characteristic for Polish nobility, such as Ligeża, Rusiecki, Zakrzewski, Bolesta, Baranowski, Kotowski, Ojrzanowski, Zalewski etc. died a disgraceful death from the hand of executioner⁵⁸. Many a time separate groups of Lisowczycy, who arrived in Silesia, simply informed Silesian authorities that they were lordless and 'willing to serve' even in the army recruited by the Protestant authorities of Silesia⁵⁹.

In the face of public outrage raised in consequence of these attacks, Polish government was forced to make profuse apologies to the Silesians and explain that the invasion was undertaken behind the king's back. Vice-chancellor himself wrote to the estates of Silesia that they are entitled to take up arms against these soldiers with no simultaneous violation of Silesian pacts and alliances.⁶⁰

This chaotic and cruel raid of Lisowczycy buried the last hopes of the Silesian nobility for any intervention in the affairs of Silesia. In such circumstances, unique must have been the impact of the letter sent at the end of May by the estates of Silesia to the

⁵⁵ The act of nomination reprinted from the copy of *Zeitschrift d. Vereins f. d. Geschichte u. Altertum Schlesiens* VIII, p. 318.

⁵⁶ The attack was more than act of lawlessness of unpaid soldiers. This is proven by the letter of the provincial authorities of Kraków to the king of the 14th of January 1620—St. K u t r z e b a, the acts of the sejmik of the provincial authorities of Kraków, vol. I, pp. 409–12. The co-participation of the bishop in this doings is confirmed by his letter to Lisowczycy of the 20th of December 1619, Mosbach, *Wiadomości*, pp. 271–2. For more information on the attack see Szelaǳowski, *op. cit.* 126 and Mosbach, *Wiadomości*, p. 274.

⁵⁷ The letter of the landed gentry of Opole and Racibórz to the highest chamber of Silesia, the 13th of February 1620, Mosbach, *Wiadomości* p. 256 and Palm, *Acta Publica* III, pp. 74–5. Reports on the destroyed churches, see Jungnitz, *Visitationsberichte Archdiakonats Oppeln*.

⁵⁸ Szelaǳowski, *op. cit.* p. 145. Mosbach, *Wiadomości*, pp. 278–9.

⁵⁹ Jodocus Debir to Schelib, the 1st of March 1620, Archdiocese Archive in Wrocław 1. c.

⁶⁰ The letter of Andrzej Lipski, Vice-Chancellor of the Crown to Prince John Christian, the 18th of March, 1620, Mosbach, *Wiadomości*, pp. 276.



Polish senators. Also this document, whose passages were quoted earlier in this paper, have not yet gathered enough scholarly attention. At the same time, the very ideology which filled this letter must have met with favourable response of the noble minds⁶¹. The letter was founded on three basic assumptions. Firstly, it highlighted close relations between Silesia and Poland, two nations with 'common origin, language and state'. Secondly, it was emphasized that although protests are generally a harmful phenomenon, in some cases they are not only justified but also necessary, 'for the injustice of rulers pushes faithful and righteous men... to rise against them'. 'For there is no ruler who, when given a chance, would be less inclined to absolute rules than to rules in line with the law'. If it is indeed so, on the other hand there exists a commonly accepted rule that subjects have the right to protest against the abuse of the power of authority as well as to the acts of imposing absolute rules. Finally, the writing pointed to the common threat of the House of Habsburgs. The estates of Silesia reminded to the Poles that it was already Sigismund II Augustus who ordered to fortify Kraków in order to secure it against the forces of the Habsburgs; they also pointed to the fact that they would not remain oblivious to a potential triumph of the supporters of absolute rules in Poland's immediate neighbourhood, for in such case 'a threat would emerge that they would like to do the same also in Poland or pave the way to do so for others'.

On comparing the content of the letter written by the estates of Silesia with the already quoted here booklet of Zbaraski, one may easily notice that Silesians at times used arguments presented by the leader of the noble opposition. With considerable emphasis they referred to the claim of Zbaraski that they neither persecute the Catholic church nor cause any kind of harm to the Wrocław chapter. For easily understandable reasons they highlighted that the Bishop of Wrocław was at the time subject only to the King of Bohemia. We do not need to add that the letter had to be intentionally unpleasant for the king and the regalists. Already the very remarks on the absolutist tendencies of the Habsburgs; statements that no king, when given such opportunity, may resist the temptation to introduce absolute rules, could have been viewed by the king as insulting. At the same time, the authors of the letter intentionally punctuated the issue. 'There is certainly plenty of laws in Poland—they wrote—which may be used in favour of royal absolutism and its hereditary power just as easily as it is done currently with the liberties of the Czechs'. This statement, utterly offensive for the king was nonetheless much appreciated by the nobility⁶².

If we realize this, we shall understand how not in the right time Sigismund addressed his inquiry to the whole of the sejmik nobility, not long later included in the form of a statement in the sejmik guidelines, published in August that very same year. It was not the best time and circumstances to support this law, which serves both to Silesia as well as to the churches and the Bishopric of Wrocław'. The question was posed—as it was aptly noticed by Szelągowski—when Rzeczpospolita was under the threat of Turkish invasion and (let us add) in the moment when Habsburg, having overcome greatest obstacles, was preparing himself to quash the Bohemian uprising⁶³.

⁶¹ The letter of the princes and estates of Silesia to the Polish senators, the 29th of May, 1620, Vratislaviae, Mosbach, *Wiadomości*, 279–285, and more details in Palm, *Acta Publica*, III, pp. 103–112.

⁶² Macurek, *op. cit.*, p. 92 assumes that the letter was authored by a Czech Silesian, for he believed that it would be impossible for a German to pluck up the courage to make such clear Slavonic references. A strange thing is that the author did not come up with a much simpler idea and, in our opinion, most probable one that the letter was written by a Silesian Pole, well acquainted with Polish political affairs.

⁶³ Szelągowski, *op. cit.* p. 153.



In the light of the aforementioned circumstances, we understand that the nobility's answer to the call was negative. Unfortunately we do not possess complete material that would enable an evaluation of individual *sejmiks*. According to the accounts of Silesian envoys that were delegated to the subsequent meeting of the *sejm*, almost all of them took a negative stance on the king's proposal. We know for certain that the group of objectors included the nobility of Sandomierz and Greater Poland who demanded that the army, recruited by the king, acted only against the Turks and Tatars, and as it was agreed by the nobility of Sandomierz: 'sub poenis capitis, infamiae, perpetuae confiscationis bonorum'⁶⁴. The acts of the *krakowski sejmik* are missing, however, judging from its former stance the demands of this *sejmik* were most probably identical with those of the *opatowski* and *średzki*. Only the small land of Czersk, Catholic and pro-regalist, issued a positive answer to the king's call, stating: 'At a favourable occasion to recuperate Murawy and Silesia, Sirs Envoys should make attempts to join these lands to Poland'⁶⁵.

What was also emblematic of the contemporary moods of the nobility, was the fact that when the envoys of Silesian and Bohemian estates, Kochticki and Maltzan, were arriving to the meeting of the *sejm*, and when the king refused to grant them audience, treating them as emissaries of the ruler he refused to acknowledge, the nobility, nonetheless managed to force their will, and not only allowed them to take the floor in the chamber of deputies, but at the same time, although this took place following the failure of the Silesian uprising and the Battle of White Mountain, assured them of their readiness to observe the pacts and maintaining peaceful relations with Silesia and Bohemia⁶⁶. At the same time, in the proposals addressed to the king the nobility strongly protested against sending the recruited armies beyond the eastern border.

Before we close our paper, we would like to present the conclusions we have arrived at during our examination. The actions of Sigismund III, who intended to intervene into Silesian affairs, were undertaken in the interest of Catholicism and dependent on the conditions of his alliance with the House of Habsburg. When it comes to material benefits he expected to achieve, these involved only awarding his sons with feudal duchies of Silesia, in order to ensure their somewhat material security in the lands which were not part of Rzeczpospolita. The plans to reintroduce former Polish laws in these lands and to regain the entire land of Silesia were postulated by him only for the purpose of winning the support of the nobility.

We may not nurse a grudge against the Polish nobility for not being seduced by the royal proposal, since for one thing they received clear signals that the king acts to his personal benefit, not to the benefit of Rzeczpospolita and since, for another, the Bohemian-Silesian uprising was close to them in terms of its ideological foundations, centred on the defence of political freedom and religious tolerance. What was finally not without significance was the still vivid at the time sense of national community, linking the Polish nobility with most part of Silesia.

Finally, besides these findings, we have also found that although Polish community was not too enthusiastic about the proposed military action in Silesia, the memory of historic connections between Poland and Silesia remained vivid in Poland,

⁶⁴Macurek, *op. cit.* pp. 112, 113, references. The *średzki sejmik*, in the letter addressed to Silesians put even greater emphasis on the common origin linking the people of both lands.

⁶⁵The instruction of the land of Czersk, the 22th of September 1620, PAU collection, Pawiński Files, This act was brought to my attention by dr J. Gierowski, for which I would like to thank him very much.

⁶⁶ The account of the envoys of Silesia of the 22nd of December 1620, Palm, *Acta Publica* III, pp. 276–306.



and contemporary Polish scholars were able to put forward substantial arguments to justify our claims towards Silesia.

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