

## Ex oriente lux! The Influence of Roman Dmowski's Japanese journey on his political thinking.

*Polish fin-de siècle. The intellectual origins of the new Polish nationalism.*

It's difficult to say when precisely Roman Dmowski, a leader of the National Democrats, the main nationalist Polish political movement became interested in Far Asia in general, or Japan in particular.

The renewed interest in Japan in Western Europe public opinion, as far as we know, has its origins in the half of XIX century. In the late of nineties appeared well-read contributions concerning reforms in Japan. On the other side, Far Asia was a terrain of colonial interest of many European countries.

The period of Meiji attracted many intellectuals as well on Polish territories. There is little doubt that primary level of this interest was inner situation of Poles. At first, one could consider that reasons of Dmowski's journey to Japan were strictly political. As the result of the outbreak of the Russian- Japanese War of 1904 political balance of power in Asia was in danger. That was nothing new, but for the many politically oriented Poles from the beginning of the XX Century, with the entry of new political generations, the outbreak of this war had meant a lot. Small country, in the eyes of the Polish observers, had humbled the Russian Empire.

So why did Roman Dmowski, the leader of Polish nationalist movement travel to Japan in the half of 1904? Were there any other reasons?

His personal accountancies are quite clear in this matter. In his annual report to his political friends from 1904, Dmowski claimed that he was sent to Japan as *the Plenipotentiary Officer* of his movement *to establish direct contacts on the spot, of acquainting ourselves with the character of the new historical foe of Russia, and of gaining a specialist in the these matters within the bosom of the organisation.*<sup>1</sup> Later on, in his political memoirs Dmowski added other motives for his undertaking: *There was the fear that someone from Europe might*

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<sup>1</sup> *Sprawozdanie z dziać alno ci Ligii Narodowej od 1 lipca 1903 do 1 Lipca 1904* (Record on the Activity of the National League from July 1903, to July 1904) p.123. Quoted from Alvin Marcus Fountain II, *Roman Dmowski. Party, Tactics, Ideology, 1895-1907*, East European Monographs, New York 1980,s.117 See as well. R. Dmowski, *List do Zygmunta Mi kowskiego, 14 marca 1904*, (Letter to Zygmunt Mi kowski, March 14, 1904) in: Mariusz Ku akowski, *Roman Dmowski w listach i wspomnieniach* (Roman Dmowski in the Light of Letters and Memoirs), Vol.1, Gryf Publications, London 1968 p.276.

*suggest to the Japanese government... a plan for using the Poles to create a diversion against Russia in the west. It was necessary to inform it of the actual situation in Poland, of the status of our cause, and of manner in which we perceive our political tasks, to point out to it that attempts in this directions would cost Poland quite dearly while yielding nothing at all to Japan. These fears are not groundless.*<sup>2</sup>

The political addresses of these statements are very identifiable. It is clear that Dmowski considered his journey to Japan at two main levels. The first one was the research the delicate and complicated situation in the region and the second one containing the opposite political power to the Polish nationalists, the Polish Socialist Party plan for the next armed uprising.

At last behind the scenes there was a personal antagonism to Józef Piłsudski, one of the main leader of Polish socialist and, what's not without a matter with it, a Dmowski's political counter-partner and ideological rival to the leadership to all Polish independent movements.

The factual side of Dmowski's journey to Japan, contacts with Japanese official representatives, his famous meeting with Piłsudski, eventually the results of his mission, are to historian in main parts well-known.<sup>3</sup> But what are the ideological consequences of his undertaking to the Dmowski's or to the Polish nationalist thought in general?

Most of the researchers agree that this three-month journey had its significant effect on Dmowski's view of society.<sup>4</sup> In Japan he found a sort of society reflecting the singular traditions, public mores, religion and history that every modern nation should have. In Japan he found as well country which had conditions to play high rates for universal aim of every progressive - in this peculiar logic- nation: Being a world empire.

Personally, Dmowski described his Japanese journey as an *illumination* which influenced *his views greatly*.<sup>5</sup> Later he claimed that he *gained new psychological and moral concepts*. Declaring in another passus: *I began to view man and society from another side*.

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<sup>2</sup> R. Dmowski, *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa* (Polish Politics and the Rebuilding of State) Vo.1, p.36-37. See as well, A. Garlicki, *Relacja Romana Dmowskiego o Lidze Narodowej* (Roman Dmowski's Deposition on the National League), „Przegłąd Historyczny”, Vol. LVII, No. 3, 1966, p. 204; A. F. Fountain, *Roman Dmowski*, op. cit., s. 117.

<sup>3</sup> See A. F. Fountain, *Roman Dmowski*, op. cit., s.115-139; K. Kawalec, *Roman Dmowski*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 2002. In particular chapter entitled „Ex oriente lux”. Roman Wapinski, *Roman Dmowski*, Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, Lublin 1989, chapter, „Podróż do Japonii” (Journey to Japan), p.132-142; Władysław Bułhak, *Dmowski–Rosja a kwestia polska*, Wydawnictwo NERITON, Instytut Historii PAN, Warszawa 2000, p. 94; Jerzy Lerski, *A Polish Charter of the Russian-Japanese War*,”The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, Third Series, Vol. VIII, November 1959, s. 69-97.

<sup>4</sup> A. Walicki, *The Troubling Legacy of Roman Dmowski*, “East European Politics and Societies”, Vo.4, No.1,1999, p.30; Brian A. Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate. Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland*, Oxford University Press, New York 2000; A.F. Fountain, *Roman Dmowski*, op.cit., p.138.

<sup>5</sup> *Roman Dmowski's Deposition on the National League*, op.cit., p. 434. See A.J. Fountain, *Roman Dmowski*, op. cit., p.138.

What was then the matter? What was that revelation, which changes the outlook of the nationalist leader and one of the most influential Polish political writers of those days? Despite the fact that Dmowski never visited Japan again, and not even studied the language; one should admit that on general terms Japan's factor had noticeable and even eminent effect on his political thinking.

At the early 1890s Roman Dmowski, young student with some political experiences, started to write for *Głos (Voice)*, the main weekly of his generation. One of his colleagues of those days, later political and personal friend recalled: *Esteemed for his writing talent, beloved for his merry and agreeable character, Dmowski soon became the favorite of whole editorial staff.*<sup>6</sup> At the same time he began his brilliant political career as a young leader of Polish nationalism.

His moral thought of those days was not very original. One recognizes there an anti-positivistic idealism mixed with the Nietzschean individualism of the nineties mingled with Social-Darwinism in the effort to challenge the dominant materialism of the age.

By idealism he believed man to be a creature of will and energy for which the needs of his soul were far more crucial than the needs of his body. Dmowski's lecture of F. Nietzsche and similar authors showed up a clear *memento*: only brave and heroic men could name their world and save the West.

To this vocabulary of young Polish nationalists, after all widespread among the whole generation of 1890s, also amongst the Polish Marxists, Dmowski added a significant ingredient: anti-Semitic racism.

The anti-Semitic racialist attitude was nothing new on the radical right scene in Europe of these days.<sup>7</sup> In the last decade of the XIX Century, the French journalist Édouard Drumont had declared in his famous *La France juive* that Jews pretended to destroy the whole social order in every European, Christian society. The book had in France 200 editions (more than 1 billion examples before WWII).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted from A.J. Fouintan, *Roman Dmowski*, op. cit., s. 17.

<sup>7</sup> On general: Georges Benoussan, *Europe. Une passion génocidaire. Essai culturelle*, Éditions Mille et Une Nuits, Paris 2006, chapt. 2 *Une question européenne? La race*, p. 204-291; Ivana Hannaford, *Race. The History of an Idea in the West*, Foreword by Bernard Crick, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London 1996, in particular chapt. 10, pt. "Race is All", 1890-1939, p.325-368; Zeev Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire, 1885-1914. Les origines françaises du fascisme*, Editions Gallimard, Paris 1992, p.179-221. George L. Mosse., *Toward the Final Solution. A History of European Racism.*, University of Wisconsin, Madison 1985, chapt. 7, s.95-112

<sup>8</sup> Michel Wincok, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism and Fascism in France*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1998, p.85-102; Pierre Birnbaum, *La Fin de la France. Le juif pervertisseur dans le paradigme Drumont* in: *L'Éternel Retour. Contre la démocratie l'idéologie de la décadence*, edited by Zeev Sternhell, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris 1994, p.197-212.

Many other works loaded with similar anti-Semitic message attained a vast popularity amongst readers all over Europe. Moreover, in the late nineties of the XIX Century these ideas were rapidly taken up by the popular politics. Karl Lueger, from 1897 the mayor of Habsburg's capital Vienna, had called for removing all Jews from public sphere. Lueger and many lesser nationalist leaders in the Habsburg Empire made anti-Semitism their principal subject.<sup>9</sup>

By late 1850s the racial thinking was more or less equivalent of nation. One ought to differentiate between historically constructed nations and rely on organic conceptions of race. However, in the second part of the century these concepts began rapidly to interweave. As Marius Turda pointed out: *Between 1880 and 1918 races were endowed with national souls (Volkgeisten), which, rather than being passed on from one generation to another, were allegedly inherited through biological processes. The belief that contemporaries have the same blood as their ancestors employed as a metaphor, but, in most cases, it seemed a biological determinism that was racial when applied to the idea of the nation.*<sup>10</sup>

Dmowski's project of a *modern nation* absorbed its ideas from earlier forms of nationalist thinking as well as racial and Social Darwinist theories of the nation. Its vocabulary blended cultural characteristics together with racial attributes.

But Polish theorist still believed in physiological stereotypes e.g. always showing Jews as physically degenerated in order to prove the superiority of *true Europeans* that for him mean the last and true incarnation of legendary Aryans.

In fact, Dmowski has represented more "pluralist" version of racism. If most German racialist intellectuals (Julius Langbehn, Paul de Lagarde, and the most known author with English origins H.S. Chamberlain) mixed human creativity with racism in declaring that only German nation, or being more precise the German *Volk*, could truly understand nature and sense of the whole world, the Polish writer believed that at least were a few nations which constructed a *civilized Europe*. In Dmowski's project there was more space for new nations, even for those, as I will mention below, originated from outside the Europe. That was something new.

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<sup>9</sup> John Boyer, *Karl Lueger and the Viennese Jews*, "The Leo Baeck Institute. The Yearbook", Vol. 26, 1981, s. 124-144.

<sup>10</sup> Marius Turda, *The Idea of National Superiority in Central Europe, 1880-1918*, The Edwin Mellen Press, London 2005, p.29. See as well: Uli Linke, *Blood and Nation: The European Aesthetics of Race*, University of Philadelphia, Philadelphia 1999.

Most of these ideas came from Western Europe, mainly from France and Great Britain. But there were some local traditions. At the first phase of development, the National Democrats had long drunk from the fount of Polish democratic traditions, namely of the *Democratic Polish Society* (Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie) of which they claimed to be the last successor. *New democrats* as they called themselves.

In *Thoughts of Modern Pole* (Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka, 1903), Dmowski's main political treaty from the first decade of the XX century, was contained the crux of ideas of this revolting young intelligentsia of the Polish fin-de-siècle.

### *Ex oriente lux*

And now we may look briefly at the various levels of influence of Dmowski's Japan's trip on his political thinking.

First articles showing that the journey had the meaning for Dmowski political thinking appeared just after his return from Japan. Actually, they contained all ideas which were repeated from that moment till the last of his days.

*Ex oriente lux*, a series of political reportages turned up at the end of 1904 in the *All-Polish Review* (Przegląd Wszechpolski).<sup>11</sup> Dmowski indicated there the moral resources of Japanese victory over Russian in the 1904-1905 war.

The major aspect of this Dmowski appeal had been the rehabilitation of the inborn instincts, which, as he declared, led the souls of the man and in fact all nations. Led unconsciously and without exceptions. On those terms has appeared a new definition of the nation. Nation was treated as an historical unity based on a strong biological ground. As such nation was therefore considered as the result of biological and historical laws. Considered intemperately. On these terms, biologic-historical nation not only stamped the every individual, but in addition decided the future of the whole society. The principle of national unity had had to be asserted either by biology or ought to be by national politics commended by national elites. The main aim of the elites was an ethical regeneration of national ties. But national meant for him always and unequivocally integral nationalist.

Dmowski finished one of articles entitled *Grounds of Polish Politics* (Podstawy polityki polskiej, 1905), published in the *All-Polish Review* a year later, with characteristic

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<sup>11</sup> R. Dmowski, *Ex oriente lux. Niektóre nauki z obecnej wojny* (Ex oriente lux. A Few Lessons from the Present War), *Przegląd Wszechpolski* (The All-Polish Review). No 9, 10, 12; September, October, December 1904. The series was then published again in popular nationalist daily in the Austrian Galicia, "Słowo Polskie" (Polish Word).

exclamation: *Long live fatherland! Long live the national ethic!* The passage was entirely included to the third edition of *Thoughts of Modern Pole* in 1907.<sup>12</sup>

If a nation was left separately, even by chance, enjoying its unique singularity, not mixing with other races and alien tribes, it had great opportunity to progress. According to Dmowski Japanese (called as an *example the most extreme grade of national unity*) had significantly proved this. There was a certain ambiguity about nation in this logic. Nation should have a sound biological base, historical traditions but as well must possess the will to fight against the alien (foreign or inner) and the will to dominate. If not, success will not become a certain destiny. Nations deprived of this spirit of dominance will intend sooner or later die or will be just subject of history. Actually, to this definition of nation Dmowski has offered no alternative, just chaos and anarchy. The old racialist, chiefly anti-Semitic, leitmotif was then appeared again redoubled in meaning. Being born as an alien was a challenge not only to the national unity but to nation as such.

The stark reference to hierarchy was heard in calling the *samurai's* tradition seen by Dmowski as still vivid in Japanese society. Natural hierarchy based on origins and mission to service impressed on him very much. In the *samurai's* tradition the nationalist leader contented the essence of being social and political, and basically moral elite. The *samurai's* legacy, he insisted, gave Japan what the nation needed the foremost: the men of character.

In general, these were the main lessons Dmowski retained. From that time on, the majority of these beliefs became a part of Dmowski's own outlook

This Asian interest was also nothing new on the European Right. One could reasonably presume that for Count Arthur de Gobineau an exact journey to some Asian countries opened eyes to importance of racial relations and the belief that the human history was determined by racial degeneration. For Gustav Le Bon and Ernest Renan, both as well intellectual teachers to the first generation of Polish nationalists, the contact with the old Asian civilizations, chiefly Eastern Asian countries, proved that the Orient lost its chance to progress.<sup>13</sup> Though most of these authors led to consider European/Oriental dichotomy as one of the keys to universal history, they also believed that "Aryans" opposed "Semites" either on

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<sup>12</sup> R. Dmowski, *Podstawy polityki polskiej* (Grounds of Polish Politics), *Przegląd Wszechpolski* (the All-Polish Review), No 7 June 1905. See A.M. Fountain, Roman Dmowski, op. cit. p.138.

<sup>13</sup> Pierre Birnbaum, *Ernest Renan, un charmant rabbi dans la guerre des deux France* in: P. Birnbaum, „*La France aux Français*“. *Histoire des Haines Nationalistes*, Éditions des Seils, Paris 2006, p. 126; Ida-Marie Frandon, *L'Orient de Maurice Barrès. Étude et Genèse*. These principale pour le docotrat et lettres présentée à la Faculté des Lettres de L'Université de Paris, Société De Publications Romanes et Francaises, Genève. 1952. On general Zeev Sternhell, *Les anti-Lumières. Du XVIII siècle è la guerre froide*, Fayard, Paris 2006.

the biological or the historical plane. They claimed unanimously that Asian races compared with the Indo-European race represent an inferior composition of human nature. In Dmowski's statements was therefore a something new.

And now we must go back at least to the beginning of the XX century. With successive extensions of the suffrage (in 1905 in the Russian Poland and 1907 in the Austrian Poland) the nationalist movement greatly increased its parliamentary influences. Represented in 1904 in Austrian parliament by only Stanislaw Głębinski (in the Second Republic, the main nationalist leader of ND), it became in 1907 the third largest party in Galicia and even more the first Polish party in the Russian parliament, with 50 seats. It captured the majority of Warsaw as well as many of provincial cities of the Russian Poland. By the 1914 it had appeared a significant political and idea logical force in Polish life. Roman Dmowski became an influential political leader for many Poles.

Despite of becoming the main counter-revolutionary factor in the Russian Poland, National Democracy was in fact only pseudo-conservative movement. It declared that it was defending crucial institutions or values (e.g. Catholic religion and the political autonomy under the Russian rule), but the fundamental interest of the movement was Polish hegemony and the introduction the spiritual unity of all Poles in political and social reality. Another significant factor was the activist nature of this new Polish nationalism. Passionate and impulsive, sometimes even vulgar and populist, it was in effect very far from the old Right. The new nationalists emphasized energy and action as being against the words and intellect. On the other side, they accused all Polish political parties of being rid of the modern political thought. National Democracy defined itself, by counter definition, as being against the foreign and the foreigner.

After 1905 almost all of the roles of aliens were clearly identified with the Jews. "Discovering" the Jew for the whole nationalist movement, as an integral enemy, was to some extent inevitable. As the highest national minority in underdeveloped country, Jews were outstandingly suited to that purpose. After the civil reforms of 1860s an increasing number of Jews flocked into the cities in the Russian Poland to begin constitute the bulk of urban intelligentsia.

In Warsaw, the Jewish population grew rapidly as a result of immigration from Russia and some demographic processes (to 27.0 per cent of all citizens). Although the great majority of Jews lived in poverty, the most often in extreme misery, on the other side, the great deal of an educated class in society was of Jewish origins. More than 60-70.0 per cent

of the self-employed before the WWI in Warsaw in banking, fiancé were Jews. In some free professions, like physicians, lawyers or journalists their proportions were even higher. After the Revolution of 1905, in the Russian Poland, Jews as national minority came to constitute their own political scene. These all social facts could have left long of no political consequences.<sup>14</sup>

In the rhetoric of the nationalist propaganda Jews became economic exploiter but as well moral corrupter debauching good Poles, but also antagonist to the Catholic faith, the real rulers of Big Business and the actual inspirer of Worker's International Movement. Jews were attacked not only on socioeconomic, but also on ethical grounds. *Last but not least* – they have been stigmatized as an enemy of Polish independence. After 1912, election to IV Duma in Warsaw, the program of the National-Democratic party was built on the rock of anti-Semitism. Till the last days before the WWI, National Democrats were ostensibly anti-liberal, anti-Marxist, openly and bitterly anti-Semitic.

Though the National Democrats as an entire movement tended to put their anti-Semitism on a political and economic basis, not on openly racial one as most anti-Semitic movements of the age, there was no recognizable distinction between their anti-Semitic vocabulary and the others of radical right.

Fight against Jews carried to National Democracy, and to Dmowski personally some other radical implications. Excluding Jews from the public sphere was possible only if it would be carried out in all European countries, if not all over the *civilized world*. The main theorist of Polish nationalist called for it in the series of his articles prepared before but published during the WWI.<sup>15</sup> Dmowski's integral nationalism found its direct enemy in Jews, but still opposition European vs. Asian countries was evoked. But Jews were only negative side of this emulation. Real challenge to *European civilization* in play for universal dominance was Asian societies.<sup>16</sup> During the war in Paris and then in London and finally while the Versailles Conference as a diplomatic representative of Poland, Dmowski didn't find out any significant partners to this political message. Later on in his political memoirs he claimed that the world leaders were during the Conference out of political reason.

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<sup>14</sup> See Theodore R. Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism. The "Jewish Question" in Poland, 1850-1914*, Northern Illinois University Press, DeKalb, Illinois 2006, s.121.

<sup>15</sup> See R. J. (R. Dmowski), *Duch narodowy i czynniki rozkładające*, (National spirit and decaying elements), „Sprawa Polska” (Polish Issue) No. 48-50, 1917.

<sup>16</sup> R. J., *Spoleczeństwo azjatyckie*, (Asian society) „Sprawa Polska (The Polish Issue), 1917.



Just after returning from Paris Dmowski had rejected current politics. But part of his political *credo* was taken up when economic and political crisis broke up in the late 1920s.

It was inevitable that the WWI stamped Poland with great problems. It's difficult to discuss whether international status or economic troubles were more in mind of the new Polish establishment. Sooner or later the Polish political elites had to solve them. It must be born in mind that the independent Poland between 1918 and 1939, despite short period from 1921-1926, was definitely a rightist, authoritarian country. Its governments advocated counter-revolutionary policy based on military victory with Soviet Russia in 1920. Same as the other regimes in region (e.g. Hungary, Romania) the Polish political elites saw themselves as a bulwark, *cordone sanitaire*, against Bolshevism and Soviet Russia.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, process of radicalization of some groups amongst the National Democrats has started out very early. The beginning of dissonances appeared in the early of 1920's with the foundation of All-Polish Youth (*Młodzież Wszechpolska*, 23 III 1922) and the murder of the first Polish president Gabriel Narutowicz (16 XII 1922). Then Dmowski was jointed in his hopes by the nationalist students and by some young intellectuals, who wanted to abolish the existing political and economic order so that the nation could be regenerated through the complete getting rid of Jews from public sphere. They appealed to the real interest of varied social groups. Still being one of the main parties of the right, National Democracy wanted to appeal all e.g. petty peasantry and deprived artisans.

Of course, we shouldn't limit our look to economic relations or just the balance of power and social interest. Dmowski as an informal leader of all Polish nationalists tried to tame those of youth in the nationalist camp who wanted to challenge economic relations very much. That was one of the most important reasons of the split in the Polish nationalist movement in the early thirties. Certainly, it was enormous strength of the radical nationalism, which dominated National Democracy in various groupings that it appeared to transcend such concerns and offered people a meaningful sense of political participation and secured them within the national community against the consequences of social and economic change.

In the early 1930s the main nationalist theorist experienced the tremendous political and ideological activity. But everywhere Dmowski has looked, as the 1930s drew to an end, he saw Jews. Of course Jews, in any political and socioeconomic sphere were only

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<sup>17</sup> On general: István Deák, Hungary In: *The European Right. A Historical Profile*, edited by Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1969, p.370. Compare E. Weber; *Romania*, idem, s. 512.

one facet of the problem. But the facet has integrated whole reality of the corrupt Western world. Humanistic, liberal and socialist ideas were, in any case, only masks behind which the Jews disintegrated and exploited *civilized countries*. All economy, politics and the foremost the moral order in the world resolved into the Jewish question. Some in the nationalist camp disagreed, but the phalanx of young nationalist intellectuals, politicians and publicist said the same. But Dmowski as an ideologist sought to more than a sober prophet of a doom and failure. Still he believed in a rebirth of *European nation* and sought to bring to his supporters the vision of a *new Europe*, and a reborn, *new Poland* within. By proclaiming the *National Revolution* against the Judaization of Western world (that meant not only Jews but also their 'flunkies' - the liberals, Freemasonry and socialist) he brought together the nationalist Social Darwinism (struggle for life and death) and anti-Semitic mythology into the political scenario.

But drawing direct examples from Nazi Germany, even if it was carried more weight as one supposes, was in the long perspective less probable. The Revisionist Germany remained in the interwar Poland one of the two mortal enemies. This conviction widely shared in society became one of the determining factors in Polish politics. Judged by this belief, the nationalist right openly flirting with Nazi ideology, the same as the radical left with its relations with the Soviet Russia, had to come to being "un-Polish" and undoubtedly deprived of an overwhelming popularity. Moreover, the basic traits of National Democracy's political legacy was until there bitter anti-Germanism. Dmowski as a political writer contributed to this legacy very much. Therefore in Polish case a radical anti-Semitic universalism was somehow contradicted with nationalism as such.

The short experience of parliamentary regime of 1920s had presented many Poles with a picture of anarchy, corruption of politicians and rabid social and ethnic conflicts. First of all country wanted order, but that didn't meant it was reluctant to social reforms. On the contrary! And the Piłsudski supporter after *coup d'état* in 1926 mostly obeyed these demands. The Piłsudski's regime possessed its stability thanks to the openly enjoyed patriotism or even state nationalism that characterized most Poles. Personally, Marshal Piłsudski as a hero of the wars for independence was perfectly suited for the head of the state. There was no greater accusation in interwar Poland that being called "un-Polish". In that sense opposition between Piłsudski's regime and National Democracy had to be something of a dispute in a big nationalist family. Thus under the Piłsudski semi-authoritarian dictatorship the chances of taking the power by the nationalist opposition were less than real. The radical groups of the nationalist camp remained outlawed just from the very beginning.

On the economic level Dmowski's solutions to world crisis of 1930s were rather conservative than radical one. Dmowski started out as a politician without any stark economical views then shifted toward nationalistic autarky, hostile to worldwide economic liberalism and the great industry for which the resolution of the Poland economic problems lay in supporting small family enterprises, specializing in skilled craft and farming, but at first eliminating the whole foreigners, mainly Jews from public life.

For the young nationalists who have been fascinated by totalitarian efficiency of German, and even Soviet economy there was anything attractive in his proposals. From the 1934 in consequence of the health problems Dmowski's political activity became less apparent. The criticism of Dmowski's personal hesitancy, coming first from socially radical youngsters became the background of the many splits into the nationalists' camp.

But, still Japan and the Far Asia returned in his geo-strategic considerations.<sup>18</sup> Why Japan, and from the early 1930s as well China were able to progress and to emulate in comparison with the gangrenous and declining West? They don't have the Jews, he answered. In this manner Dmowski interest of Japan was however more complex. Nevertheless, at first this proposition was still an opportunity for endeavoring nations which has just started to question the political order of the world. Japan in Far Eastern Asia was a significant example of that. Dmowski admired Japan's empirical achievements as prove of that social rule, although he rejected after the WWI imperialism as an ideological system. Moreover, he believed that Japan's nationalism was more vigorous and ideologically pure to regenerate its own society. Comparing with the main European radical rightist movements (e.g. Nazis and Italian fascists) Japanese nationalists represented the most creative element.

One gets a sense of this political program either in Dmowski's political writing of thirties - *Postwar World and Poland* (Świat Powojenny i Polska, 1930) and *Revolution*-(Przewrót, 1933) or in his two, published anonymously, belles-letters, in novels *In half a way* (W połowie drogi) in *Legacy* ( Dziedzictwo, 1932). Till the last of his journalistic activity he didn't lost his interest in Japan and its matters.<sup>20</sup> Dmowski died in January of 1939.

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<sup>18</sup> R. Dmowski, *Pierwiastki polityki japońskiej* ( The elements of Japan's politics) „Gazeta Warszawska” (The Warsaw's journal), No. 179-183, 185-188, 1932.

<sup>20</sup> See R. Dmowski, *Bunt w Tokio* ( *Mutiny In Tokio* ) , „Warszawski Dziennik Narodowy” (Warsaw's National Journal) No. 56, 1936, s.1.

## *Resume*

And now we can draw a few conclusions. Given the constraints of space I must restrict myself to a few points:

- 1) Dmowski as a political writer and as well as an energetic political leader must be seen in the context of his age and generation. Its origins and the reasons for its development lay in quest for independent political being but first and foremost for a radical modernization of a society. On the other hand, although Dmowski's activity was attuned to the distinct local tradition ought to be seen against a background of the similar European rightist thinkers of those days. The most frequently "villain" of this logic was Jew, who came to be depicted as the very personification of modernity. Dmowski's ardent anti-Semitism from the very beginning was a crucial aspect of this revolt against the legacy of the Enlightenment. In all his works, Dmowski thought to serve but one goal – the spiritual rebirth of Polish nation.
- 2) From the very outset, in this political thinking emulation of nations was treated as natural fact and central idea to the functioning of social reality. The nations of Far Asia, firstly and eminently Japan and then also China (from the 1930s) were evident challenge to declining the West. An interesting feature of Dmowski's logic shows characteristic change in treating some Asian countries firstly as anachronistic and unproductive societies, eventually as the civilized and cultured nations. Japanese and Chinese were consistently evoked in his political writing as a guarantee of racial purity. But still struggle for existence, eternal conflicts was for him a dominant rule of international relations. Dmowski has remained to some extent a European exclusivist. The metaphor of clash civilizations presented in Dmowski's late publications, was continued to reduce history to most simple semi-Manichean antagonism of every radical ideologies: Nationalist/ Jews; Aryans/Semites, West/East; Bourgeoisie/ Proletariat/. Mortal enemy vs. friend. Dmowski's case still thus presented the classic dilemma of the Right against the Orient.
- 3) Observed from this perspective Dmowski's anti-Semitic racism expresses a utopian nostalgia for a hierarchical society, which embraces universalistic measures similar to socialist ideologies. What complicates Dmowski's position on the Polish Right even more is that he took a position which was in a minority even among Polish

anti-Semites, a position which brings him closer to Nazi ideology. At least it tended to hierarchizations and exclusion, at worst it led to Holocaust.

- 4) In Polish sociopolitical context Dmowski's ideological legacy can be analyzed as a dream on political power and international position of nation seen from middle-size, undeveloped society with the great historical past which can not be forgettable. The attraction of his political proposal is that, it promises to take nation away from petty, corrupt present, back to the great past. In this respect, Dmowski still can be seen as a contemporary political writer to many Poles.
- 5) If Dmowski may be apprehended as a role-model of Anti-Enlightenment (*Le Anti-Lumieriete* according to Zeev Sternhell) tradition in Polish political thought; personally, he ought to be considered in somewhat at odds with the traditional images of Polish nationalists - in being indifferent and skeptical to religion, far individualistic in manner and scrupulous and patient in realizing his political plans. He was an exponent to some extent of what some historians called an anarchist of the right (*anarchiste de droite*).