

Political and economic aspects in Leon Orłowski's diplomatic activity

abstract

This doctoral dissertation presents the biography of Leon Orłowski, a diplomat in Polish foreign service, practically throughout the entire Second Polish Republic period, with particular emphasis on political and economic aspects of his diplomatic activity. The crowning point of Orłowski's career was the position of Extraordinary Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary in Hungary in 1936-1940. That period was most important for his career from the perspective of diplomatic activity. Before that, Orłowski was an official in Poland's Consular Office in New York, then Secretary of Polish Embassy in Washington, Head of Section in Foreign Ministry in Warsaw and Secretary of Polish Embassy in London. After completing his mission in Budapest, he never returned to active diplomatic service. In 1941 he emigrated to the United States of America, where he settled down and lived for over 35 years. In USA he was active in a number of Polonia (Polish diaspora) organizations and worked for the United Nations and Radio Free Europe. However, first and foremost he devoted his time to writing articles and books, mostly on history .

This dissertation is organized chronologically, following the years of Leon Orłowski's life (1891-1976). Identified stages of his life were treated in an equal manner, without a special emphasis on the "Hungarian period", as it was deemed that for the purpose of presenting political and economic aspects of Orłowski's activity, the time he spent as an official of diplomatic establishments abroad (as secretary or counsellor), especially in USA, is just as important as the time when he was managing the Polish embassy in Budapest. It was during his time in diplomatic establishments in the USA that Orłowski devoted the highest proportion of his diplomatic activity to economic issues, especially those related to commerce. During that time he developed two reports, important for that perspective, on production of cotton in Texas by Poles, as well as a guide for Polish entrepreneurs hoping to establish commercial relations with America. After the transfer to embassy in Washington he continued exploration of his economic interests. Among other things, he supervised production of new Polish coins in American mints. This initial period of his diplomatic career was very promising and conducive to development. After almost eight years spent in USA, he became one of Polish diplomats best versed in American issues. He maintained fairly good contacts both in political and business milieus.

He did not depart from the economic sphere after return to Foreign Ministry in Warsaw, either. Economic issues were particularly eminent in relations between Poland and

the Free City of Gdańsk and after Orłowski's transfer to the Anglo-Saxon Section. Some issues were in his purview when in Polish Embassy in London.

The high point of Orłowski's diplomatic career was his appointment as Extraordinary Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland in Budapest in 1936. Entire two chapters of this dissertation were devoted to a detailed analysis of that period of his life, determining the role he played in shaping Polish-Hungarian relations and evaluating his stance at the most sensitive time – the first two years of World War II – of his activity in Hungary. Experience gained during his long history of diplomatic service was used by Orłowski for the purpose of academic work, many years after conclusion of his diplomatic career. In his treatise “On Politics” (*O Polityce*) he based his deliberations not only on historical research, but also his own experience and thoughts. Orłowski's academic legacy includes more publications, and was described in a separate chapter; so was his activity during the emigration years .

Orłowski is an excellent example of a so-called “second row” diplomat – an official rather than a politician, someone, whose career was built not on high connections and personal relations, but first and foremost on knowledge and skills. He was valued highly, not only by his direct superiors. His strengths as a diplomat were noted also by the representatives of foreign countries.

This dissertation attempts to answer a number of questions pertaining not only to the person of Leon Orłowski, but also Polish diplomatic service, especially career paths of employees of the Foreign Ministry of the Second Polish Republic.

In order to provide a comprehensive view of Orłowski's diplomatic activity, emigration and published legacy, various source materials were used, preserved in Polish and foreign archives. The main body of source materials is composed of documents preserved outside of Poland, in particular in Józef Piłsudski Institute of America. Other sources include materials from: Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences of America in New York, Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London, Hungarian National Archive, Archive of Current Records in Warsaw, and National Library in Warsaw.

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