

**THE CLASH OF MORAL NATIONS: *IMPONDERABILIA* IN THE SECOND POLISH
REPUBLIC, 1926-1935**

by

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Dissertation Abstract

**The Clash of Moral Nations: *Imponderabilia* in the
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This dissertation examines the singlemost explosive political event of the Polish interwar period: Joseph Piłsudski's 1926 coup d'état and the period of "Sanacja", or "cleansing" that it inaugurated. I argue that the Sanacja's language of purification, health and rebirth resonated forcefully outside of the strictly political and military contexts in which the event is customarily considered. It is generally argued that Piłsudski carried out the coup in the name of political stability, and that his goal was to reform a corrupt and incompetent public service. As a mandate, however, the Sanacja was singularly imprecise; it favoured a rousing rhetorical appeal to *imponderabilia* – abstract invocations of morality, virtue and civic courage – over practical reform measures. The utopian vagueness of the Sanacja, the very malleability and mobility of its language, made it available to all, opponents and proponents alike, as a set of ideas with which to critique contemporary social, political, and moral ills, and as an idiom in which to articulate visions of what independent Poland should be. To supporters of Piłsudski, the Sanacja, with its appeals to active and responsible citizenship, held the cure for the spiritual and intellectual malaise that afflicted post-partition Poland. For right-Catholic-nationalist opponents of the coup, the Sanacja, supported as it was by agents of secular reform, was itself evidence of moral rot. This radical polarization of interwar Polish society underlies the argument that Piłsudski's coup should be understood as the dramatic clash of what contemporary writer Maria Dąbrowska termed Poland's "moral nations".

This dissertation is organized around some of the various ways in which different groups and individuals responded to, used and understood the Sanacja. It draws upon a

wide variety of texts, including contemporary press coverage, the personal and professional papers of notable interwar figures (such as those of Zofia Moraczewska, Aniela Samotyhowa and Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna), and organization records (such as those of the Women's Democratic Election Committee, the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, and the Society for the Moral Rebirth of the Nation). Other personages who figure in this study include: Tadeusz Boy Żeleński, Zygmunt Wasilewski, Aleksander Świętochowski, and Adolf Nowaczyński.

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It was during a conversation with Joe Kadezabek and Mary Catherine Moran, in the graduate student offices of Carleton University in Ottawa, that I first considered leaving British history and embarking on an exciting foray into the world of eastern

Europe. Many other friends and colleagues were very important to me during the years that I worked on this project. I thank Gillian Burnett, Hilary Earl, Mark Loudon, Tracy McDonald, Joe Perry, Ina Puchala and Rebecca Wittmann for listening, advising, relating and motivating. Alexander Prusin and Aleksander Panev both read drafts of the dissertation, and offered many useful suggestions for improvement.

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My two years studying British History at Carleton University stand out for me as particularly inspiring times. Deborah Gorham did more than an M.A. supervisor ever needed to do. She taught me much about what it is to be a good historian and a feminist. Her continuing support means a great deal to me. Pamela Walker's enthusiasm for History was contagious, and I thank her for always having the time to listen and to advise and to tell it like it is.

I began my doctoral work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where I learned a great deal from many wonderful professors and students. I would especially like to thank Keith Hitchins for his incredible kindness and understanding during what was for me a very difficult year.

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I dedicate this effort to my father, Józef Plach (1922-1994), and to my mother, Aniela Plach. My parents taught me how to put a Ph.D. in perspective and to understand that book-learning has its limits, too.

Table of Contents

Introduction:	Inventing the Second Republic, Re-Inventing Poland	1-35
	Three Days that Shook the Republic: 12 to 15 May 1926	11
	The Imponderabilia	19
	Narrating the Sanacja	28
Chapter 1:	“A Lack of Moral Vigour. That is Where Poland’s Fall Will Be.”	36-89
	Postwar Europe and Moral Crisis	39
	Moral Citizenship in the Second Republic	44
	Writing the Moral Crisis	51
	The Crisis Mounts: The National Forum on Morality	58
	“Journalistic Troubadours of Moral Rebirth”	61
	National Voices Against Immorality	72
	Manipulating Morality and the Sanacja	82
	Conclusion	89
Chapter 2:	Poland Writes to Piłsudski	90-131
	Secretary Kazimiera Hłakowiczówna	92
	Entering the World of Imponderabilia	104
	“A Peasant and Old Woman Lament”	111
	“My Dearest and Beloved Grandfather”	117
	Citizen Piłsudski: Sculptor of Souls, or the Bandit from Belvedere?	125
	Conclusion	131
Chapter 3:	Building the Army of Moral Action: Warsaw’s Society for the Moral Rebirth of the Nation (<i>Towarzystwo Odrodzenia Moralnego Ojczyzny</i>), 1926-1932	132-186
	Organizing for Rebirth	137
	<i>The Way</i> and Piłsudski-ite Neo-Romanticism	141
	Abramowski and the Moral Revolution	150
	The Inactive Army	161
	“A Title and Projects, But No Concrete Results”	170
	A Women’s Army	179
	The Last Days	183
	Conclusion	186

Chapter 4:	The Sanacja and Women's Activism	189-249
	Zofia Moraczewska and the History of Women in Poland	191
	Toward the Ideal Citizen: The Sanacja-Era Mother-Pole	197
	The Women's Democratic Election Committee	203
	<i>(Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet) 1927-1928</i>	
	The March 1928 Elections	211
	The Women's Union for Citizenship Work	220
	<i>(Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet) 1928-1933</i>	
	The Women in Action	228
	The Women's Union and the Political Sanacja	235
	Conclusion	247
Chapter 5:	The Play-Boy in the Sanacja Nation	250-299
	Writing Boy	253
	The Curtain Opens on Boy's Sanacja	256
	Publicism in the Sanacja's Golden Age	264
	The Play-Boy Betroths Miss Sanacja	271
	The Sanacja, Jews, Boy-shevism and Bolshevism	282
	Conclusion	298
Conclusion:	Assessing the Spring of Miracles	300-309
Bibliography:		310-354

Introduction: Inventing the Second Republic, Re-Inventing Poland

It would be lethal if I, taking after many Poles, delighted in the period of independence (1918-1939); if I did not dare to look it straight in the eyes with the coldest lack of ceremony. I ask that you not consider my coolness a cheap striving for effect. The air of freedom was given to us so that we could begin to come to terms with an enemy more tormenting than the taskmasters we have had up to now: ourselves. After our struggles with Russia, with Germany, a struggle with Poland awaited us. It is not surprising, therefore, that independence turned out to be more burdensome and humiliating than bondage. As long as we were absorbed with the revolt against a foreign power, questions such as 'Who are we?', 'What are we to make of ourselves?', lie dormant, but independence awakened the riddle that was slumbering within us.¹

Witold Gombrowicz (1904-1969), 1955

Gombrowicz's allusion to the many challenges which independence introduced provides an intriguing starting point for this project, one which has at its core an interest in the ways in which citizens of the Second Republic (1918-1939) might have responded to the questions posed above. This dissertation explores these questions through the lens provided by Joseph Piłsudski's May 1926 coup d'état and the period of *Sanacja*, or cleansing, that it inaugurated in the Second Polish Republic.

Partitioned between Austria, Prussia and Russia in the late eighteenth century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was recreated as the Second Republic in 1918.² With

¹ Witold Gombrowicz, *Diary. Volume One 1953-1956*, trans. Lillian Vallee (1957; rpt. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1988), p. 151. This statement is taken from a Saturday in 1955. For an introduction to Gombrowicz, see: Hanjo Berressem, *Lines of Desire. Reading Gombrowicz's Fiction with Lacan* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998).

² On the re-creation of the Polish state and on politics in the immediate post-war period, see: Michał Pietrzak, *Rządy parlamentarne w Polsce w latach 1919-1926* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1969); Tadeusz Piszczkowski, *Odbudowanie Polski 1914-1921* (London: Orbis, 1969), pp. 132-139; Andrzej Ajnenkiel, *O rządów ludowych do przewrotu majowego. Zarys dziejów politycznych Polski 1918-1926* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Wiedza Powszechna, 1978); Janusz Żarnowski, "Odbudowa niepodległości w 1918 r. w historiografii polskiej", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 85: 4 (1978): 818-830; Janusz Pajewski, *Odbudowa państwa polskiego 1914-1918* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1980); Szymon Rudnicki, *Działalność polityczna polskich konserwatystów 1918-1926* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1981); Janusz Żarnowski, ed., *Życie polityczne w Polsce 1918-1919* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1985); Jan Tomicki, *II Rzeczpospolita. Oczekiwania i rzeczywistość* (Warsaw: Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1986);

independence began a fantastically challenging task of national reconstruction.³ The new state, with a multi-ethnic population of 27.2 million in 1921, was an economically and socially underdeveloped one.⁴ Since the very inception of the Second Republic,

Piotr Wróbel, *Listopadowe dni - 1918. Kalendarium narodzin II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1988); Andrzej Friszke, *O kształt niepodległej* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Więzi, 1989); Paul Latawski, ed., *The Reconstruction of Poland, 1914-1923* (London: Macmillan, 1992); Michał Śliwa, *Polska myśl polityczna w I połowie XX wieku* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1993); John S. Micgiel, ed., *Wilsonian East Central Europe: Current Perspectives* (New York: The Piłsudski Institute, 1995); and Bożena Bańkiewicz, Antoni Dudek, Jacek Majchrowski, *Główne nurty współczesnej polskiej myśli politycznej*, tom 1 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1996).

³ Historian Edward Wynot makes the point, though only in passing, that we could treat the Second Republic as a "post-colonial" society. There is much in this suggestion that deserves further exploration. See: Edward D. Wynot, Jr., *Warsaw Between the World Wars: Profile of the Capital City in a Developing Land, 1918-1939* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs / New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. v and 41 and ch. 8. Much work remains to be done on eastern Europe and its colonial legacy. For a general theoretical introduction to the literature on colonialism, see: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979). For colonialism in the Balkan context, see: Milica Bakic-Hayden and Robert M. Hayden, "Orientalist Variations on the Theme 'Balkans': Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics", *Slavic Review* 51: 1 (Spring 1992): 1-15; Maria Todorova, "The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention", *Slavic Review* 53: 2 (Summer 1994): 453-482; Milica Bakic-Hayden, "Nestling Orientalisms: The Case of the Former Yugoslavia", *Slavic Review* 54: 4 (Winter 1995): 917-931; and K.E. Fleming, "Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography", *American Historical Review* 105: 4 (October 2000): 1218-1233.

⁴ The population statistic comes from: Janusz Żarnowski, *Spoleczeństwo Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918-1939* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1973), p. 19. Żarnowski has relied on the *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny* (1938). For an analysis of the state of the Polish economy in the Second Republic, see: Zbigniew Landau and Jerzy Tomaszewski, *The Polish Economy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1985). See also the various other titles by Zbigniew Landau and by Jerzy Tomaszewski in the bibliography, as well as: Jan Kofman, "The Political Role of Big Business Circles in Poland Between the Two World Wars", *Acta Poloniae Historica* 43 (1981): 151-120; Benedykt Zientara et al., *Dzieje gospodarcze Polski do roku 1939* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1988); Wojciech Roszkowski, "The Growth of the State Sector in the Polish Economy in the Years 1918-1926", *The Journal of European Economic History* 18: 1 (Spring 1989): 105-126; Wojciech Morawski, "Town-Country Economic Relations Versus Stability of the System of Parliamentary Democracy in Poland of the 1920s," *East European Quarterly* XXIV: 1 (1990): 47-56; and Główny Urząd Statystyczny, ed., *Historia Polski w liczbach* (Warsaw: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1994), pp. 157 and 170. For a good background discussion of the economic and social challenges that the Second Republic faced, see: Antony Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland 1921-1939. The Crisis of Constitutional Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), ch. 1. For general surveys of the economic development of the whole of the east European region, see: Iván T. Berend and György Ránki, *Economic Development in East-Central Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); Daniel Chirot, ed., *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe: Economics and Politics from the Middle Ages until the Early Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Daniel Chirot, "Ideology, Reality, and Competing Models of Development in Eastern Europe Between the Two World Wars", *East European Politics and Societies* 3: 3 (Fall 1989): 378-411; and Jan Kofman, *Economic Nationalism and Development: Central and Eastern Europe Between the Two World Wars*, trans. Maria Chmielewska-Szljajfer (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997). For western Europe, see: David S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

moreover, one political crisis after another shook citizens' confidence and fomented a general sense of disappointment with the quality of independence.

Many pointed to the nature of the March 1921 Constitution for creating the political problems.⁵ The March Constitution was widely recognized as a progressive and democratic document: it granted the right of franchise to all citizens - regardless of ethnicity, religion, race or sex - safeguarded their basic freedoms, and guaranteed their full protection under the law. Many also argued, however, that in the establishing a system of proportional representation in the Sejm, the lower house of the Polish parliament, and in granting pre-eminency to this body over the executive branch of government, the constitution had laid the groundwork for an impractical and ultimately disastrous *Sejmocracy* ("Parliamentocracy").⁶ Under the political system established by the Constitution, parliamentary majorities were difficult to attain and to maintain, and the need to form coalition governments prevailed. Coalitions were, however, also difficult to sustain, especially in an environment marked by fierce and often irreconcilable political differences. Politics in the Second Republic was therefore defined by a succession of short-lived, unstable and ineffective governments.⁷ A total of fourteen governments had

⁵ On the constitutional question from 1918 to 1921, see: Stanisław Krukowski, "Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z 1921 r.," in *Konstytucje Polski. Studia monograficzne z dziejów polskiego konstytucjonalizmu*, tom. 2, ed. Marian Kallas (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990), pp. 19-24; I. Lee Blackwood, "Czech and Polish National Democracy at the Dawn of Independent Statehood, 1918-1919", *East European Politics and Societies* 4: 3 (Fall 1990): 469-488; Rett R. Ludwikowski, *Continuity and Change in Poland. Conservatism in Polish Political Thought* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991); Mark Brzezinski, *The Struggle for Constitutionalism in Poland* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 50-51; Jacek Jędruch, *Constitutions, Elections and Legislatures of Poland, 1493-1993. A Guide to their History* (1982; rpt. New York: EJJ Books, 1998), pp. 267-305; and Michael Bernhard, "Institutional Choice and the Failure of Democracy: The Case of Interwar Poland", *East European Politics and Societies* 13: 1 (Winter 1999): 34-70. For an English-language selection from the 1921 Constitution, see: Robert Machray, *The Poland of Piłsudski, 1914-1936* (1936; rpt. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1962), pp. 475-486.

⁶ The system of proportional representation used in Poland was a modified form of the d'Hondt method. This describes a system of proportional representation in which larger parties are favoured. In the Second Republic, 72 of the Sejm's 444 seats were reserved for those parties which had nominated candidates for at least six of the country's sixty-four constituencies. See: Alexander J. Groth, "Proportional Representation in Prewar Poland", *Slavic Review* 1: 23 (March 1964): 104 and 106.

⁷ On politics in the early years of the Republic, see: Andrzej Ajnenkiel, *Parlamentaryzm II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1975), pp. 106-109; Władysław Czapliński, *Dzieje Sejmu*

attempted to govern Poland from 1918 to May 1926. By the mid-1920s, there were almost one hundred political parties in Poland, and close to a third of these were represented in the Sejm.⁸

The main political currents of the period were represented by four broad groupings. The first of these was the nationalist-right camp, and was composed of National Democracy (*Narodowa Demokracja*, ND) and their allies.⁹ National Democracy's co-founder, elder statesman, theoretician and symbolic leader throughout the interwar period was Roman Dmowski (1864-1939).¹⁰ Dmowski espoused an integral Polish nationalism and believed that ethnic and national bonds were the highest forms of social cohesion; he envisioned a Poland that was ethnically homogenous, anti-German, industrialized, and Catholic.¹¹ The National Democrats' political party (and the strongest

polskiego do roku 1939 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1984); and Andrzej Ajnenkiel, *Historia Sejmu polskiego*, tom 2, cz. 2: *II Rzeczpospolita* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1989).

⁸ Peter D. Stachura, *Poland in the Twentieth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 27; and Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, pp.52 and 112-114. Sejm deputies were part of parliamentary clubs; by 1922, there were 17 parliamentary clubs. Deputies could move in and out of clubs as they saw fit, and they often did so with the hope of forming stronger coalitions. This constant shuffling, however, rendered the work of governing extremely difficult. See: Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski, *Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski, tom II: 1914-1939*, 2nd ed. (London: B. Świdorski, 1967), pp. 178 and 186-187; and Jerzy Holzer, *Mozaika polityczna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1974), pp. 111-112

⁹ On the use of the term "nationalist camp", see: Krzysztof Kawalec, ed., *Roman Dmowski o ustroju politycznym państwa* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996), p. 286.

¹⁰ On Dmowski, see: Roman Wapiński, "Niektóre problemy ewolucji ideowo-politycznej Endecji w latach 1919-1939", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXXIII: 4 (1966): 861-877; Roman Wapiński, "Miejsce Narodowej Demokracji w życiu politycznym II Rzeczypospolitej", *Dzieje Najnowsze* I (1969): 47-62; Andrzej Micewski, *Roman Dmowski* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Verum, 1971); A.M. Fountain II, *Roman Dmowski: Party, Tactics, Ideology 1895-1907* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); Roman Wapiński, *Roman Dmowski* (Lublin, Poland: Wydawnictwo Lubelskiej, 1988); Kawalec, ed., *Roman Dmowski*; and Krzysztof Kawalec, "Myśl polityczna Romana Dmowskiego", *Przegląd Zachodni* LX: 3 (July-September 1999): 41-58. For a selection of Dmowski's writings from the period in question, see: Mariusz Kułakowski, *Roman Dmowski w świetle listów i wspomnień*, tom II (London: Gryf Publications Ltd., 1972). Brian Porter's recent work on Dmowski and on the National Democratic camp prior to the Great War is extremely interesting. See: Brian Porter, "Who is a Pole and Where is Poland? Territory and Nation in the Rhetoric of Polish National Democracy", *Slavic Review* 51: 4 (Winter 1992): 639-653; "Democracy and Discipline in Late Nineteenth-Century Poland", *Journal of Modern History* 71 (June 1999): 346-393; and *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). For a succinct elaboration of the differences between Dmowski and Piłsudski, see: Piotr S. Wandycz, "Poland's Place in Europe in the Concepts of Piłsudski and Dmowski", *East European Politics and Societies* 4: 3 (Fall 1990): 451-468.

¹¹ On National Democracy, see: Jerzy Janusz Terej, *Idee, mity, realia. Szkice do dziejów Narodowej Demokracji* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1971); Jerzy Holzer, "The Political Right in Poland, 1918-

and largest party of the right) was called the People's National Union (*Związek Ludowo-Narodowy*, ZL-N), and from 1928, the National Party (*Stronnictwo Narodowe*, SN).¹²

Second, there was the political left, dominated by the powerful Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*, PPS). The PPS blended a commitment to social democratic ideas about social justice and egalitarianism with a steadfast commitment to Polish independence.¹³ Third, there was the peasant movement. The right-wing Polish People's Union – Piast (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – Piast*, PSL-Piast), and the left-wing Polish People's Union – Liberation (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – Wyzwolenie*, PSL-Liberation) were two of the most important peasant parties. The peasants were interested, first and foremost, in securing land reform in the Republic.¹⁴

Lastly, there was the camp of Józef Piłsudski. The Piłsudski-ites (*Piłsudczycy*) included a motley assortment of men and women, many of whom were drawn from the intelligentsia stratum, and some of whom had been or continued to be involved with socialist politics. Many had also been a part of the famed Polish Legions that had been organized to spearhead the fight for an independent Polish state during the Great War. The Belvedere camp,¹⁵ as this group was also sometimes called, shared an attachment to

1939", *Journal of Contemporary History* 12 (1977): 395-412; Roman Wapiński, *Narodowa Demokracja 1893-1939* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1980), pp. 141-163; Krzysztof Kawalec, *Narodowa Demokracja wobec faszyzmu 1922-1939* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1989); and R. F. Leslie, ed., *The History of Poland since 1863* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 111-133.

¹² On the formation of the ZL-N, see: Holzer, "The Political Right in Poland", pp. 398-399.

¹³ On the Polish Socialist Party, see: Henryk Jabłoński, *Polityka Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej w czasie wojny 1914-1918* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1958); and Jerzy Holzer, *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna w latach 1917-1919* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1962).

¹⁴ On the early peasant movement in the Second Republic, see: Stanisław Lato, "Walka ruchu ludowego o demokratyczny charakter państwa polskiego 1918-1939", in *Ruch ludowy a sprawa niepodległości*, ed. Alicja Więzikowa (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1969), pp. 71-75; Stanisław Lato and Witold Stankiewicz, *Programy Stronnictw Ludowych. Zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1969), pp. 146-171; Jan Jachymek, *Mysł polityczna PSL Wyzwolenie 1918-1931* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1983); Józef Ryszard Szaflik, "Ruch ludowy w okresie Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej", in *Życie polityczne w Polsce 1918-1939*, ed. Janusz Żarnowski (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1985), pp. 89-90; Jan Borkowski, *Ludowcy w II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1987); and Stefan Inglot, ed., *Historia chłopów polskich* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1992), pp. 201-234.

¹⁵ Piłsudski lived in Warsaw's Belvedere Palace while he was Head of State from 1918 to 1922; hence the designation "Belvedere camp".

nineteenth-century Polish romanticism, to the “brotherhood of nations”, and to the multi-ethnic heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Piłsudski-ites were further defined by a fierce loyalty to Piłsudski himself, and considered the National Democrats their most formidable enemies.¹⁶ The Piłsudski-ites did not have a definable political structure or party until after the coup d'état of 1926, though their ideology and political goals had been taking shape ever since independence.¹⁷

By the early 1920s, Józef Piłsudski had devoted himself to Poland in a variety of remarkable ways: he had been an anti-tsarist socialist revolutionary in the Russian partition during the late nineteenth century; a founding member of the Polish Socialist Party; and an early editor of the influential underground socialist newspaper, *The Worker* (*Robotnik*). Piłsudski had also been a dominating personality in the Legions, and he himself had commanded the First Brigade. Piłsudski was the classic representative of his generation, a generation born into the conspiratorial atmosphere of the period following the failed January Uprising of 1863/64 against the Russians; this was the generation that had played a key role in the independence struggle.¹⁸ Piłsudski was cast, then as now, as the inheritor of the romantic-insurrectionary tradition of the nineteenth century.¹⁹ He was a resolute patriot and an indefatigable proponent of Polish independence, Poland's first Marshal since 1920, the Head of State from 1918 to 1922, and the Chief of the General

¹⁶ Andrzej Garlicki, *U źródeł obozu belwederskiego* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1978); Władysław T. Kulesza, *Koncepcje ideowo-polityczne obozu rządzącego w Polsce w latach 1926-1935* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1985), pp. 34-38; and Holzer, *Mozaika polityczna*, pp. 77-78.

¹⁷ On the difficulty of defining the ideology of the Piłsudski-ites, see: Garlicki, *U źródeł obozu belwederskiego*, p. 5.

¹⁸ Historian Bohdan Cywiński has referred to the post-1863 generation as the generation of “niepokornych”, or “the defiant ones”, those who were neither humble nor submissive. For a discussion of the ways in which the January Uprising shaped a generation, see: Bohdan Cywiński, *Niepokornych* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krag, 1984); Garlicki, *U źródeł obozu belwederskiego*, ch. 1; Roman Wapiński, “Pokolenia Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 90: 3 (1983): 483-504, see esp. p. 494; and Roman Wapiński, *Pokolenia Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1991). For a discussion of generations and women, see: Roman Wapiński, “Kobiety i życie publiczne – przemiany pokoleniowe”, in *Równe prawa i nierówne szanse: kobiety w Polsce międzywojennej*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2000), pp. 25-36.

Staff from 1918 to 1923. Piłsudski was integral to the definition of Polish nationalism in the Second Republic; he was Poland's greatest romantic hero, Poland's white knight and saviour.

One of the most ominous symbols of the extent of the political polarization in the Second Republic emerged late in 1922, during the first regularly scheduled elections.²⁰ In the November elections to the Sejm and the Senate, the National Democrats, as part of an electoral alliance called the Christian National Unity Association (*Chrześcijański Związek Jedności Narodu*) – “Chjena” to its detractors – won the greatest number of seats.²¹ In the Presidential elections of December, however, the National Democrats' candidate for President failed to win. Instead, the National Assembly (the Sejm plus the Senate) elected Gabriel Narutowicz (1865-1922)²² by a vote of 289 to 227 as the first President of the Second Republic.²³

¹⁹ Jan Starzewski, “Obraz Duszy”, in *Idea i czyn Józefa Piłsudskiego*, eds. Waclaw Sieroszewski, et al. (Warsaw: Biblioteka Dział Naukowych, 1934), p. 102.

²⁰ On the partial elections of 1919 (the elections were held only in those areas that were controlled by the Polish army), see: Hugh Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe between the Wars* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1962), pp. 157-159; Wiesław Władyka, “Obyczaje polityczne (o polskiej kulturze politycznej u progu Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej),” in *Rok 1918, tradycje i oczekiwania*, ed. Andrzej Garlicki (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1978); and Władysław Czapliński, *Dzieje Sejmu polskiego do roku 1939* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1984).

²¹ “Chjena” sounds like “hyena” in Polish, and thus this was a derogatory name for the new electoral alliance. The Christian National Unity Association included, in addition to the National Democrats, the Christian National Party and the Christian Democratic Party (Christian Democracy, or “Chadecja”). The Association was also known as “Number 8” (“Ósemka”) because it happened to occupy the eighth place on the ballot. The Christian National Unity Association took 163 out of the 444 available seats in the Sejm. For details on the results of the 1922 elections, see: Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, pp. 60 and 101. For an analysis of the failed attempts to create a political centre in the Second Republic up to 1926, see: Iwona Malinowska, “Polskie centrum parlamentarne 1919-1926”, *Przegląd Historyczny* LXXXI: 3-4 (1990): 581-610. For a brief English-language introduction to the political divisions in the first decade of the Republic, see: A.J. Groth, “Polish Elections 1919-1928”, *Slavic Review* 24: 3 (September 1965): 653-666.

²² Daria i Tomasz Nałęcz, “Gabriel Narutowicz, prezydent Rzeczypospolitej 14 XII - 16 XII 1922”, in *Prezydenci i premierzy Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, eds. Andrzej Chojnowski and Piotr Wróbel (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1992), pp. 35-48; and Leslie, *The History of Poland*, pp. 111-133.

²³ Narutowicz represented PSL-Liberation. The National Democrats' candidate was Count Maurycy Zamoyski, while PSL-Piast put forward Stanisław Wojciechowski. The Polish Socialist Party was represented by Ignacy Daszyński, and the national minorities by Jan Baudouin de Courtenay. On the presidential elections, see: Holzer, *Mozaika polityczna*, pp. 77-78.

Narutowicz's victory sparked violent street demonstrations and riots by the nationalist right. In the vicious press polemics that grew out of the election, the right concluded that Narutowicz was not a legitimate President of Poland, as he had won the election only with the decisive votes, as they quipped, of the "foreign nationalities" - the Jews and the Germans²⁴ - and with some left-wing votes as well. Narutowicz, furthermore, was regarded as Piłsudski's favoured candidate for the Presidency.²⁵ Just one week after his election, while he was attending an art opening in Warsaw, President Narutowicz was assassinated by Eligiusz Niewiadomski (1869-1923), a supporter of National Democracy and a passionate opponent of Piłsudski.²⁶ In certain right-nationalist circles, the assassin was raised to the status of a hero.²⁷

²⁴ The non-Polish minorities formed about 30% of the population of the Second Republic. The Ukrainians were the most numerous ethnic minority at 15 %, followed by the Jews at 8 %; the Germans, Belarusians and Lithuanians constituted the remainder. Poland signed a Minorities Treaty on 28 June 1919. See: Groth, "The Legacy of Three Crises", pp. 565-567. On minorities, see: Stephan Horak, *Poland and Her National Minorities, 1919-1939: A Case Study* (New York: Vintage Press, 1961).

²⁵ Piłsudski had himself refused to run for the Presidency because he considered the office to be a fatally emasculated one. See: Machray, *Poland of Piłsudski*, p. 242. The nationalist-right had lobbied hard to create a weak Presidency and to thereby prevent Piłsudski, who was most likely to fill this position, from wielding too much power. The President had no powers of veto, and could not dissolve the Sejm unless he had the consent of three-fifths of the Senate. For a review of the process for electing the President of the Republic, see: Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, pp. 45-48; Bernhard, "Institutional Choice and the Failure of Democracy", pp. 55-56; and Krukowski, "Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z 1921 r.", pp. 84-93.

²⁶ Eligiusz Niewiadomski, *Kartki z więzienia* (Poznań: Wielkopolska Księgarnia Nakł. K. Rzepeckiego, 1923).

²⁷ On Narutowicz's election and assassination, see the articles by the nationalist-right politician and publicist, Stanisław Stroński (1882-1955): "Ich prezydent", *Rzeczpospolita* Nr. 337 (10 December 1922); and "Przeszkoda", *Rzeczpospolita* Nr. 341 (14 December 1922); rpt. in Daria Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem: batalie publicystyczne II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich, 1993), pp. 16-18 and 24. On Stroński, see: Bolesław Wierzbiański, "Stroński - dziennikarz", in Antoni Bogusławski et al., eds., *Stanisław Stroński w 50-lecie pracy pisarskiej* (Kent: The Polish Poets Press, 1954), p. 65; and Janusz Faryś, *Stanisław Stroński: Biografia polityczna do 1939 roku* (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 1990). For contemporary analyses of Stroński, see: Marjan Porczak, *Rewolucja majowa 1926 i jej skutki* (Kraków: Nakładem Autora, 1927), pp. 21-22; and Bernard Singer, "'Profesor Stroński", *Nasz Przegląd* (15 May 1929); rpt. in Bernard Singer, *Od Witosa do Sławka* (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1962), pp. 54-57. For the Polish Socialist Party's views of the assassination, see the articles reprinted from *The Worker (Robotnik)* in Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem*, pp. 34-47. For an eye-witness account of the assassination, see: Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna, "Wspomnienie o Prezydencie Narutowiczu", in Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna, *Wspomnienia i reportaże*, eds. Jacek Biesiada and Aleksandra Woszczyńska (Warsaw: Wiąz, 1997), pp. 189-193. Iłakowiczówna's article originally appeared in *The Polish Gazette (Gazeta Polska)* dated 16 December 1932. The assassination is dramatized in a film entitled, *Śmierć Prezydenta: Narutowicz*.

Speaking to the Senate just after the assassination, the Speaker of the Sejm, Maciej Rataj (1884-1940), commented on what had happened:

The whole of Poland condemns this act [the assassination]....But [we must recognize that] these sorts of madmen could only have been nurtured by an atmosphere of jealousy and hate, the kind that has unfortunately become prevalent in Poland from the moment of its resurrection.... We must cleanse this atmosphere if we wish to maintain unity and the independence of the country.²⁸

The assassination widened the gulf between, on the one hand, the Poland of the nationalist camp, and on the other, the Poland of the political left and the progressive liberal-democrats, grouped, at least for a time, into a single polarity.²⁹ As one historian has stated, the sides that emerged at this time depicted each other not merely as political competitors, but as “enemies” that had to be combated and eliminated.³⁰ The political and cultural analyses of the time reveal a great deal about competing ideas regarding “who” had a right to participate in Polish politics, and indeed, about who constituted a legitimate citizen of Poland. The assassination in 1922 of the first President of the newly independent nation marked a turning point in the Republic’s short history, and further poisoned an already tense political and social environment. Independence was fast becoming, as Gombrowicz had suggested, “more humiliating than bondage”.

Though some measure of calm was achieved by January of 1923, new tensions soon emerged. On 17 May 1923, the right-nationalist People’s National Union, Christian Democracy, and the right-wing branch of the Polish peasant movement, the Piasts, signed the Lanckorona Pact (*Pakt Lanckoroński*) for the purpose of establishing a government. The government which emerged from this coalition was called, like its predecessor of

²⁸ Maciej Rataj, Speech to the Senate, 21 December 1922, as rpt. in: Maciej Rataj, *Wskazania obywatelskie i polityczne. Wybór pism i przemówień z lat 1919-1938*, ed. Stanisław Lato (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1987). See also: Maciej Rataj, *Pamiętniki 1918-1927*, ed. Jan Dębski (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1965), pp. 134-140.

²⁹ Daria Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy: Inteligencja wobec niepodległości* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1994), p. 7.

³⁰ Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem*, p. 14. The reference to “enemies” comes from: Wiesław Władyka, “Śmierć prezydenta – grudzień 1922”, in *ibid.*

1922, the Christian National Unity Association (or pejoratively, “*Chjeno-Piast*”); it served under the Premiership of the Piast leader, Wincenty Witos (1874-1945)³¹ from May to December 1923. The coalition was marked by a desire to create a “Polish national character” in the state and in educational institutions, by deep chauvinism, anti-Semitism and virulent anti-Communism. The new government also outlined plans to introduce basic changes to the structure of military command. In general, the Lanckorona government raised the ire of the political left, of the national minorities, and especially of Piłsudski and his supporters.³²

In a memorable speech given at Warsaw’s Hotel Bristol on 3 July 1923, Piłsudski reflected on the events of the last half year. He stated plainly that he could not and would not participate in a political system which was burdened with what he referred to as “the moral responsibility” for the assassination of President Narutowicz; he resigned from his post as Chief of the General Staff, left active political life, and began a period of

³¹ On Witos, see: Bernard Singer, *Od Witosia do Sławka* (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1962); Andrzej Zakrzewski, “Wincenty Witos – Chłopski mąż stanu w latach 1918-1926”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXXV: 3 (1968): 565-594; Jan Borkowski, “Wincenty Witos w naszej historiografii i publicystyce: Uwagi krytyczne”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXXVIII: 1 (1978): 103-130; and Andrzej Zakrzewski, *Wincenty Witos* (Warsaw: Iskry, 1985). See also Witos’ memoir: *Moje wspomnienia* (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1965). A part of the memoir pertaining to the coup has been reprinted in: Jan Borkowski, ed., *Józef Piłsudski o państwie i armii w świetle wspomnień i innych dokumentów* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985), pp. 142-145.

³² The peasants entered into this coalition with the nationalist right on the promise that the new government would move swiftly to implement the land reform bill that had been passed by the Sejm in 1920. See: Wiesław Bembenek, “Ludowcy w dyskusji nad reformą rolną w Sejmie I kadencji (1922-1927)”, in *Chłopi, naród, kultura*, tom 2, *Działalność polityczna ruchu ludowego*, ed. Stanisław Dąbrowski (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1996), p. 129. The Lanckorona text was signed by Stanisław Gąbiński and Marian Seyda of the People’s National Union; Wincenty Witos and Władysław Kiemik of PSL-Piast; and Wojciech Korfanty and Józef Chaciński of the Christian Democrats. For the text of the agreement, see: “Pakt Lanckoroński”, in *Druga Rzeczpospolita: Wybór tekstów źródłowych*, eds. Szymon Rudnicki and Piotr Wróbel (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1990), pp. 124-137. On Lanckorona, see: Henryk Jabłoński, “Konserwatyści przed przewrotem majowym 1926 r.”, *Przegląd Historyczny* 57: 4 (1966): 610-633; Alexander J. Groth, “The Legacy of Three Crises: Parliament and Ethnic Issues in Prewar Poland”, *Slavic Review* 27: 3 (September 1968): 572; Henryk Jabłoński, *Z rozważań o II Rzeczypospolitej* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1987), pp. 429-430; and Wiesław Bembenek, “Ludowcy w dyskusji nad reformą rolną w Sejmie I kadencji (1922-1927)”, in *Chłopi, naród, kultura*, tom 2, in *Działalność polityczna ruchu ludowego*, ed. Stanisław Dąbrowski (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1996), p. 129.

semi-retirement in his villa in Sulejówek, located on the outskirts of Warsaw.³³ With these actions and these words, Piłsudski cemented his position as the leader of the opposition to the nationalist camp, whom he blamed for the unqualified mess in which the Republic found itself.³⁴ Piłsudski would re-emerge with dramatic flourish in mid-May of 1926.

Three Days that Shook the Republic: 12 to 15 May 1926

When Wincenty Witos and the right-nationalist coalition that he led formed the government once again on 10 May 1926, riots broke out across Warsaw.³⁵ The formation of another “Chjeno-Piast” government reminded people of the devastating inflation, unemployment and worker unrest that had marked Witos’ earlier government of 1923, and was regarded by many as a precursor to wholesale domination of Poland by the nationalist-right.³⁶ The sense of desperation and fear among a populace already dealing with serious economic crisis was raised to dramatic heights. The new Witos government would last only five days.

When Piłsudski was stopped by a reporter in Warsaw on 10 May 1926, just as the new government was forming, he offered a categorical condemnation of the Witos coalition, the right-nationalists generally, and of “politics”, corruption in the public service, and political game-playing.³⁷ Further, some Piłsudski-ites popularized at this

³³ Wacław Jędrzejewicz, *Kronika życia Józefa Piłsudskiego, 1867-1935. Tom II: 1921-1935* (London: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1977), pp. 103-110.

³⁴ Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy*, p. 208. For the reaction of key Piłsudski-ite theoretician Adam Skwarczyński to this speech and to the political situation in Poland generally, see: Adam Skwarczyński, “O pracy moralnej narodu”, *Droga* (5 August 1923); rpt. in Daria Nałęcz, ed., *Adam Skwarczyński – od demokracji do autorytaryzmu* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1998), pp. 123-128. Skwarczyński and the journal *The Way (Droga)* is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

³⁵ Witos replaced the non-party Cabinet of Aleksander Skrzyński, which was in power from 20 November 1925 to 5 May 1926. See: Wojciech Morawski, “Aleksander Skrzyński, premier Rzeczypospolitej 20. XI. 1925 - 5. V. 1926,” in *Prezydenci i premierzy*, eds. Chojnowski and Wróbel, pp. 199-203.

³⁶ On the economic and social tensions of the period, including the 1923 workers’ strikes, see: Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, ch. 3, esp. pp. 116-119; and Ajnenkiel, *Od rządów ludowych*, pp. 355-374.

³⁷ The interview with Piłsudski was confiscated, but after the coup, it was reprinted in a variety of places. It is also reprinted in: Alicja Bełcikowska, *Walki majowe w Warszawie: 11 maj – 16 maj 1926* (Warsaw:

time the view that the new coalition would attempt a coup against the existing political system and would change the Constitution to assure long-term political pre-eminence for itself. In a short political statement published earlier in 1926 and entitled *The Times and the People (Czasy i ludzie)*, Witos had in fact advocated radical changes to Poland's parliamentary democracy and had warned ominously that the already "catastrophic" situation could deteriorate even further. He had also suggested the need for a "strong hand", and had urged the ostensibly retired Piłsudski to stop interfering in the work of government.³⁸ In these early days of May, Witos' words underscored the sense of foreboding that many felt.³⁹

The events which unfolded during the coming days should not have come as much of a surprise to any astute political observer. As journalist Konrad Olchowicz stated in his memoirs, no one could have predicted what exactly would happen, but many were able to sense change in the air: "One could have expected anything."⁴⁰ Demonstrations - some spontaneous and some planned - in opposition to the Witos government and in support of Piłsudski erupted across the capital on the 11th of May.⁴¹ Piłsudski-ites paraded around Warsaw shouting "Long live Piłsudski" and "Down with Witos", and they forced people to sing the march of the First Brigade, which functioned as a Piłsudski-ite

Nakładem Drukarni W. Maślankiewicz i F. Jabczyński, 1926), pp. 5-7; and Andrzej Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1978), pp. 220-222. On Piłsudski specifically during this period, see: Andrzej Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski 1867-1935* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1989), pp. 326-334.

³⁸ Wincenty Witos, *Czasy i ludzie* (Tarnów, Poland: Józef Pisz, 1926). A fragment of this brochure is reprinted in: *Druga Rzeczpospolita*, eds. Rudnicki and Wróbel, pp. 159-163. *The Worker (Robotnik)*, the mouthpiece of the PPS, was extremely critical of Witos' text, referring to it as pretentious and reactionary and as the result of shallow and unoriginal thinking. See: n.a., "P. Witos 'przędza myśli' reakcyjnych", *Robotnik* Nr. 90 (31 March 1926), p. 1. For Witos' account of this period, see: Wincenty Witos, *Moje wspomnienia. Part II*, eds. Eugeniusz Karczewski and Józef Ryszard Szaflik (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1990), pp. 264-297. On the new Witos governments' plans for the army, see: Joseph Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), pp. 25-32.

³⁹ Marian Romeyko, *Przed i po maju* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1967), pp. 209-220; Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski*, pp. 303-309; and Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 38-39.

⁴⁰ Archiwum Państwowe Miasta Stołecznego i Województwa Warszawskiego w Warszawie (hereafter A-MSWW), File 273, Konrad Olchowicz, "Wspomnienia i refleksje dziennikarza 1914-1939", p. 72. Olchowicz worked with *The Warsaw Courier (Kurier Warszawski)*.

national anthem. The tension was further heightened when rumours spread that gunshots had been fired on Piłsudski's home in Sulejówek. This did much to provide Piłsudski with a moral justification for what happened next.⁴²

On the 12th of May, Piłsudski and his army of about 2,000 men advanced towards Warsaw.⁴³ For the most part, historians contend that Piłsudski's aim at this juncture was to organize a non-violent show of force and support, a monumental political demonstration which would prove to one and all that only Piłsudski was equipped to save the nation and that accordingly, he should be handed power peacefully.⁴⁴ Confronted with resistance from the government, however, Piłsudski was forced to consider other options, and he launched the May coup d'état. By the end of the three-day-long "civil war", as many referred to the events, close to four hundred people would be dead, and about one thousand would be injured.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Henryk Charlemagne, "Wydarzenia majowe 1926", *Stolica* Nr. 20 (16 V 1971), p. 4, as quoted in Marian Marek Drozdowski, *Sprawy i ludzie II Rzeczypospolitej. Szkice i polemiki* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1979), pp. 134-135; and Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy*, p. 224.

⁴² Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy*, p. 224.

⁴³ For a published collection of archival documents concerning the days of the coup, see: Andrzej Garlicki and Piotr Stawewski, "Przewrót wojskowy w Polsce w 1926 r. Wybór dokumentów", *Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny* 23: 1 (1978): 218-273.

⁴⁴ Historians have also referred to anecdotal evidence when arguing this point. Piłsudski is alleged to have told his wife on the morning of the 12th that he would be home in time for lunch. See: Aleksandra Piłsudska, *Memoirs of Madame Piłsudski* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1940), p. 330. See also: Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy*, pp. 225-226 and ch. 5 for a detailed description of the events from 12 to 15 May. For a selection of perspectives on the May events, drawn from the period itself, see: Jędrzejewicz, *Kronika życia Józefa Piłsudskiego*, pp. 211-236.

⁴⁵ In total, 379 people died (including 164 civilians), and 920 people were injured. See: Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy*, p. 269. The official tally of the dead has been reprinted as, "1 czerwca 1926, Warszawa, Zestawienie Komisji Likwidacyjnej Generała Lejcjana Żeligowskiego o zabitych i rannych podczas zamachu stanu – w dniach 12-15 maja 1926 r.", in *Józef Piłsudski o państwie i armii*, ed. Borkowski, p. 146. Already on the 14th of May, *Robotnik* reported 51 dead and 242 wounded. See: "Wczoraj", *Robotnik* Nr. 132 (14 May 1926), p. 1. For an interesting visual depiction of the dead, see: Z. Kosmowski, "U mogiły ofiar walk bratobójczych: Polska – O krwi bratnia, tak szczerze przelana, żeby choć z ciebie wyrósł szlachetny owo na drzewie ojczystym!", in *Józef Piłsudski w karykaturze*, eds. Andrzej Garlicki and Jerzy Kochanowski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Interpress, 1991), p. 38. See also: Organizacja Obrony Państwa, "Pogrzeb ofiar walk bratobójczych", *Gazeta Warszawska Poranna* (18 May 1926); as contained in the files of the National Library, Dokumenty z Życia Społecznego (hereafter BN-DŻS), File IA6a7, Warsaw. *The Warsaw Morning Gazette (Gazeta Warszawska Poranna)* was critical of the Piłsudski faction.

Late on the 14th and into the morning of the 15th, the government forces asked for a cease-fire in order to prevent the escalation of violence across Poland.⁴⁶ The President resigned, as did Prime Minister Witos and his government.⁴⁷ Piłsudski became Minister of Military Affairs (from 15 May) and Inspector General of the Polish Armed Forces (from 28 August).⁴⁸ On Piłsudski's instruction, Kazimierz Bartel (1882-1941) became the Prime Minister on 15 May. A short while later, the Sejm and the Senate elected Piłsudski President of the Republic, but Piłsudski refused this position. On Piłsudski's recommendation, an outstanding scholar, administrator and former socialist, Ignacy Mościcki (1867-1946), was elected President in June of 1926, and Mościcki held the post until 1939.⁴⁹

The coup of 12 to 15 May 1926 constituted a spectacular expression of frustration with the profound failures of each successive government of newly independent Poland, with the deeply polarized state of political life, and with the quality of independence generally. The young Republic had been experiencing what the Piłsudski faction called a profound "moral breakdown" of its public life.⁵⁰ Supporters of Piłsudski emphasized that the coup had been waged with the "moral good" of the nation in mind and with the intention of affecting a Poland-wide spiritual rebirth. The Polish Socialist Party, Piłsudski's own former party, hailed Piłsudski's actions as a revolution against the Chjeno-Piast coalition that threatened to ruin the nation "politically and morally", and

⁴⁶ For a description of the situation in the rest of Poland, see: Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy*, pp. 257-259.

⁴⁷ Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski*, pp. 334-357; and Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 125-147.

⁴⁸ Jerzy Halbersztadt, "Józef Piłsudski a mechanizm podejmowania decyzji wojskowych w latach 1926-1935", *Przegląd Historyczny* LXXIV: 4 (1983): 677-724. For interesting perspectives on the army and the May coup, see: n.a., "Naród i wojsko", *Szaniec* Nr. 1 (1 July 1927), pp. 1-2; n.a., "Wojsko i społeczeństwo", *Szaniec* Nr. 24 (24 December 1929), pp. 1-2; and n.a., "O zdrowie moralne wojska", *Szaniec* Nr. 6-7 (20 April 1930), pp. 1-2.

⁴⁹ In the June presidential elections, Mościcki received 283 votes, while his opponent, Adolf Bniński (1884-1942), received 200 votes. There were 56 ineligible or spoiled votes. See: Tadeusz Smoliński, *Rządy Józefa Piłsudskiego w latach 1926-1935. Studium prawne* (Poznań: Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza, Seria Prawo Nr. 115, 1985), p. 55.

⁵⁰ Archiwum Akt Nowych (hereafter AAN), Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, File 225, Poster addressed to: "Citizens of the Republic", 16 May 1926. This poster was signed by, among others, Piłsudski.

they welcomed the “better future” that lay ahead.⁵¹ Warsaw’s liberal *Morning Courier* (*Kurier Poranny*) similarly hailed the “moral rebirth of the nation” that the coup promised to introduce and proclaimed that the event formed a necessary precursor to wider economic and political.⁵²

Piłsudski himself had remarked just weeks after the coup:

...in the reborn country, there did not emerge a rebirth of spirit... rather, scoundrels and rogues and blackguards held sway. The nation has been reborn in only one area, that is, in terms of individual boldness and service to the state in times of battle. Thanks to this I was able to take the war to its successful end. In all other areas I have found no rebirth.⁵³

It was Piłsudski, moreover, who had issued a nation-wide call on the night of 12 May, just as the events were getting under way, to focus on what he called “imponderabilia” – “like honor, virtue, courage and generally, all the internal strengths of a person...”.⁵⁴ It was this appeal to widen the scope of what was considered “political” and to embrace imponderabilia which resonated powerfully and in a wide variety of unusual and unexpected ways with the populace of the Second Republic. It is this focus on imponderabilia which forms the backbone of the present exposition.

⁵¹ P.P.S., “Robotnicy! Obywatele!”, *Robotnik* Nr. 131 (13 May 1926), p. 1. See also: n.a., “Wielka chwila”, *Robotnik* Nr. 133 (15 May 1926); and n.a., “Sanacja moralna a zwycięstwo demokracji”, *Robotnik* Nr. 146 (29 May 1926), p. 1. To assist Piłsudski, the socialists, along with the communists, had proclaimed a general strike in the whole of Poland, to begin on 14 May. The Rail Workers’ Union had already started their strike action on 13 May, and had thereby prevented the passage of government troops to the capital. See: P.P.S., “Strajk powszechny”, *Robotnik* Nr. 132 (14 May 1926), p. 1; and Belcikowska, *Walki majowe*, p. 28. The political left would later call this assistance it gave to Piłsudski “the May Mistake”. On the socialists and the coup, see: Adam Pragier, *Czas przeszły dokonany* (London: R. Świdorski, 1966), pp. 318-324; Rothschild, *Piłsudski’s Coup d’état*, pp. 88-99; and Aleksandra Tymieniecka, *Polityka Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej w latach 1924-1928* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1969), pp. 19-30.

⁵² F. Bierkiewicz, “Walka o odrodzenie moralne narodu”, *Kurier Poranny* Nr. 137 (19 May 1926), p. 1. Another similarly positive evaluation of Piłsudski’s actions was delivered in: n.a., “Rząd legalny – a głównie – rząd uczciwy”, *Kurier Poranny* Nr. 134 (16 May 1926), p. 2. This latter piece blames the government, and not Piłsudski, for the deaths that resulted from the coup.

⁵³ Piłsudski’s statement is drawn from a speech he made to the Sejm on 29 May 1926, and segments of it have been reproduced widely. See, for example, Andrzej Wierzbicki, *Naród – państwo w polskiej myśli historycznej dwudziestolecia międzywojennego* (Wrocław: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1978), p. 120; and Wacław Jędrzejewicz’s *Piłsudski: A Life for Poland* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1982), p. 236.

⁵⁴ Józef Piłsudski, “Wywiad udzielony prasie po pierwszym dniu walk majowych”, in Józef Piłsudski, *Pisma wybrane* (London: M.I. Kolin, 1943), p. 413. On Piłsudski’s “imponderabilia” speech, see also: W.F. Reddaway, *Marshal Piłsudski* (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1939), pp. 228-229.

Piłsudski's coup gave birth to what became known as the period of the *Sanacja*, a word derived from the Latin "*sanatio*", meaning healing, rejuvenation, cleansing or reform. The *Sanacja* period lasted, in various permutations, right to the outbreak of the Second World War and to the last days of the Second Republic in 1939. The Polish word *Sanacja* will be used throughout this dissertation to refer to the period, regime and mood launched by Piłsudski's coup of 1926.

Historians have traditionally interpreted the coup as the product of a profoundly sick political culture, and they have understood the *Sanacja* as a period devoted to affecting fundamental reforms in the state's political structure and practices, especially to a strengthening of the Executive and to re-writing the March Constitution. The *Sanacja* was an era dominated by appeals to a new, modern and more productive citizenship, to the primacy of collective over individual interests, to "clean hands", "the state above all else" and "work as the highest calling". The *Sanacja* was surely about all of these things, and many good works have addressed these aspects of the question, as will be discussed below.

This dissertation, in contrast, studies the wider cultural significance of the *Sanacja* as an idea that was subject to rigorous debate and manipulation and as an idea which served as the catalyst for all kinds of creative thinking about the nation. My interest is in the way in which the *Sanacja* was imbued with a fantastically wide range of meaning in the post-1926 period and in the way in which it was used, misused and manipulated in the cultural and political discourses of the Second Republic. This is a study of the *Sanacja* as a symbol and a potential which circulated widely in interwar Poland. It explores the oblique potential of the *Sanacja*, the powerful yet hitherto under-explored sub-text of the period. As such, it understands *Sanacja* broadly, as a particularly

flexible and reverberant idea that could move between and speak simultaneously to the political and the cultural realms.⁵⁵

I argue that the May coup and the Sanacja that it proclaimed acted as a catalyst for discussion, reflection and acerbic debate about the very essence of Poland and Polishness, of citizenship and responsibility to the nation. The Sanacja initiated a peculiar and fascinating national forum on what the new state had become and it provided a focus for the ideas about national and moral identity that had been circulating in Polish society ever since the inception of the Second Republic. By popularizing a vocabulary of rebirth and change, of moral responsibility, civic duty and citizen accountability, work and collective action, the Sanacja sparked a widespread debate about the meaning of Poland in the modern era. The idea of a Sanacja became so successful and powerful because it capitalized cleverly on and manipulated a general mood of disaffection and created convenient and attractive catch-phrases on which people could focus. It was the very malleability of the term Sanacja and its applicability to a varied range of contexts that made it so appealing.

Maria Dąbrowska (1889-1965), one of the most successful and well-respected writers associated with the progressive leftist interwar intelligentsia, and for some time a proponent of Piłsudski and the coup, expressed the uniqueness of and the hope contained in the May coup when she wrote in her diary just days after the events, on 17 May 1926:

There happened in Warsaw a thing at once terrifying and wondrous, like a chapter from Greek history. A military revolution with a moral ideal. ...

⁵⁵ For analyses of the relationship between culture and politics, see: Samuel P. Huntington, "The Change to Change: Modernization, Development and Politics", *Comparative Politics* 3: 4 (April 1971), p. 316; and Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Analytic Debates: Understanding the relative autonomy of Culture", in *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, eds. Jeffrey C. Alexander and Steven Seidman (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 1-27. For a theoretical discussion, grounded in the Romanian interwar context, of the way in which culture is inherently political, see: Katherine Verdery, "National Ideology and National Character in Interwar Romania", in *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, eds. Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (New Haven: Yale Centre for International and Area Studies, 1995), pp. 103-134. For a discussion of how the Bolsheviks conceived of culture during the early Soviet period, see: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), "Introduction".

Two moral nations have clashed in Poland. One nation of action and perfection, of getting to the heart of questions, and the second nation – a nation of lies and convention. The values for new life have been formed. But what will we, society, do with them? Piłsudski cannot do everything for us.⁵⁶

Dąbrowska's words reveal the tremendous hope that she and many like her placed in the May coup; the coup would be the start of something momentous, of a revolution unlike any other. This idea that Piłsudski had rescued the nation from a wretched future and had laid the bases for positive change was perpetuated in the press of the period as well as in personal attitudes and commentary; it was also reflected in the emergence of organizations devoted to specific aspects of the Sanacja potential. Those who supported Piłsudski and the coup – men and women drawn mainly, though not exclusively, from the left-liberal intelligentsia – claimed a morally right and just position for themselves. Theirs was the nation of “action and perfection”, and their positions could not be reconciled with the nation of “lies and convention”, associated so clearly in the minds of the Piłsudski-ites with the National Democrats. The May coup reflected polarized political allegiances in the Republic, but it also exacerbated them by creating even more obviously divergent camps and transforming them into irreconcilable moral categories. This dissertation will explore how Poland's moral nations took shape in the post-coup period; it will probe the political and cultural landscape that was formed in Poland after May of 1926 with the proclamation of a very powerful – and very flexible – notion of moral reform.

⁵⁶ Maria Dąbrowska, *Dzienniki 1914-1932*, ed. Tadeusz Drewnowski (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1988), pp. 179-180. This same quote is used in a variety of texts. See, for example, Andrzej Chojnowski, “Moralność i polityka. Kobięce lobby w Bezpartyjnym Bloku Współpracy z Rządem”, in *Kobieta i świat polityki w niepodległej Polsce 1918-1939*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996), p. 161; Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy*, p. 255; and Wapiński, *Pokolenia Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, pp. 263-264. The Piłsudski-ite Adam Skwarczyński had much earlier uttered a similar statement. It was published in *The Way (Droga)* Nrs. 1-2, 1923, p. 3 under Skwarczyński's pseudonym, Adam Płomieńczyk. See: Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy*, p. 206.

The Imponderabilia

The chapters are organized around the varied ways in which people responded to the coup and imbued the Sanacja with meaning. Each chapter begins with the May coup itself, and studies a specific reading of the event and the ensuing Sanacja; each focuses, that is, on a different rendering of “imponderabilia”. The first part of Chapter One constitutes an introduction to the discursive moral crises which appeared in the Warsaw-based press during the period immediately preceding the May coup. The intention is to establish that the themes which would reappear with a vengeance under the Sanacja era first made their appearance - in a milder and less focused form - before the coup. The second part of Chapter One explores the press-based debates about culture and morality which, I argue, escalated as a result of the proclamation of a Sanacja and generally, as a result of the political climate occasioned by the coup. It studies specifically the ways in which nationalist-right opponents of Piłsudski used the Sanacja as a springboard from which to launch wholesale condemnations of the moral and cultural state of the newly independent nation.

Chapter Two is based on a selection of letters written to Piłsudski from the general public during the Sanacja era. These letters have been ignored completely by historians because they are thought to yield nothing relevant about the major political events and trends of the day. I argue that, on the contrary, they offer especially interesting insights into what ordinary men and women were thinking about in the Sanacja era, and that they encourage us to understand the Sanacja in its widest possible incarnation and in terms of its broadest potential. These letters establish that the people of Poland understood the coup and the ensuing Sanacja as opening up a nation-wide forum on Poland’s moral, cultural and political health in the post-partition era. While

people differed over what kind of a Sanacja was necessary, few would have denied that some sort of a serious reflection on the state of Poland was necessary.

Chapters Three and Four take as their subjects organizational responses to the Sanacja. Chapter Three addresses the emergence of a hitherto unstudied and small Warsaw-based group called The Society for the Moral Rebirth of the Nation (*Towarzystwo Odrodzenia Moralnego Ojczyzny*) (1926-1932). The left-liberal intellectuals who formed this Society in the wake of the coup embraced the event as an important catalyst for moral and national rebirth. While it is fair to say that the Society remained shockingly ineffective for the duration of its existence, it nevertheless saw a number of prominent Sanacja politicians – like Walery Sławek and Janusz Jędrzejewicz, for example – pass through its ranks. Though the group achieved little, its papers are rich, and its statements of intent and its analyses of the meaning of Sanacja and of the state of Polish independence reveal much about the mood, expectations and hopes of the period.

Chapter Four explores the women's activism inspired by the coup. I argue that the Sanacja motivated women of the pro-Piłsudski, left-liberal intelligentsia to new heights of public service. These women argued that they, as women, had a special role of fulfill in the Sanacja project. The Sanacja, after all, had declared the importance of moral health and of achieving a national cleansing; this, the women argued, was precisely women's preserve, and therefore a Sanacja of the Polish nation was unthinkable without women's full and committed participation. With Zofia Moraczewska in the lead, this particular group of women organized themselves to support the Sanacja. The chapter is broken down into three major sections. The first is a brief review of Moraczewska's own life and of the approaches evident within Polish historiography to the writing of the history of women, and provides an important background to understanding the position which women occupied in the Second Republic.

The next major section within Chapter Four is a study of the Women's Democratic Election Committee (*Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet*). This Committee was established by Moraczewska and other women from the Piłsudski-ite intelligentsia to agitate for the Sanacja electoral ticket in the 1928 elections. Piłsudski did not establish a full-fledged dictatorship after assuming power in 1926, and instead he left in place the pre-existing parliament until November 1927, when its term expired. The March 1928 elections were the first held after the coup, and Piłsudski was eager for the results to impart a degree of legitimacy (moral, if not strictly constitutional), to his actions.

In preparing for these elections, the Sanacja camp created what political scientist Joseph Rothschild has described as a "phalanx" of all classes and parties, a supra-national organization united by the appeal of a strong executive (Piłsudski) and by a desire to build a strong state and achieve the goals of moral renovation, broadly conceived. This phalanx was called the Non-Partisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (*Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem*, referred to by its Polish initials, BBWR). The BBWR was a pro-government electoral alliance of Piłsudski-ites and former socialists, but also of many conservatives and Catholics, powerful industrialists, former members of peasant parties, and a fair number of political opportunists.⁵⁷ This section of Chapter 4 will explore the role that the Piłsudski-ite women played in helping the BBWR secure its electoral victory in 1928. It relies on the papers of the Women's Democratic Election Committee as well as on Moraczewska's personal and professional papers.

The last section of Chapter Four is a study of the Democratic Union's successor: the Women's Union for Citizenship Work (*Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*), a large

⁵⁷ Joseph Rothschild, "A Chapter in Polish Politics of the 1920s", in *Studies in Polish Civilization*, ed. Damian S. Wandycz (New York: Columbia University and the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, 1966), p. 99. Historian Andrzej Chojnowski has referred to the BBWR, simply, as "a political

and influential pro-Sanacja women's group established, again, by Moraczewska and other women from the left-liberal intelligentsia. The Women's Union developed interesting links between itself, as a women's activist organization, and the Sanacja government. The specifics of its tenure and of its relationship with the BBWR yield important perspectives on what the Sanacja could and did mean in the Second Republic. This chapter is based on the Women's Union own records, as well as on Moraczewska's personal papers. As a whole, Chapter 4 constitutes one of the only English-language explorations into any aspect of the history of women in the Second Republic.

The last chapter, Chapter Five, explores what I call the "cultural Sanacja". In some ways, this chapter is a return to a number of the ideas about moral health and crisis raised in the first chapter. Chapter Five takes Tadeusz Boy Żeleński - a popular cabaret writer, a publicist, a vocal exponent of women's rights over their bodies, a medical doctor, and a highly prolific translator of classic French literature into the Polish language - as the most powerful symbol of what critics identified as the pernicious cultural Sanacja that had raged within Poland since May of 1926. This chapter constitutes an exploration of how Catholic-rightist-nationalist critics created the term "Boy's Sanacja" to register a link between the political Sanacja, on the one hand, and on the other, liberal attitudes towards modern and western cultural trends and values. This coupling represents perhaps one of the most creative and telling manipulations of the Sanacja word and idea. Nationalist-right critics argued that the Sanacja had authorized flagrant violations of Polish history, religious beliefs and appropriate gender roles, and had licensed a private (im)morality that was inconsistent with political stability and good citizenship. Bolshevism, Boy-shevism, a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy and the Sanacja,

organization of the ruling camp". See: Andrzej Chojnowski, *Piłsudczycy u władzy. Dzieje Bezpartyjnego Bloku Współpracy z Rządem* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1986), p. 285.

critics maintained, were expressions of a single threat. This chapter uses the press of the period, as well as various unpublished and published primary sources.

Each of the chapters could serve as the basis for a longer study. As such, I have provided extensive references throughout all of the chapters to additional sources which could be used to pursue a given topic in greater depth. This has been quite a deliberate attempt to popularize the availability of sources, especially archival ones, and to suggest some of the interesting directions in which the study of the Second Republic could move in the coming years.⁵⁸

The Conclusion addresses, in part, why this study ends with the early- to mid-1930s. By the mid-1930s, pressing social and economic concerns eclipsed arguably intangible questions about moral health and national renaissance. By 1930, moreover, the Sanacja was viewed by many former supporters as an immoral and spent idea with little substance. Many condemned the political regime that the Sanacja had created as authoritarian, and cursed the regime's promoters as fallen moral beacons who had failed to make good on the Sanacja's promises of national rebirth. By the time of Piłsudski's death in May of 1935, the Sanacja camp had largely decomposed, and it became virtually impossible to imbue the Sanacja with innocence and positive potential.

By virtue of the kinds of questions examined here, this dissertation is focused (though not exclusively) on the so-called elites of the Second Republic, on the intelligentsia stratum of society. Roman Wapiński, a historian who takes a generational approach to understanding modern Polish history, states that 95% of the elites in the

⁵⁸ Every study conducted into the history of the Second Republic must also consider carefully the availability of sources. The Second Republic itself had created twelve archives. 74 % of these, however, were destroyed by the end of World War Two. For a discussion of Poland's system of archives and of the fate of documents under the Communists, see: Hanna Krajewska and Isabel Röska-Rydel, "Poland", *Austrian History Yearbook XXIX: Part 2: A Guide to East-Central European Archives* (1998): 83-104; and

Second Republic were born between 1860 and 1900, and that most came from the former Austrian and Russian partitions. This generation was instrumental in shaping the political, social and cultural life of the Second Republic.⁵⁹ Historian Janusz Żarnowski defines the Polish interwar intelligentsia as all those people who made a living from non-manual labour. This included not only those who had professional qualifications from institutes of higher education, but also writers and scholars, artists, as well as office workers and civil servants, who may or may not have been formally educated.⁶⁰ In 1921 the intelligentsia formed 3.5 % of the economically engaged population, according to Żarnowski, and grew by just more than a percentage by 1931.⁶¹

The east European intelligentsia was not, as it was in western Europe, part of a traditional middle class.⁶² It was, rather, part of an economically insecure group, and its

Adam Lewak, "The Archives and Libraries of Warsaw During World War II, 1939-1945", *Polish Review* VII: 2 (Spring 1962): 3-40.

⁵⁹ Wapiński, *Pokolenia Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, passim, but see esp. pp. 334 and 364.

⁶⁰ Janusz Żarnowski, "East-Central European Societies, 1918-1939: The Polish Example", trans Charles E. Railsback, in *Poland at the 14th International Congress of Historical Sciences in San Francisco. Studies in Comparative History*, eds. Bronisław Geremek and Antoni Maczak (Wrocław: Polish Academy of Sciences, 1975), pp. 250-251. See also: Janusz Żarnowski, *Struktura społeczna inteligencji w Polsce w latach 1918-1939* (Warsaw: Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1964); Henryk Jabłoński, "Inteligencja polska w dwudziestoleciu 1918-1939. Parę konfrontacji", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXXII: 1 (1965): 95-98; Janusz Żarnowski, "Społeczeństwo i kultura II Rzeczypospolitej", in *Z dziejów Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. Andrzej Garlicki (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1986), p. 299; and Janusz Żarnowski, "Państwo polskie, a rozwój społeczeństwa polskiego, 1918-1939", in *Odrodzenie państwowości i przemiany struktur społecznych w Polsce i Czechosłowacji, 1918-1945. Materiały XXVI posiedzenia Komisji Historyków Polskich, Czeskich i Słowackich. Warszawa 20-23 listopada 1988 r.*, ed. Maria Bogucka (Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Historii, 1991), pp. 79-80. Also on the Polish intelligentsia, see: Aleksander Gella, "The Life and Death of the Old Polish Intelligentsia", *Slavic Review* 30: 1 (March 1971): 1-27; Alexander Matejko, *Social Change and Stratification in Eastern Europe: An Interpretative Analysis of Poland and Her Neighbours* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), esp. pp. 57-62 and 140-144; Janina Markiewicz-Lagneau, *La formation d'une pensée sociologique. La Société Polonaise de l'Entre-Deux-Guerres* (Paris: Editions de la Maison Des Sciences de l'Homme, 1982); and Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy*, p. 136. For a discussion of the intelligentsia in the provinces, see: Regina Renz, *Życie codzienne województwa Kieleckiego, 1918-1939* (Kielce, Poland: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1994), esp. pp. 64-70.

⁶¹ Żarnowski, as quoted in Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, p. 30. For a discussion of the political elite in the Second Republic, with an emphasis on generations, see: Roman Wapiński, *Świadomość polityczna w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1989), ch. 1.

⁶² On western Europe, see: Julian Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, trans. Richard Aldington (1928 and 1956; rpt. NY: W.W. Norton and Co. Ltd., 1969). For a critique of Benda, see: Edward Timms, "Treason of the Intellectuals? Benda, Benn and Brecht", in *Visions and Blueprints: Avant-Garde Culture and Radical Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Europe*, eds. Edward Timms and Peter Collier (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 18-32. On the intelligentsia in eastern Europe as a

numbers were small. Yet the intelligentsia in eastern Europe, and in Poland especially, was a culturally, politically and socially central group. Its centrality derived, in part, from the singularly important role which it had occupied during the nineteenth-century partition period, when it was engaged in what historians have called a “rule of souls”.⁶³ During this period, the intelligentsia played an almost sacred role in the state, serving as political leaders and as the unofficial ambassadors of the Polish nation and its independence cause. Historian Jerzy Jedlicki describes the partition-era intelligentsia as follows:

The intelligentsia... was a class, stratum, or milieu that succeeded in its aspiration to replace the nobility, or the educated elite of the former gentry, in its function as a preserver of the historical sense of the nation under the most adverse circumstances, and as a guide towards a better future.⁶⁴

Confronted with independence, the intelligentsia was forced to renegotiate its role in and its relationship to the nation. Indeed, a self-reflexive interest in what role the intelligentsia played or should play in the nation constituted a defining feature of postwar debates not just in Poland, but all across Europe. In contrast to western Europe, the intelligentsia in the postwar period in Poland could for the first time “abandon” the nation and eschew what had hitherto constituted the defining imperative of their existence. Independence allowed some members of the intelligentsia to rethink their moral responsibility to the nation, to eschew, for example, the imperative to use literature as a way of furthering the Polish national cause, and to develop new terms of interaction

whole, see: Alexander Hertz, “The Case of an Eastern European Intelligentsia”, *Journal of Central European Affairs* XI: 1 (January 1951), esp. p. 22; Zygmunt Bauman, “Intellectuals in East-Central Europe: Continuity and Change”, *East European Politics and Societies* 1: 2 (Spring 1987): 168-169.

⁶³ The term appears in: Bohdan Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krag, 1984), p. 135.

⁶⁴ Jerzy Jedlicki, *A Suburb of Europe: Nineteenth-Century Polish Approaches to Western Civilization* (1988; rpt. and trans. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), p. xiii. See also: Jerzy Jedlicki, “Polish Concepts of Native Culture”, trans. Konstanty Gebert, in *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, eds. Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (New Haven: Yale Centre for International and Area Studies, 1995), pp. 1-22; and Jerzy Jedlicki, “Historia inteligencji polskiej w kontekście europejskim”, *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* XLIV: 2 (April-June 2000): 141-162.

between themselves and the nation. They might have chosen to remain committed popularizers of nationalist ideas, or conversely, they may have opted to leave the national question aside completely. The very recognition of this choice factor was anathema to certain cultural commentators, and the question produced intensely polarized views.⁶⁵

How the intelligentsia approached independence and how it fashioned a new role for itself in the Second Republic constitutes one of the underlying interests of this dissertation. As we shall see, the debates about what the Sanacja was or should be were intricately connected to competing ideas regarding the role of the intelligentsia in newly independent Poland. It was the intelligentsia stratum which was most engaged with questions about the nation's moral health and potential and which found in the Sanacja's call to defend the nation's imponderabilia a concrete focus and inspiration.⁶⁶ Through the debates that the intelligentsia generated and in which it was involved, it engaged some of the most fundamental ideas about what it meant or should mean to be Polish.

This exposition, moreover, is focused on personalities who were based in and associated with Warsaw, and on the cultural products and trends that emanated from the Second Republic's capital city. Warsaw's population in 1918 was 758,400 (down from a 1914 total of 884,500), and it reached 936,700 by 1921. The city enjoyed a diversified work force, including a high percentage of blue-collar workers as well as white-collar workers, especially civil servants. The city's population was also made up of a significant percentage of self-employed artisans and merchants.⁶⁷ Germans and

⁶⁵ Janina Leszkiewicz, "Jeszcze o polskiej inteligencji XIX w.," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXXII: 1 (1965): 89-93; Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy*, ch. 1; and Alina Kowalczykova, *Programy i spory literackie w dwudziestoleciu 1918-1939* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1978), p. 9.

⁶⁶ Nałęcz makes an argument about the ways in which the intelligentsia was deprived of a clear role as a result of independence. See: Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy*, p. 97.

⁶⁷ Wynot, *Warsaw Between the World Wars*, pp. 93-95 and 98-102, and see ch. 4 for a discussion of municipal politics in interwar Warsaw.

Ukrainians were largely absent from the capital city, which was, rather, comprised mainly of Polish Catholics and Jews.⁶⁸

Emphasis on a single city, surely, cannot accommodate the various regional divisions and peculiarities evident in the Second Republic. The need for caution, then, in drawing certain generalizations from a study based on Warsaw, is acknowledged. At the same time, and as some contemporaries themselves argued, Warsaw functioned as the undisputed cultural and intellectual centre which shaped nation-wide patterns.⁶⁹ The intelligentsia stratum, whose ideas underpin this study, was either physically present in Warsaw, or was engaged with the ideas that emanated from that city. In addition, Warsaw was by far the most important centre of publishing life in the Second Republic, and most of the major periodicals of the period, a number of which are used in this study, were published in that city.⁷⁰

Warsaw was also invested with great symbolic meaning. As the capital city, it was the seat of the government and the locus of the many important political happenings which were absolutely central to the way that contemporaries thought about the trajectory of independence. Piłsudski's May coup, moreover, did much to cast Warsaw into the spotlight. The fighting between Piłsudski's forces and the government troops had actually taken place in Warsaw, and it was in that city that men had died fighting for one side or the other during those fateful days in May. Piłsudski's ensuing *Sanacja*

⁶⁸ In 1921, 68% of the population of Warsaw was Catholic, and 33% Jewish, with each of these percentages decreasing slightly in the second census of the interwar period, conducted in 1931. See: *ibid.* pp. 106-107.

⁶⁹ Stanisław Rychliński, *Warszawa jako stolica Polski* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Biura Ekonomicznego Zarządu Miejskiego, 1936), p. 180. This text also contains a several-page-long summary in the French language, pp. 181-190. For a general study of Warsaw between the wars, see: Marian Marek Drozdowski, *Warszawa w latach 1914-1939* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990).

⁷⁰ Andrzej Paczkowski, *Prasa codzienna Warszawy w latach 1918-1939* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1983), ch. 8.

government was based in Warsaw; it was, for better or worse, the seat of the Moral Revolution.⁷¹

Narrating the Event

From the very beginning, the coup d'état provided a fertile terrain for political, social and cultural analysis. Reporters, writers, politicians and intellectuals all wrote about some aspect of the event, pondered its causes and its ramifications, and declared their allegiances.⁷² Historians have also shown great interest in the coup, and are agreed that the event was the single most important political caesura of the interwar period.⁷³ Rigidly ideological Communist scholarship of the immediate postwar years depicted the whole of the interwar period as a socially, economically and politically reactionary milieu, and adopted a harsh attitude towards Piłsudski, portraying him as a dictator that stymied the real potential of socialism. This emphasis on the most dismal aspects of the

⁷¹ The term "moral revolution" had wide currency in the Second Republic. It was most firmly located in the writings of Adam Skwarczyński and the Piłsudski-ite journal *The Way (Droga)*. See, for example, Adam Skwarczyński, "Rewolucja moralna", *Droga* (5 May 1926); rpt. in Adam Skwarczyński, ed. Nałęcz, pp. 157-160.

⁷² See: Belcikowska, *Walki majowe*; Józef Beck, *Final Report* (New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1957); and Eugeniusz Kozłowski, ed., *O przewrocie majowym 1926. Opinie świadków i uczestników* (Warsaw: Ministry of National Defense, 1984). Kozłowski's text contains excerpts from the memoirs of three men, all of whom were opposed to Piłsudski: Andrzej Wierzbicki (1877-1961); Stanisław Haller (1872-1940); and Jan Rzepecki (1899-1983). See also: Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, *Dysproporcje: rzecz o Polsce przeszłej i obecnej* (1931); ed. and intro. by Andrzej Garlicki (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1989), pp. 323-338; Regina Kociowa, *Irena Kosmowska* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1960), ch. 8; January Grzędziński, *Maj 1926* (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1965); Gombrowicz, *Souvenirs de Pologne*, pp. 71-73; Olivier D'Etchegoyen, *The Comedy of Poland*, trans. Nora Bickley (Paris, 1925, rpt.; London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1927); Arkadiusz Adamczyk, "Relacja Bogusława Miedzińskiego z wydarzeń majowych 1926 r", *Zeszyty Historyczne* 132 (2000): 226-234; Mieczysław Rybczyński, "Wypadki majowe 1926 roku", *Zeszyty Historyczne* 86 (1988): 63-96; and Stanisław Strumph-Wojtkiewicz, Wanda Melcer Rutkowska and Marja Szpyrkówna, *Moment zwrotny* (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Wyd. Rój, 1926). Stanisław Strumph-Wojtkiewicz's extended memoir appears as: *O własnych siłach: Kartki z prywatnego archiwum 1921-1939* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1967). The segment pertaining to the coup appears on pp. 94-118. See also: Arkadiusz Adamczyk, "Relacja Bogusława Miedzińskiego z wydarzeń majowych 1926 r", *Zeszyty Historyczne* 132 (2000): 226-234. See also: National Library, Warsaw, Krasieński Palace Manuscript Collection, (Biblioteka Narodowa, hereafter BN-PK), Jan Skotnicki, "Wspomnienia", IV.6396, tom II.

⁷³ Some of the main general political histories of the Second Republic (which, as a matter of course include analysis of Piłsudski, the coup and the whole of the Sanacja period) are: Andrzej Micewski, *Z geografii politycznej II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1965); Andrzej Micewski, *W cieniu Marszałka. Szkice z dziejów myśli politycznej II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1969); Holzer, *Mozaika polityczna*;

Second Republic was tempered somewhat during the period of the Thaw, which began when Władysław Gomułka took power in October 1956.⁷⁴ Beginning with the late 1970s and early 1980s, a number of important works on the Sanacja appeared.⁷⁵ This interest in the Sanacja, and in the Second Republic generally, has blossomed during the last decade, as historians of the Third Republic draw parallels between Poland's most recent period of independence and the Second Republic.⁷⁶

In the whole of this scholarship on the coup and the Sanacja era, a number of specific emphases emerge. One of the most richly studied topics concerns whether the coup was planned, or whether it was a more improvised affair. There is some evidence to suggest that Piłsudski-ite conspiratorial groups, especially within the army, had worked assiduously for a few years before May of 1926 to position the ostensibly retired Piłsudski for a future return to public life. That the portion of the army loyal to Piłsudski encouraged Piłsudski's return to public life is beyond doubt, and that Piłsudski had used his semi-retirement to rally support for himself and to arouse hostility towards the centre-

Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski 1867-1935*; Garlicki, *Od maja do Brześcia* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1981); and Garlicki, *U źródeł obozu Belwederskiego*.

⁷⁴ For a brief overview of the ways in which historians of the early People's Republic wrote about the interwar period, see: Tadeusz Cieślak, "Badania nad historią Polski od 1914 do 1964 – w Polsce Ludowej", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXXII: 1 (1965): 30-38; Andrzej Garlicki, Tomasz Nałęcz and Wiesław Władysław, "Druga Rzeczpospolita w powojennych badaniach historyków polskich", *Przegląd Historyczny* LXIX: 3 (1978): 389-404; Micewski, *W cieniu Marszałka*, pp. 54-61; and Antony Polonsky, "The Second Republic in Contemporary Perspective", in *Poland Between the Wars: 1918-1939*, ed. Timothy Wiles (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Polish Studies Center, 1989), pp. 4-5. For a good discussion of the trends evident in historical writing about Poland see: Piotr S. Wandycz, "Historiographies of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Poland", *American Historical Review* 97: 4 (October 1992): 1011-1025. For a popular discussion of the Second Republic by three eminent historians, see: Roman Wapiński, Andrzej Ajnenkiel and Jerzy Holzer, "Między Hitlerem a Stalinem", *Magazyn Gazety* (6-7 November 1998): 18-25.

⁷⁵ The two names which stand out in terms of historical analyses of the coup are Andrzej Garlicki and Andrzej Chojnowski. Garlicki's *Przewrót majowy*, op. cit., outlines the political causes of the coup, while Garlicki's *U źródeł obozu Belwederskiego* outlines the very beginnings of the formation of the Piłsudski-ite political camp. See also Garlicki's *Od maja do Brześcia*, op. cit., for a discussion of the Sanacja camp in power. For an amusing right-wing vitriolic of Garlicki's works, see: Maciej Giertych, *Dmowski czy Piłsudski?* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Norton, 1995), pp. 116-121. By Andrzej Chojnowski, see: "Józef Piłsudski przed i po przewrocie majowym", *Przegląd Historyczny* 77 (1986): 723-732; and *Piłsudzcycy u władzy*, op. cit.

⁷⁶ See, for example: Janusz Faryś, *Piłsudski i Piłsudzcycy: Z dziejów koncepcji polityczno-ustrojowej (1918-1939)* (Szczecin: Uniwersytet Szczeciński, 1991); and Śliwa, *Polska myśl polityczna*.

Right coalitions is also clear.⁷⁷ But it is fair to say, too, that the coup d'état, as it actually occurred, was a blend of both meticulous planning and spontaneous and intrepid action.⁷⁸ Piłsudski did not expect to spark a civil war in newly independent Poland. As one of the leading historians of the Second Republic, Andrzej Chojnowski has argued, Piłsudski was prepared in May of 1926 for a number of developments and was willing to consider a wide range of actions.⁷⁹

Historians have also been interested in the extent to which we can understand the affront to democracy in May of 1926 as a uniquely Polish affair, or conversely, as symptomatic and reflective of a European-wide postwar phenomenon marked by frequent assaults on democratic institutions and a profound crisis of faith in democratic potential. In the eastern European context, this question of democracy in the interwar period has

⁷⁷ For the November 15, 1925 meeting between Piłsudski-ite army officers and Piłsudski at Sulejówek, see: Garlicki, *U źródeł obozu Belwederskiego*, pp. 356-366. On the extent to which the coup was planned, see: Tomasz Nałęcz, "W służbie Rzeczypospolitej i w dyspozycji Wodza (obóz legionowy od Oleandrów do zamachu majowego)," in *Życie polityczne w Polsce 1918-1939*, ed. Janusz Żarnowski (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1985), pp. 205-216; Ajnenkiel, *Od maja do Brześcia*, pp. 447-449; Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski*, pp. 320-323; Joseph Rothschild, "The Military Background of Piłsudski's Coup d'état", *Slavic Review* 21: 2 (June 1967): 257-258; Krzysztof Kawalec, *Roman Dmowski* (Warsaw: Editions Spotkania, 1996), pp. 276-277; Jerzy Halbersztadt, "Józef Piłsudski a mechanizm podejmowania decyzji wojskowych w latach 1926-1935", *Przegląd Historyczny* LXXIV: 4 (1983): 677-724; Matthew R. Schwonek, "Kazimierz Sosnkowski and the Foundations of Polish Military Policy, 1918-1926", *Polish Review* XLII: 1 (1997): 45-76; Robert Michael Ponichtera, "The Role of the Polish Army in the Rebuilding of Polish Statehood, 1918-1921", Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1995; and Tadeusz Urbańczyk, "Polska myśl wojskowa i doktryna wojenna na łamach *Bellony*", *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne* MCXLII: 112 (1994): 33-44. For a discussion of soldiers's dilemmas during the May events, see: Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy*, pp. 230-234.

⁷⁸ There has also been speculation that the English government supported Piłsudski in his coup and helped finance it. For an analysis of this theory, see: Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, Appendix A, pp. 514-517; Leon Gosfeld, "Czy Anglicy rzeczywiście byli inspiratorami przewrotu majowego?", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXXVI: 3 (1969): 677-681; and Leon Gosfeld, "Were the English Really the Instigators of the May Coup d'état?", *Acta Poloniae Historica* 21 (1970): 177-183. Gosfeld concludes that it is highly unlikely that the English encouraged Piłsudski to launch the coup. The same view is expressed in: Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy*, pp. 358-363. See also: Henryk Jabłoński, "Przyczynek do dziejów zamachu majowego 1926 r. w Polsce", *Przegląd Historyczny* LXI: 2 (1970): 249-259 for a study of the broader international context for the coup; Zbigniew Landau, "Przewrót majowy w raportach poselstwa RP w Londynie", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXVI (1959): 155-158; and Michał Pietrzak, "Jak doszło do wojny domowej i 'Przewrót majowy'" (Dwa nieopublikowane memoriały)", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXVI (1959): 127-154. For a general analysis of whether the coup was planned, see: Pobóg-Malinowski, *Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski*, ch. 14; and Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 81-82.

⁷⁹ Chojnowski, "Józef Piłsudski przed i po przewrocie majowym", pp. 723-732. In this article, Chojnowski has published excerpts from Kazimierz Świtalski's (1886-1962) papers, which have been deposited at both

been a particularly vexing one: all of the states in the region, with the single exception of Czechoslovakia, succumbed quickly and thoroughly to varying forms of authoritarianism.⁸⁰

Historians of Poland tend to regard the years from 1926 to 1930 as a “guided democracy”. During this period, certain structures and forms of the parliamentary system were retained. At the same time, however, Piłsudski himself appointed the cabinets, played a preponderant role in decision-making, and assumed some of the postures of a dictator.⁸¹ Historians typically take 1930 as the end of guided democracy and the end of the first, comparatively mild, period in the Sanacja’s history. In September of 1930, Piłsudski imprisoned at the fortress of Brześć (Brest-Litovsk) members of the Sanacja political opposition, grouped together in a bloc of centre-left parties called Centrolew.⁸² The Sanacja defended its choices by arguing that the opposition activists were preparing a coup against the government, and that the action thus constituted a purely defensive attempt to prevent the spread of anarchy. After Brześć, the regime turned increasingly

the Archive of Modern Documents and at the National Library, Warsaw. The nine documents cover the period from December 1925 to June 1926, and pertain to the unfolding of the political situation in Poland.

⁸⁰ On east European authoritarian movements during the interwar period, and generally, on the failure of democracy, see: István Deák, “Hungary”, in *The European Right: A Historical Perspective*, eds. Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (1965; rpt. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 364-407; Eugen Weber, “Romania”, in *The European Right*, pp. 501-574; Peter F. Sugar, ed., *Native Fascism in the Successor States, 1918-1945* (Santa Barbara, CA: Clio, 1971); Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1974); Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars*; Polonsky, *The Little Dictators*; Andrew Lass, “‘What Are We Like?’ National Character and the Aesthetics of Distinction in Interwar Czechoslovakia”, in *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, eds. Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (New Haven: Yale Centre for International and Area Studies, 1995), pp. 39-64; Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); and Ivan Berend, *Decades of Crisis: Central and Eastern Europe Before World War Two* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).

⁸¹ Historian Andrzej Garlicki calls Piłsudski a dictator. See: Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy*, p. 271. For Piłsudski’s views on dictatorships, see: “Wywiad udzielony korespondentowi *Le Matin*”, in Józef Piłsudski, *Pisma wybrane*, p. 417.

⁸² On the formation of the Sanacja opposition, see: Antoni Czubiński, *Centrolew: Kształtowanie się i rozwój demokratycznej opozycji antysanacyjnej w Polsce w latach 1926-1930* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1963). Czubiński’s text is useful despite its overtly ideological character. The trials of those imprisoned at Brześć lasted from 26 October 1931 to 13 January 1932. The arrests were undertaken with no warrants, and the charges – preparing a coup against the government – were specious. Dozens of

authoritarian and lost much of the support on which it had relied since 1926. As Maria Dąbrowska stated, Brześć represented the final severing of the moral links between the people and Piłsudski. Further, it raised the call to “defend the imponderables” that Brześć had violated so completely.⁸³

This second period within the Sanacja’s history ended in 1935, with the death of Piłsudski and the passage of the new April Constitution. The last period of the Sanacja stretches from 1935 to 1939 and is marked by militarism, nationalism and even greater authoritarianism; it is outside the scope of this study.⁸⁴

Other historians have argued that in addressing this question of democracy, we must first ask whether the Second Republic was a democratic state before the 1926 coup. Historian Zbigniew Landau has suggested that the coup marked the end of parliamentarianism rather than the end of democracy, for democracy had not had enough time to become firmly planted in Poland, either in terms of political structures and systems, or in terms of the growth of a democratic political culture.⁸⁵ The Piłsudski-ites believed that civil society in the newly independent state was too immature to function, and the Sanacja was intended, in part, to make possible the growth of a healthy and strong citizenship.

A great deal of attention has also been accorded to the fact that much of the political left, most notably the Polish Socialists, and the Communists, too, initially

opposition leaders and thousands of opposition activists were arrested. See: Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 350-353.

⁸³ Kowalczykova, *Programy i spory literackie*, p. 245. Dąbrowska’s original statements about Brześć were published as “Rozmowa z przyjaciółmi”, *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 3 (18 January 1931), p. 2; and in “Na ciężkiej drodze”, *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 4 (25 January 1931), p. 1.

⁸⁴ The typical division of the Sanacja into three periods (1926 to 1930, 1930 to 1935, and 1935 to 1939), is discussed in: Zbigniew Landau, “Uwarunkowania zamachu majowego (Dyskusja redakcyjna)”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 93: 1 (1986): 124-125; and Krzysztof Jakubiak, *Wychowanie Państwowe jako ideologia wychowawcza sanacji* (Bydgoszcz: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Bydgoszczy, 1994), pp. 44-45.

⁸⁵ Landau, “Uwarunkowania zamachu majowego”, p. 124. A recent special focus of the *Austrian History Yearbook* devoted some attention to this question of defining political culture for the Habsburg Empire. See the essays by George Barany, “Political Culture in the Lands of the Former Habsburg Empire:

supported a military coup and saw in it the hope and potential for a real socialist revolution.⁸⁶ The figure of Piłsudski himself was instrumental in this.⁸⁷ There were a number of compelling reasons for the socialists to place their faith in Piłsudski, their old comrade from the pre-war socialist movement. Piłsudski had the real support and confidence of a number of prominent socialists and of a large part of the left-liberal progressive intelligentsia. Piłsudski, moreover, was a far better option than that represented by the nationalist camp. Furthermore, Piłsudski's language about the need for fundamental transformation and dramatic revolution, for a purge and cleansing, was easily absorbed into and re-interpreted by a socialist worldview. The contention of this study is that the language of the Sanacja was so broad and open-ended so as to make a daunting variety of interpretations possible.

And yet the reality was that Piłsudski was not a Socialist, and historians have often repeated Piłsudski's statement that he had "stepped off the Socialist train at the stop marked Independence."⁸⁸ The results of the coup, as Polish Socialists would quickly see, hardly approximated a left-wing agenda. Shortly after the coup, Piłsudski issued a press interview in which he attempted to clarify his intentions and to dispel any thoughts that the coup d'état had been waged to affect fundamental changes to the status quo. The

Authoritarian and Parliamentary Traditions", and Susan Gal, "Political Culture and the Making of Tradition: A Comment", *Austrian History Yearbook XXIX: Part I* (1998): 195-248 and 249-260.

⁸⁶ Andrzej Paczkowski, "Uwarunkowania zamachu majowego (Dyskusja Redakcyjna), *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 93: 1 (1986): 118.

⁸⁷ The two major biographies of Piłsudski which cover the whole of his life are those written by Waclaw Jędrzejewicz and Andrzej Garlicki. See: Jędrzejewicz's *Piłsudski: A Life for Poland*; and Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski*. Jędrzejewicz's book is a translation and a condensed version of the Polish original. The author was a member of Piłsudski's Legions, was active in the government of interwar Poland, and was part of the privileged Sanacja core. The biography thus lacks a degree of impartiality, and is limited in terms of its value as a critical assessment of the man and his times. Its utility as a source for historians is marred, moreover, by a lack of proper referencing. See also: Robert Machray, *The Poland of Piłsudski, 1914-1936* (1936; rpt. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962); Janusz Rakowski, "Józef Piłsudski w krzywym zwierciadle historografii Andrzeja Garlickiego", *Niepodległość XVII* (1984): 224-238; Janusz Rakowski, "Ostatnie lata Józefa Piłsudskiego (artykuł recenzyjny)", *Niepodległość XXI* (1988): 219-234; and Adam Suchoński, ed., *Józef Piłsudski i jego współpracownicy* (Opole, Poland: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 1999).

interview was published in Warsaw's *The Morning Courier* on 27 May 1926. His would be "a revolution without revolutionary consequences", Piłsudski stated, and he cautiously but deliberately distanced himself from the Left.⁸⁹ In the months following the coup, Piłsudski would build political support not on the Left, as many had hoped he would. Rather, he reached out to the conservatives on the Right.⁹⁰ It became clear that the coup was intended to preserve and protect the status quo rather than overturn it.⁹¹

The Sanacja, as historians have repeatedly emphasized, possessed no real program beyond the vague avowals of cleansing, reform, and strengthening the state.⁹² The post-May camp's lack of clear goals, purpose and ideology meant that it could attract successfully a variety of different groups to its fold and incorporate many tendencies. It meant, too, that opportunity existed to manipulate the Sanacja idea in many creative ways, and these are the subject of this dissertation. This project is interested in the

⁸⁸ For a discussion of the authenticity of this statement, see: Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, p. 64, fn 3. For the view that Piłsudski was never really attached to socialist ideas, see: Micewski, *W cieniu Marszałka*, p. 251.

⁸⁹ Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, p. 198; and Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, p. 172.

⁹⁰ The conservatives should not be confused with the National Democrats. "Conservatives" referred to the aristocrats, to the landed interests in the Republic, and to the industrialists. Many joined the BBWR. For a discussion of the Piłsudski camp's relationship to the conservatives after the May coup, see: Władysław Władysław, *Działalność polityczna polskich stronnictw konserwatywnych w latach 1926-1935* (Wrocław, Poland: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1977); and Władysław T. Kulesza, "Konserwatyści w obozie sanacyjnym w latach 1926-1935", *Przegląd Historyczny* LXXIII: 3-4 (1982) 227-250, esp. pp. 229-234.

⁹¹ The Socialists first expressed their displeasure with Piłsudski in the period immediately following the coup, when Piłsudski refused to call new elections to the Sejm and instead allowed the pre-existing right-centre cabinet to live out its term. It was widely believed that the Socialists would win any elections held immediately after the coup. For Socialist criticism of Piłsudski and the Sanacja, see, for example: Norbert Barlicki, "Przemówienie na II Zjeździe Związku Robotników Przemysłu Metalowego, wygłoszone 12 grudnia 1926 r., in *Norbert Barlicki: Wybór przemówień i artykułów z lat 1918-1939*, ed. Jan Tomicki (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1964), p. 163. Barlicki makes the same points, though with even more venom, in "Przemówienie na Kongresie Centrolewu w Krakowie, wygłoszone 29 Czerwca 1930 r.", pp. 174-178. Barlicki was arrested on 10 September 1930 as a Centrolew member, and was imprisoned in Brześć. See also: Stanisław Biernacki, "List otwarty", *Kurier Poznański* 2 June 1926, rpt. in full in AAN, Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, File 232, p. 19. By mid-1928, Mieczysław Niedziałkowski (1893-1940), the editor of the Socialist newspaper, *The Worker* from 1927 to 1939, affirmed categorically that, "The road of Polish socialism and the road of Marshal Piłsudski have parted ways completely." See: Mieczysław Niedziałkowski, "Wywiad Marszałka Piłsudskiego", *Robotnik* Nr. 188 (2 July 1928), p. 1. Niedziałkowski's article concerned the interview that Piłsudski had given just a week earlier and in which Piłsudski had criticized parliamentary democracy. Critiques of Piłsudski can be read throughout *The Worker*, and throughout the Kraków-based PPS paper, *Naprzód* (*Forward*). See also: Mieczysław Niedziałkowski, *Demokracja parlamentarna w Polsce* (Warsaw: Nakładem Księgarni Robotniczej, 1930), pp. 38-42.

forms of these manipulations; it is concerned with understanding why so many people reacted so strongly - either in support or in opposition - to the Sanacja and why the idea of Sanacja proved to be so powerful and long-lasting. As such, this project introduces a new way of understanding the period generally and the Sanacja specifically. It builds off of the many and very good studies which have understood the coup as a great political caesura. Instead of retracing the fortunes and failings of the political Sanacja and of the Piłsudski-ite camp as a government and regime, however, this project begins from the premise that the Sanacja must be understood, first and foremost, as a potential and as a persuasive and tantalizing idea. Independence, as Gombrowicz stated, had “awakened the riddle that was slumbering within us”; the very idea of a Sanacja encapsulated this process of awakening, while it also acted as a catalyst for even more pronounced reflection on what Poland had become and what it would be.

⁹² Micewski, *W cieniu Marszałka*, p. 202; and Śliwa, *Polska myśl polityczna*, pp. 98-100.

Chapter One:

“A Lack of Moral Vigour. That is Where Poland’s Fall Will Be.”¹

Stanisław Kozicki (1876-1958), a prominent politician of the nationalist-right camp, reflected on the numerous challenges that the newly independent state faced. He offered the following summation:

In addition to everything that is going on there [in western Europe after the Great War], we are undergoing a transition from slavery to freedom and are exerting a great effort to organize our own state. Can one really be surprised that the transitional period is lasting longer and is more complicated?²

Though it was unpleasant and troubling, it was natural enough, Kozicki reasoned, for the Second Republic to confront monumental problems on all fronts and at all levels.

Commentators like Kozicki moved effortlessly between blaming the lingering effects of the partitions for the problems evident in the Second Republic, to blaming the Great War and the subsequent border wars, the political structures of the new state, the ethnic minorities, the international situation and geo-politics. But commentators also impugned something far less tangible and potentially far more explosive: the moral health of the nation. A vocabulary of infestation and filth, of healing, good ethics and moral rigour, was heard frequently in the press of the early independence period as many looked to the moral realm as possessing great explanatory power. In a chaotic atmosphere of economic uncertainty, social tension and political animosity, cultural and moral visions of newly independent Poland were bound to clash. Bit by bit, the contours of a discursive moral crisis developed alongside the political crises, the social unrest and the economic ruin. Within intellectual circles of the Second Republic, debates raged about the quality of the

¹ Zygmunt Wasilewski, “Kłamstwo”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 23 (29 May 1926), p. 322.

² Stanisław Kozicki, “Walka z młodem pokoleniem”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 48 (6 November 1932), p. 702. Another elaboration of this position is found in: Bronisław Górecki, “O charakter inteligencji”, *Gontyna* Nr. 2 (1 April 1931): 3-4. Kozicki also wrote under the pseudonym Stanisław Lubicz. See: Józef Zieliński, “Stanisław Kozicki”, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, tom 14, p. 609.

nation's moral fabric. The content and expression of these ideas form the subject of this chapter.

We begin by defining moral crisis and reviewing the ways in which historians have approached this question for the post-war west European context; we then explore the Polish context specifically. As in western Europe, lively discussions about moral and national health raged in postwar Poland. These debates – evident in the Second Republic before the May coup of 1926 – were instrumental in laying the groundwork for an explosion of interest in moral themes after May 1926. If the May coup could capitalize on a feeling of disaffection and malaise, then this was possible only because the material for a nation-wide forum on moral health had been circulating in Polish society since independence.

During the Sanacja era, the discourses about moral health moved in fascinating directions, and these are the subject of the second part of the chapter. Piłsudski's coup and the proclamation of a Sanacja would provide a resonant focus for the discussions about morality that had been fermenting in the Second Republic ever since independence. The Sanacja could and did function rhetorically as a moment of rebirth precisely because people had become accustomed to thinking about the need for some kind of dramatic cultural and social transformation and had become comfortable with a language of crisis, spiritual renewal and moral rejuvenation. The Sanacja grew out of and reflected a deep-seated moral crisis, while it also acted as a catalyst for an invigorated focus on moral questions.

Chapter One relies on a selection of periodicals drawn mainly from the Warsaw market. The press of the Second Republic, as historian Andrzej Paczkowski argues, occupied a centrally important role in the political and cultural life of the nation. The press became during this period a social milieu in its own right, one in which all the participants – the editors, publishers, contributors and readers – existed as co-creators of

national culture.³ In Warsaw alone in 1928, for example, 715 periodicals were published, and this figure constituted about 30% of the total periodical publication in Poland, making Warsaw the indisputable centre of the market.⁴

The press of the period was divided, both in popular discussion and in official government records (such as those maintained by the Interior Ministry, the ministry involved in regulating the press), according to political affiliations. Almost all political groupings in the Second Republic had their own periodicals, and periodicals were commonly divided according to the political perspective they represented.⁵ This referred primarily to a division based on simple Left and Right categories. Left and Right were, however, incredibly complicated and imprecise designators which, as we shall see, became even more tangled in the post-May period, when divisions between Left and Right gave way at least in part to pro- and anti- Sanacja and were replaced, as historian Ludwik Hass has noted, by moral precepts and values.⁶ The press of the Second Republic

³ Andrzej Paczkowski, *Prasa polska w latach 1918-1938* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1980); Paczkowski, *Prasa codzienna Warszawy*; and Andrzej Paczkowski, "La presse polonaise en France comme facteur socio-culturel entre 1920 et 1940", in *La presse polonaise en France 1918-1984*, ed. Daniel Beauvois (Lille: Revue du Nord, 1988), p. 15. This argument about the importance of the press is also made in: Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem*. "Introduction"; and in: Jakubiak, *Wychowanie Państwowe*, p. 9. For an exploration of the ways in which the Great War altered writing in Poland, see: Harold B. Segel, "Culture in Poland during World War I", in *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914-1918*, eds. Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 88. For a discussion of the ways in which the post-war press changed in England, see: Billie Melman, *Women and the Popular Imagination in the Twenties: Flappers and Nymphs* (London: Macmillan Press, 1988), pp. 107-120. For a discussion of the press in turn-of-the-century Berlin, see: Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

⁴ Andrzej Paczkowski, "Prasa w życiu politycznym Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej", *Dzieje Najnowsze* 10: 3 (1978): 39; and Stefan Żółkiewski, "Kultura literacka – Warunki modernizacji i początki umasowienia", in Brodzka et al., eds., eds., *Literatura polska*, pp. 14-15. The life span for periodicals, on average, was three years. See: Maria Czarnowska, *Ilościowy rozwój polskiego ruchu wydawniczego 1501-1965* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1967), p. 118. For a discussion of the Polish provincial press, see: Andrzej Notkowski, *Polska prasa prowincjonalna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (1918-1939)* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982).

⁵ John M. Bates, "Freedom of the Press in Inter-War Poland: The System of Control", in *Poland Between the Wars, 1918-1939*, ed. Peter D. Stachura (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 99; and Urszula Jakubowska, *Oblicze ideowo-polityczne 'Gazety Warszawskiej' i 'Warszawskiego Dziennika Narodowego' w latach 1918-1939* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), pp. 30-31 and 34.

⁶ Ludwik Hass, "U socjalnych źródeł przewrotu majowego (Inteligencja – Piłsudzycy)", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXXVII: 2 (1970): 368-391. For Piłsudski's views on the limits of the categories of left and

became an especially useful instrument of politics and performed a vitally important role in shaping public opinion and in popularizing ideas and trends.⁷ Commentators from across the political spectrum used the press as a forum in which to express their profound frustrations with the newly independent state.

Post-War Europe and Moral Crisis

The terms moral crisis and moral panic have been used to describe periods in which widespread analysis of the meaning and structures of social and national organization, purpose, change and potential circulate with a marked intensity. When the members of a given society disagree fundamentally about how to create categories, norms and models to evaluate action and perception, and when they disagree over what values the society should promote, a moral crisis, or a pervasive feeling of alarm, develops.⁸

Scholars have also explored the ways in which moral panics typically unfold, and have added that in times of acute political or moral chaos, social disorder, and perceived danger, ideas about gender difference acquire an especially powerful resonance. Historian Joan Scott argues that gender and the relationship between the genders is typically represented as “timeless, unchanging, outside social and political systems.” But in politically and socially tumultuous times, supposedly immutable gender norms are depicted as having been overturned and violated. The disorder of political and social life is represented by and reflected in the perversion of a supposedly natural order between

right, see: Interview with Piłsudski in *Kurier Poranny* 27 May 1926, rpt. in Rudnicki and Wróbel, *Druga Rzeczpospolita*, pp. 184-188.

⁷ Nałęcz, *Nie szabłą, lecz piórem*; and Andrzej Paczkowski, “Uwarunkowania zamachu majowego (Dyskusja Redakcyjna), *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 93: 1 (1986): 120.

⁸ See: Sonya O. Rose, “Cultural Analysis and Moral Discourse. Episodes, Continuities, and Transformations”, in *Beyond the Cultural Turn. New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, eds. and intro. by Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 218-219. Also on moral discourses, see: Sonya O. Rose, “Sex, Citizenship and the Nation in World War II Britain”, *American Historical Review* 103: 4 (October 1998), p. 1148. For a discussion of the definitions of morality and ethics in a contemporary Polish context, see: Roman Andrzej Tokarczyk, *Prawa narodzin, życia i śmierci* (Lublin: Marie Curie-Skłodowska University, 1995), pp. 17-26. For a general philosophical

the sexes: men are portrayed as prostrate and powerless and unable to fulfill their obligations, while women are depicted as replacing men in their public roles, as strong and assertive as well as careless in their attitudes towards family and nation.⁹

Historian Sonya Rose adds that a moral panic is never a new or unprecedented event, and that anxiety over sexuality is ever-present, although its intensity changes in interesting and revealing ways at specific times. Rose defines morality:

Morality is elaborated in a struggle over symbolic power, which is ultimately the power to define social categories and groups and to establish as legitimate a particular vision of the social world.¹⁰

Morality attempts to identify a single standard of right and wrong, and denigrates as misguided all thoughts and actions which are opposed to it and which threaten to subvert the unity that the community needs to survive.¹¹

Historians of the postwar west European context have argued that the Great War, in part because it was an experience so unique and monumentally devastating, produced a profound and long-lasting moral crisis; the postwar era has been described as one replete with moral anxiety, as a time of cultural and moral crisis.¹² The historical literature about the social disorder and cultural malaise which the Great War stimulated is especially rich and compelling in the French case. As Eugen Weber writes in *The Hollow Years* (1994), for example, the crisis of the French postwar period was as much economic, institutional

discussion of morality, see: Bernard Gert, *Morality. Its Nature and Justification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁹ Joan Scott, "Rewriting History", in Margaret Randolph Higonnet et al., eds., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 27.

¹⁰ Rose, "Cultural Analysis and Moral Discourse", p. 230, but see also pp. 221-223. Rose cites Mary Douglas' pioneering analysis of the association between various social bodies and (women's) physical bodies as exerting a key influence on her own work. See: Mary Douglas, "Symbolic Pollution", in *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, eds. Jeffrey C. Alexander and Steven Seidman (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 155-159.

¹¹ Rose, "Cultural Analysis and Moral Discourse", p. 231.

¹² For analyses of the cultural effects of the war experience, and of postwar cultural renderings and remembrances of the Great War, see: Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (New York: Doubleday, 1989); Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and*

and political as it was “about public morality, confidence, and self-confidence”. Anxiety about sluggish population growth and the expected effects that this would have on military potential, national prosperity and security was high in the postwar period in France.¹³ In *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (1994), historian Mary Louis Roberts argues that the Great War sparked a blurring of boundaries between hitherto dominant conceptions of what constituted proper and ideal femininity and what defined proper masculinity. This blurring caused a “madness”, as Roberts writes, and led contemporaries to refer to postwar France as a “civilization without sexes”. This posed a fundamental challenge to prevailing notions of “the nation”, and portended the ruin of France itself.¹⁴

Like postwar France, postwar Britain nurtured its own anxieties about how the war had changed women and gender relations, and how, in turn, the foundations on which the nation was built were forced to confront serious challenges. Without women assuming their places at the centre of home and hearth, the vitality and indeed the greatness of the nation would be undermined, critics warned.¹⁵ Similarly, Atina

English Culture (New York: Atheneum, 1991); and Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹³ Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1994), p. 7. Poland did not have a similarly intense preoccupation with its birth rate. Poland’s population in 1921 was 27.2 million, and it reached 35.1 million by 1939, making it the sixth most populous country in Europe. See: Andrzej Albert, *Najnowsza historia Polski, 1918-1980* (1983; rpt. London: Polonia, 1989), p. 275. For a contemporary perspective on population growth, see also: Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Warszawie (hereafter A-PAN – Warsaw), Papiery Witolda Chodźko, untitled typed manuscript concerning rural health in Poland, [after 1927].

¹⁴ Mary Louis Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 3-4. Robert A. Nye has addressed many of these themes as well. See: Robert Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honour in Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹⁵ Angela Woollacott, “‘Khaki Fever’ and its Control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War”, *Journal of Contemporary History* 29: 2 (April 1994): 325-348. For a discussion of the British approach to population decline and to family policy, see: Pat Thane, “Visions of Gender in the Making of the British Welfare State: The Case of Women in the British Labour Party and Social Policy, 1906-1945”, in *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare State, 1880s – 1950s*, eds. Gisela Bock and Pat Thane (New York: Routledge, 1991). An interesting analysis of the fate of feminism during the interwar period in Britain is offered in: Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Grossman has argued for the German context that contemporary sources reveal a heightened degree of anxiety about women's perceived embrace of sexual liberation and of a commitment to all kind of "modern" ideas, from the latest fashions to paid employment. Critics, especially during the Nazi era, argued that the Weimar "New Woman" was abandoning brazenly her womanly duties and forsaking family and nation.¹⁶

Historians of western Europe, and of North America,¹⁷ too, have produced many interesting analyses of the deliberations about moral and national health which erupted in the postwar period, and have paid special attention to the ways in which an emphasis on gender identity and gender relations became a constituent feature of these debates. A discursive focus on women and on women's new-found rights, their modern styles and untraditional preferences, emerges when other aspects of national, political and social life are in extraordinary disarray.

Historians of eastern Europe, in contrast, have offered few specific analyses of the postwar moral and cultural crises that might have accompanied the numerous political and economic crises that marked the postwar period. Historians of the east European region have tended to prioritize instead the strictly political aspects of nation- and state-building that the war occasioned. There are many reasons for this. It was important, and remained important through the Communist period, for the states of the east European region to affirm and reaffirm the legitimacy of their claims both to political independence

¹⁶ Atina Grossmann, "Girlikultur or Thoroughly Rationalized Female: A New Woman in Weimar Germany?", in *Women in Culture and Politics: A Century of Change*, eds. Judith Friedlander et al., (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 64-65 and 69; Anita Grossman, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Renate Bridenthal, et al., eds., *When Biology Becomes Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984); Willem Melching, "'A New Morality': Left-Wing Intellectuals on Sexuality in Weimar Germany", *Journal of Contemporary History* 25: 1 (1990): 69-85; and Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 70, 77 and 96.

¹⁷ On these debates in the post-war American context, see: Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of American Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). For Canada, see: Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (1991 rpt. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993).

and to cultural autonomy. In very practical ways, moreover, communism did not afford historians of the Soviet Bloc countries the freedom to explore the kinds of questions which historians elsewhere were free to pursue. Research areas were defined either by nationalist concerns, as suggested, or conversely, by ideological ones. Historians could not often indulge in the luxury of studying topics which seemed not to have an immediate relevance to the paramount issue of political survival and which did not go some distance towards spinning the desired narrative about ones' national history. Historians of eastern Europe are only now slowly beginning to move away from studying the war and the postwar from narrowly political perspectives.¹⁸

Though studies of this topic are still in their infancy for the east European context, a number of historians of the region have pointed, though only pointed, to the existence of moral and cultural crises in that region during the postwar period.

Preliminary analyses of these themes have been suggested for the Bulgarian, Romanian and Hungarian contexts.¹⁹ The Polish context provides an especially fruitful terrain for

¹⁸ On war-time culture in Poland, see, for example, Tomasz Fałęcki and Bronisław Kulek, eds., *Inter arma cantant musae* (Częstochowa: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Częstochowie, 1995/96). This collection treats the war-time literary efforts of Kazimierz Wierzyński, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Józef Weysenhoff and Kazimierz Świtalski, among others. It also includes an article on representations of the Great War in Polish film. See also: Eugenia Łoch and Krzysztof Stepnik, eds., *Pierwsza wojna światowa w literaturze polskiej i obcej: Wybrane zagadnienia* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1999). For an interesting discussion of the literary representation and meaning of war, see: Maria Janion, *Placz generała: Eseje o wojnie* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sic!, 1998).

¹⁹ On Bulgaria, see: Marin V. Pundeff, "Bulgarian Nationalism", in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, eds. Sugar and Lederer, pp. 139-141, 149-150; and Jerzy Tomaszewski, "Some International Aspects of the Bulgarian Coup d'état June 9, 1923", *Acta Poloniae Historica* 41 (1980): 203-216. On Romania, see: Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*; Maria Bucur, "Disciplining the Future: Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania", Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1996; and Eugen Weber, "Romania", in *The European Right: A Historical Perspective*, eds. Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (1965; rpt. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 501-574. On Hungary, see: István Deák, "Hungary", in *The European Right: A Historical Perspective*, eds. Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (1965; rpt. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 364-407. See also: Janusz Żarnowski, ed., *Dictatorships in East-Central Europe 1918-1939. Anthologies* (Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences, 1983). On the Baltic states, see: Piotr Łossowski, *Kraje bałtyckie na drodze od demokracji parlamentarnej do dyktatury (1918-1934)* (Wrocław, Poland: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1972). On the Soviet case, see: David L. Hoffmann, "Mothers in the Motherland: Stalinist Pronatalism in its Pan-European Context", *Journal of Social History* 34: 1 (Autumn 2000): 35-54; and Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

the study of a postwar moral crisis. As Stanisław Kozicki commented, the Second Republic had to contend not just with the effects of the Great War, but also with the end of the partitions. It was hardly surprising, then, that so much attention was devoted to Poland's moral health in the post-1918 period. The fact that political life was so desperately ill, that economic problems were fierce, and that social and ethnic tensions were dangerously high, suggested, many contemporaries argued, that Poland's "moral health" was also in need of serious attention and reform. "Something", people said, was not right. It is to the specific Polish context that we now turn.

Moral Citizenship in the Second Republic

That the partitions had imprinted many undesirable features on the Second Republic was beyond dispute: the partitions had deprived Poles of the experience of state administration and political organization, and of opportunities for social cooperation and growth. As a result, independent Poland was a politically chaotic and socially immature society with an underdeveloped political culture; this chaos would eventually result in the 1926 coup. At the same time, some commentators in the Second Republic noted that certain aspects of partition-era patriotism had been passionate, committed and ideal, and that the Second Republic needed to emulate the best features of this nationalism if it were to survive the challenges of the modern period. A fantastic legend about consummate partition-era nationalist commitment developed in the newly independent state (despite the fact that only a very small and elite portion of the population actually expressed this unwavering national devotion during the partition period), and became a measure by which to gauge contemporary patriotism. Citizenship in the Second Republic was recast as much more than a constitutionally regulated designation; it acquired the status of a

“moral category”, a duty to the nation and to Polish history that, if ignored, would result in a tragedy along the scale of the late eighteenth-century partitions.²⁰

In these postwar conceptions of ideal citizenship, partition-era Polish womanhood was singled out as the embodiment of a model commitment to the nation. With the partitions, the men of the nobility and the political institutions which they had dominated in the days of the Commonwealth lost their special status, and as a result, the private sphere, the home, became an especially important site of nationalist commitment. Women dominated this sphere, and turned it into a site of sedition and hope; the home became a repository of “Polishness”, a vital site of political and national mobilization.

Commentators from across the political spectrum in the Second Republic heralded women of the partition era for having played an indispensable role in the nationalist struggle, for protecting national virtues and culture, for passing along language and tradition, and thus, at the most basic level, for ensuring the very existence of the nation.²¹

²⁰ This idea of citizenship as a moral category comes from Rose, “Sex, Citizenship and the Nation”, p. 168. See also: Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 88-90 for a discussion of nationalism and citizenship.

²¹ See: Sławomira Walczewska, *Damy, rycerze i feministki. Kobiety dyskursu emancypacyjnego w Polsce* (Kraków: eFKA, 1999), pp. 41-43; Barbara Jedynak, “Dom i kobieta w kulturze niewoli”, in *Kobieta w kulturze i społeczeństwie* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1990), pp. 70-105; Anna Żarnowska, “Family and Public Life: Barriers and Interpenetration – Women in Poland at the Turn of the Century”, *Women’s History Review* 5: 4 (1996): 469-486. For a discussion of Klementyna Tańska Hoffmanowa (1798-1845), an early- and mid- century author of advice literature to Polish women, see: Bogna Lorence-Kot, “Klementyna Tańska Hoffmanowa. Cultural Nationalism and a New Formula for Polish Womanhood”, *History of European Ideas* 8: 4/5 (1987): 435-450. See also Lorence-Kot’s article about women’s practices of national mourning in the 1860s: Bogna Lorence-Kot, “Konspiracja: Charting the Topography of Women’s Underground Activities. The Kingdom of Poland in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century”, in Jaworski and Pietrow-Ennker, eds., *Women in Polish Society*, pp. 31-38. For background reading on the public and private spheres, see: Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989). For a critical review of the ways in which historians have used Habermas’ work on the public sphere, see: Harold Mah, “Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians”, *Journal of Modern History* 72: 1 (March 2000): 153-182. For a discussion of the origins of the public sphere in eastern Europe, see: Larry Wolff, “Voltaire’s Public and the Idea of Eastern Europe: Toward a Literary Sociology of Continental Division”, *Slavic Review* 54:4 (Winter 1995), pp. 932-933. Zygmunt Bauman makes an interesting case for the unique development of the private and public spheres in eastern Europe: Bauman, “Intellectuals in East-Central Europe”, p. 172. For a discussion of public and private spheres in the American context, see: Mary P. Ryan, *Empire of the Mother: American Writing about Domesticity, 1830-1860* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985); and for the British context, see: Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English*

The model of femininity which women of the Second Republic inherited from the partition period was based on what literary critic Barbara Heldt has referred to in the Russian context as a “terrible perfection, frightening to men who could not match it in ‘manly’ action and inhibiting to women who were supposed to incarnate it....”²² Women of the Second Republic could not but fail to measure up to the models of femininity and citizenship which had arisen out of the partition period. Some commentators in the Second Republic observed that independence-era women had become satisfied with formal territorial independence and with their newly won political rights, and believed, mistakenly, that there was nothing left to do. Others emphasized that independence-era women had been lured away by the so-called opportunities which the new era had presented and had embraced frivolous fashions and tastes, again leaving the nation to fend for itself. The effects of this wanton disregard for national imperatives were evident in the depth of the problems which the Second Republic confronted.

As early as the border wars of 1919 to 1921, but after the formal declaration of Polish independence in 1918, women were already singled out for having threatened to eschew carelessly their responsibilities to the nation. Contemporary women needed to be reminded of the sacrifices their foremothers had made, and which they, as good and moral citizens of an independent Poland, should also make. One army appeal to women made during the border wars read:

Be like Polish women from the past, who, without a tear, sent to their deaths their most beloved... Away with rags and fashions, trite phrases and fox-trots and that whole hideousness of a low and impoverished life.

Middle Class, 1780-1850 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). For a counter-argument, that the separation of spheres widened in partitioned Poland, see: Katherine R. Jolluck, “Gender, Identity and the Polish Experience of War, 1939-1945”, Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, Stanford University, 1995, pp. 279-280.

²² Barbara Heldt, *Terrible Perfection: Women and Russian Literature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 5.

Your dance hall is an army hospital, your fashions, a head-band with a cross.²³

If women needed to be reminded even during the wars over Poland's borders that they were morally obliged to fulfill the dictates of citizenship, then it could come as a surprise to no one that during a time of formal peace after 1921, when the threats to Poland were less tangible and clear, women seemed to embrace new heights of irresponsibility. Far from being marginal and unimportant issues, women's behaviour went to the very core of definitions about citizenship and symbolized what some believed was the lamentable state of national commitment in the independence era.

Historian George Mosse has explored some of the links between nationalism and culture, gender identity, sexuality and respectability for the west European context. He argues that nationalism is constituted by and reflects not just ideas about common ethnicity, culture and religion, about a feeling of shared history and tradition, but that it also reflects ideas about male and female respectability and expressions of sexual morality. The way that society understands men to act "as men" and the way in which it understands women to behave "as women" go to the very core of how that society conceives of itself as a nation. Mosse argues that expressions of sexuality, conceptions of national commitment, virtue, morality and bourgeois respectability shape each other and fit together in very specific and important ways.²⁴

Historian Andrzej Friszke, writing about the Polish context, has shown that questions of morality, sex and respectability formed core features of National Democrats' definitions of citizenship and generally, of the nationalist-right's conceptions of nationalism during the mid- and later- 1920s. This emphasis is especially evident,

²³ AAN, Naczelne Dowództwo Wojska Polskiego, File 296 / I, tom 56, p. 126. On women, nationalism and the Great War, see also: Richard, d'Oniot, "La Femme polonaise", *La Pologne politique, économique, littéraire et artistique* 12: 2 (February 1931): 166-169.

²⁴ George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), ch. 1.

Friszke argues, in the writings of Roman Dmowski. Dmowski believed that declining morals should be a prime concern for the state and for all those who wished to build a strong and healthy nation. “A society in which morality declines, in which shamelessness, brutal or subtle immorality flourishes, in which a person loses respect even for himself”, Dmowski wrote, was one in which a person lost his or her ability to aspire to noble goals and one in which the slide toward moral – and therefore national – ruin was assured.²⁵ As Friszke states, declining morality, unbridled license and rampant liberalism, in the conception of Dmowski and the National Democrats, “was judged to be a singularly important problem of national politics.”²⁶ Dmowski himself was known to despise “feminists”, who, he believed, placed their individual needs above those of their families and the nation. Dmowski had a traditional view of women’s roles, and believed, as a matter of course, that politics was a man’s preserve. Within this framework, women had limited though important roles to fulfill in the private sphere, raising children and creating for their men a happy and comfortable space away from the hustle and bustle of the outside world.²⁷

The ways in which commentators and cultural observers in the Second Republic approached the problem of citizenship in the post-partition era were many and varied.

²⁵ Andrzej Friszke, “Naród, państwo, system władzy w myśli politycznej Związku Ludowo-Narodowego w latach 1919-1926”, *Przegląd Historyczny* LXXII: 1 (1981): 69. The quote from Dmowski is taken from: *Wewnętrzna polityka*, p. 43. *Internal Politics (Wewnętrzna polityka)* was first published in 1913, and then again in 1919. Dmowski’s text is reprinted in: Kawalec, ed. *Roman Dmowski o ustroju politycznym państwa*, pp. 41-50. For Dmowski’s criticisms of European decadence and liberalism, see: Kawalec, *Roman Dmowski*, p. 281, and see also p. 303. On the links between politics and morality, see: Zygmunt Wasilewski, *O życiu i katastrofach cywilizacji narodowej* (Warsaw: Nakładem Księgarni i Składu Perzyński, Niklewicz i Sp., 1921). For a general introduction to the ways in which “gender and nation” can be used in the study of eastern Europe, see the special edition entitled, “Gender and Nation”, *East European Politics and Societies* 8: 2 (Spring 1994).

²⁶ Friszke, “Naród, państwo, system władzy”, p. 69.

²⁷ For more on Dmowski and his views on women, see: Izabela Wolikowska, *Roman Dmowski: Człowiek, Polak, Przyjaciel* (Chicago: Nakładem Komitetu Wydawniczego, 1961), pp. 157-160. Wolikowska was a co-founder of a Catholic-Polish women’s organization called the National Organization of Women (*Narodowa Organizacja Kobiet*). For more on Dmowski’s views on women, see: Andrzej Chojnowski, “Aktywność kobiet w życiu politycznym”, in *Równe prawa i nierówne szanse: kobiety w Polsce międzywojennej*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2000), p. 38.

Some reacted by creating guide-books that provided pointers on how to raise good citizens; publishing advice literature became a mini-industry. Father Stanisław Podoleński, S.J., for example, published *A Pedagogical Handbook (Przewodnik Pedagogiczny)*. This text was intended to teach Poles how to become useful citizens of an independent nation. In this text, Podoleński reserved special opprobrium for what he referred to as the “feminist excesses” of the post-war era which threatened to make women into freaks, into “half-men”, and which threatened, therefore, independence itself. Podoleński exhorted all parents and educators to take their responsibilities seriously. He reached to the lessons inherent in the partitions, and warned that too lackadaisical an attitude to these issues would spark a repeat of the great tragedy that had befallen the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the late eighteenth century. He urged his readers to act in such a way that, “Poland will be happy and will not be lost...”.²⁸

The loudest exhortations to take seriously the responsibility of raising committed citizens for the new Republic appeared on the pages of the press. The press of the period was filled with references to the “savage mores” of the post-partition period as well as with warnings about the dire effects private immorality would exert on the public generally, and on the nation as a whole.²⁹ Calls for women to recognize and to embrace their citizenship duties, to become like they were during the partition era, resonated with a dire urgency as the political and economic problems mounted. One typical supplication to the Republic’s women, taken from a conservative and highly moralistic magazine entitled *The World and the Truth (Świat i Prawda)*, read: “The whole nation watches

²⁸ Stanisław Podoleński, S.J., *Przewodnik pedagogiczny* (Kraków: T.J., 1921), pp. 150 and 167. For a more detailed and contextualized discussion of sex education, see: Magda Gawin, “Dispute over the Sex Education of Children and Young People During the Inter-War Years”, *Acta Poloniae Historica* 79 (1999): 185-205, esp. pp. 188 and 197.

²⁹ These debates about the relationship between public and private morality was often made on the pages of *Pro Patria*, for example. *Pro Patria* was established in Warsaw in 1924 and served the Polish Monarchist Organization. See, for example, Stanisław Pieńkowski, “Nowym cyklem”, *Pro Patria* Nr. 76 (31 March 1926), p. 5; and M. Lempicki, “Coście z Polską zrobili?”, *Pro Patria* Nr. 79 (24 April 1926), p. 5. On the

you... The Fatherland calls out to you with every pain and every sadness..."³⁰ Another appeal stated that women, quite simply, were "on the front lines" of the nation's future, and would have to answer for their actions "before God and history". The author stated: "one could reproach today's mothers for many, very many, things", and he pointed to women's short hairstyles, knee-length skirts, low-cut dresses, and to the fact that the modern woman's household was more likely to have rum for the guest's tea rather than something for the children's bread. Nothing less than Poland's future was at stake.³¹ Yet another author referred to the way in which the yearly "springtime of peoples" affected changes in women's fashions. The author pointed to women's penchant for bright colours in spring clothing and to their fascination with see-through fabrics, and concluded: "Women's summer dresses really most clearly reveal the state of the spirit and of culture."³²

Models of femininity went to the very heart of morality, and morality, in turn, reflected on the quality of citizenship in Poland and on the very essence and vitality of the nation. Commentators attempted to popularize the idea that citizenship concerned much more than formal political and constitutional rights. As another writer in *The World and the Truth* stated, the penalty for turning a blind eye to the "moral gangrene" would be "a complete turn to savagery of our mores, and with this... the worst political consequences"; the allusion here to the partitions served as a painful reminder and

Polish monarchists, see: Jacek M. Majchrowski, *Ugrupowania monarchistyczne w latach Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1988).

³⁰ Kajot, "Polska ma być rodziną", *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 24 (1925), p. 115. The journal was established in 1923 in Grudziądz, though it was available in all parts of Poland. It sold at a cost of 1.30 złoty in 1924 and 1 złoty in 1926. 30,000 copies of the Nr. 21 issue (1925) were published, and 22,000 copies of the Nr. 24 issue (1925) were published. *The World and the Truth* (*Świat i Prawda*) was both edited and published by Zenon Gątkowski until 1926, at which point Józef Kisielewski became managing editor. See: *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 15 (October 1924) and *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 36 (1 July 1926). This 1926 issue summarized the ideals of the paper as: "For God, the Fatherland, through Faith, Hope and Love."

³¹ Zenon Gątkowski, "Dla kobiet", *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 24 (1925), p. 114.

³² Zetgie., "O strojach", *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 24 (1925), p. 114.

warning.³³ Another author in the nationalist-right *Current (Prąd)* argued that while the Polish political nation had been reborn in 1918, the moral nation had not, and women in particular were betraying Polish history and tradition. “A *not-Polish-woman* type is a wife whose only ambition is fashion and flirt, ... is a ‘mother’ that supports neo-Malthusianism, which leads to the dying of the race and the nation...”. The nation always ended up paying for women’s experimentation: “[t]he nation needs for a woman to be a mother not only in the flesh, but also of the spirit...” Only a woman whose sense of her duty is based on “faith and morality” would guarantee the strength and longevity of the nation.³⁴

With these exhortations to women to re-examine their actions and to remember that everything they did and wore reflected on the moral health of the nation, and that this, in turn, affected the very life of the state, commentators were making very basic points about the relationship between the public and private realms. These debates reached an especially interesting note in the months immediately preceding the coup – months of extremely tense political wrangling – on the pages of a journal called *National Thought (Myśl Narodowa)*.

Writing the Moral Crisis

National Thought was established in Warsaw in 1920.³⁵ Its’ mandate, as its editors proclaimed, was to develop “a nationalist ideology – in an emotional, intellectual and practical sense – for the generations” and to encourage productive thinking “in a nationalist spirit”.³⁶ The journal was the de facto political-theoretical mouth-piece of the

³³ J.K., “Zmierzch publicznej przyzwoitości”, *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 15 (October 1924), p. 11.

³⁴ Ludwik Życka, “O polski typ kobiety”, *Prąd* Nr. 4 (April 1926), pp. 181, 183-184. This paper was formed in 1913 and in the period which concerns us, was edited and published by Antoni Chaciński in Warsaw. See: Notkowski, *Polska prasa prowincjonalna*, p. 294; and Paczkowski, *Prasa polska*, p. 185.

³⁵ In 1926, *National Thought* became a bi-weekly. One issue cost 80 gr. See: *Myśl Narodowa* 1926; Editors, “O *Myśli Narodowej*”, *Myśl Narodowa* Nr. 56 (29 November 1931), p. 329; and Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski*, p. 340.

³⁶ Editors, “O *Myśli Narodowej*”, *Myśl Narodowa* Nr. 56 (29 November 1931), p. 329.

Peoples' National Union, the political party of the National Democrats. Through its association with National Democracy, *National Thought* formed part of one of the most powerful and extensive press networks in Poland. By the mid-1920s, *National Thought* became a leading journal of the right-wing, urban, nationalist intelligentsia generally. During the post-May period, this segment of the intelligentsia included some of the Sanacja's most bitter opponents.³⁷ The audience that *National Thought* reached, moreover, was wide, as it often allowed its own articles to be reprinted in other publications, and it, too, reprinted pieces first published elsewhere. As such, *National Thought* shared views and at least portions of an audience with the National Democrats' main daily newspaper, *The Warsaw Gazette (Gazeta Warszawska)*, as well as with *The Morning Gazette (Gazeta Poranna)*, and *The Warsaw Courier (Kurier Warszawski)*, for example.³⁸ *National Thought* constitutes an especially valuable lens through which to explore the relationship between morality, culture and politics.

During the period immediately preceding the coup, when political tensions were at their peak and the mood was one of anticipation and frustration, the contours of a discursive moral crisis, not coincidentally, followed, reflected and exacerbated political anxieties. In the first months of 1926, *National Thought* published a number of articles which assessed the moral health of the nation. One of these was written by Aleksander Świętochowski (1849-1938). Świętochowski had been a leading ideologist of late nineteenth-century Warsaw positivism. He was an eminent and controversial publicist and ideologue throughout the Second Republic, and contributed regularly to *National*

³⁷ See: n.a., "Oznaki odrodzenia Warszawy", *Myśl Narodowa* Nr. 10 (6 March 1926), pp. 154-155. For more on the National Democratic press generally, see: Jakubowska, *Oblicze ideowo-polityczne*, pp. 7-10.

³⁸ Antoni Słonimski referred to *The Warsaw Courier (Kurier Warszawski)* as the stronghold of the "morality police". See: Antoni Słonimski, "Kronika Tygodniowa", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 29 (17 July 1927), p. 5.

Thought.³⁹ On the subject of Poland's pressing political and moral problems, Świętochowski – or the “Parliamentarian of Truth”⁴⁰ as he was sometimes dubbed sarcastically – had much to say.

Świętochowski's regular column in *National Thought* was entitled “Liberum Veto”. This was a bold title, one which recalled the historic Liberum Veto of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The late-nineteenth-century Kraków school of historians had argued that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth fell precisely because of a careless, self-satisfied and weak nobility that thought more about its own interests than about national ones. The nobility's irresponsibility and recklessness was best represented by the Liberum Veto, the right of an individual noble to veto any legislation passed during a session of parliament. Once invoked against a specific piece of legislation, all other legislation considered during that session was also considered null and void, rendering the work of governing extremely difficult. As the strength of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth weakened perceptibly in the late seventeenth century, and especially into the eighteenth, nobles were known to sell their right of veto to the highest bidder, often a Russian. Ever since the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, many commentators thus used the infamous term Liberum Veto as a short-hand to describe the

³⁹ Świętochowski was a supporter of National Democracy from the immediate post-1918 period through to the early 1930s. For a discussion of some of the significant changes in Świętochowski's ideas and worldview, see: Tadeusz Stegner, “Przyczynek do ewolucji ideowo-politycznej Aleksandra Świętochowskiego”, *Dzieje Najnowsze* XVII: 3-4 (1985): 27-40. Also on Świętochowski, see Samuel Sandler's introduction in: Aleksander Świętochowski, *Wspomnienia*, ed. Samuel Sandler (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1966), pp. v-xxxviii; Samuel Sandler, *Ze studiów nad Świętochowskim* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1967); Maria Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski redaktor 'Prawdy'* (Wrocław: Polska Akademia Nauk / Ossolineum, 1974); and Maria Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski. Biografia*, tom 2 (Warsaw: PiW, 1987), pp. 393-393. A multi-volume collection of Świętochowski's dramas and fiction has been edited by Wacław Kubacki, and is published under the title *Pisma wybrane* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1951). The various pseudonyms which Świętochowski used in his writings include: g.; G.; J.D.; S.; S.S., among others. See: Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski*, pp. 529 and 546.

⁴⁰ The name seems to have its roots in a 1922 article written by Iza Mószczeńska and entitled, “Poseł prawdy - reakcjonista”. See: Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski*, p. 279.

shortcomings of the ill-fated state and the positively abominable conception of citizenship which abuse of the veto implied.

Świętochowski used *Liberum Veto* as a painful reminder to his readers in the Second Republic that political institutions and cultural practices could and would demoralize the population and threaten the very existence of the state, as was shown in fact to have been the case with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Świętochowski used the veto as a symbol of desperate opposition, and he used his column as a forum for issuing acerbic and incisive criticisms of the state of independence. He employed the right of veto as a powerful and symbolically rich jumping-off point to rail against the frivolity of his own day.⁴¹

In February of 1926, Świętochowski wrote in his regular *Liberum Veto* column about the economic and political crises in Poland. He asked his readers to consider the problems from a very peculiar perspective. Though he certainly recognized the international aspects of the situation, Świętochowski also assailed women – from all social classes – for having mismanaged household budgets and for embracing the trappings of modernity. He objected to women's elaborate hats, their fine hose and delicate shoes, and expressed fear that Poles were again living beyond their means and without due regard for the paramount needs of the nation. "I saw workers digging potatoes while wearing gloves and silk blouses", Świętochowski stated. This was all the more objectionable in the context of financial crisis. For Świętochowski, women's profligate ways functioned as an omen of something worse to come. He stated:

⁴¹ *Liberum Veto* was also the name of a paper which Jan Rembieniński had co-founded with Adolf Nowaczyński in the immediate postwar period. The first issue of *Liberum Veto* came out on 2 December 1918 and was sold at a cost of 1.25 Mk. See: *Liberum Veto* Nr. 1 (2 December 1918). The publisher was Stefan Dumin. Contributors from 1918 to 1920 included, among others: Jerzy Kurnatowski, Ignacy Grabowski, Franciszek Kamocki, Józef Maciejowski, and Paweł Romocki. For more on the philosophy behind *Liberum Veto*, see: "Od wydawnictwa", *Liberum Veto* Nr. 1 (2 December 1918), pp. 1-2; and Ignacy Grabowski, "Nasienie Piastów", *Liberum Veto*, Nr. 3 (21 December 1918), pp. 1-2. *Liberum Veto* at least in part supported the re-establishment of a monarchy in Poland. See, for example: L.G.

During the time of slavery [the partitions] she [the Polish woman] was a heroine, a priestess, a teacher of virtue and modesty; in independent Poland she is again like she was in the period of her passage into slavery over one hundred years ago.⁴²

Świętochowski read the general state of national morality through women's actions and attitudes, and in the mid-1920s, was loathe to find that women were showing a wanton disregard for "Poland".⁴³ Behind Świętochowski's statements was the sense that Polish independence was not yet secure, and that the legacy of the partitions had not yet been overcome completely. Świętochowski feared that the nation would again be hurled into an abyss, as was the case in the late eighteenth century. He revealed a belief that true independence could only be achieved through displays of moral fortitude and rigour. Further, he understood women to play a central role in shaping not just a private and individual morality, but a wider public and national morality as well. According to Świętochowski, moral chaos reinforced and reflected political chaos, and vice versa.

While parliamentary politics in the Republic became especially chaotic in early 1926, Świętochowski, one of the most notable personalities of the day, writing in a very prominent journal of the nationalist right, focused his attention specifically on Poland's moral health and drew his readers' attention to women's delicate shoes. So precarious and strained was the situation which Świętochowski observed that he felt compelled to introduce into the discussion the most frightening specter possible: the demise of the political state. In the same breath, Świętochowski implicated women clearly and directly

"Monarchizm", *Liberum Veto* Nr. 39 (43) (27 September 1919), pp. 1-2. For a discussion of the historic veto, see: Jan Rembieliński, "Czem było 'Liberum Veto'", *Liberum Veto* Nr. 19 (23) (10 May 1919), p. 12.

⁴² Aleksander Świętochowski, "Liberum Veto", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 6 (6 February 1926), p. 89. In another "Liberum Veto" piece from 1927, Świętochowski continued to address these same themes. See: Aleksander Świętochowski, "Liberum Veto", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 7 (15 March 1927), pp. 111-112.

⁴³ For Świętochowski's views on women, see his collection of aphorisms: Aleksander Świętochowski, *Aforyzmy*, ed. Maria Brykalska (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1979), pp. 185-186 and p. 199. The aphorisms in these pages are taken from the years 1927 and 1932-1935. One, for example, states: "Often, the education of women is like grafting pears onto a willow tree." (p. 186). Another states: "Woman has exacted on the history of the world a very small effect with her soul, but an enormous one with her body." (p. 199). During his Positivist period in the late nineteenth century, Świętochowski had

in what he viewed as the dreadful condition of political, economic, moral and national life, suggesting subtly but firmly that the formal realm of politics was linked irrevocably to what was understood to be the private sphere.

National Thought columnist Zygmunt Wasilewski (1865-1948), writing not too long after Świętochowski, addressed some of these same themes and probed openly the relationship between rigorous moral codes and effective political systems. Wasilewski was a key National Democratic ideologue. At one time, he had served on the editorial board of the National Democrats' main publication, the daily *Warsaw Gazette* (*Gazeta Warszawska*), and since 1925, he worked as editor of *National Thought*, and had become very influential in National Democratic publishing circles.⁴⁴ He outlined his views plainly:

The loosening of morals lays the foundation for the disintegration of responsibility to society and the nation – and vice versa.. A person must battle the weakness of his/her nature, and society has to help him/her in this... so that the nation can live in a civilized fashion...⁴⁵

At the top of the list of dangerous moral trends, Wasilewski, not unlike Świętochowski, placed women's changing position in society and, following from this, a disruptive individualism. Wasilewski further pointed to the dire effects that women's changing styles and scope for action were having on the institution of the family, and thus, on the nation itself. The culture of "everything goes" disturbed Wasilewski a great deal. He singled out all forms of "pornography" – art, literature, theatre, dance halls, film and women's fashions – as constituting what he called "the elementary school of moral, social and political breakdown". This produced a situation in which everything that "the

been a vocal advocate of the education of girls. See: Jerzy Rudzki, *Świętochowski* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1963), pp. 74-82.

⁴⁴ On Wasilewski, see: Paczkowski, *Prasa polska*, pp. 34-35 and 40; Paczkowski, *Prasa codzienna Warszawy*, pp. 100-102; Jakubowska, *Oblicze ideowo-polityczne*, p. 7; Piotr Stasiński, *Poetyka i pragmatyka felietonu: Z dziejów form artystycznych w literaturze polskiej* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1982), p. 55; Jan Emil Skiwski, "Zygmunt Wasilewski", in *Na przelaj oraz inne szkice o literaturze i kulturze*, ed. Maciej Urbanowski (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1999), pp. 95-103; and Friszke, "Naród, państwo, system władzy", pp. 54-56.

church and the family” had built over the centuries was threatened with wholesale destruction.⁴⁶ For Wasilewski, these issues went to the heart of Polish nationalism:

The Polish spirit is creative only when it is clean, when it does not indulge, when it is inspired by the social psyche and by its own strong ethical standard.⁴⁷

What concerned commentators like Świętochowski and Wasilewski was that citizens of the Second Republic generally, and women specifically, seemed to have become satisfied with formal independence and believed naively that the formal recognition of a Polish state somehow guaranteed its existence. Instead, the argument which these men wished to make was that formal territorial independence was simply one aspect of real independence, and indeed, that the moral rebirth which had to accompany physical rebirth was vitally important and the most difficult to achieve. As suggested earlier, these emphases were rather typical for the nationalist-right camp generally, which understood that the nation was based on the family, and that the Polish-Catholic, modest and moral woman played a uniquely important role in nourishing and maintaining the family, and therefore the nation.⁴⁸

Provocative dance styles and revealing fashions had not caused the problem, and “modernity” would have arrived on the Polish scene whether or not the parliamentary system of the Second Republic was functioning smoothly and the economy was strong or weak. But the fact that politics and economics in the newly independent state was so troublesome provided a neat focus for critics’ understanding of the modern era. Critics cited examples of “immorality” to underscore just how very sick the new Republic was, and how far it was from solving some basic problems. Women’s new fashions and forms

⁴⁵ Zygmunt Wasilewski, “Likwidowanie obyczaju”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 17 (24 April 1926), pp. 257-258.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 258. For another exploration of the importance of women and “women’s issues” to the nation as a whole, see: A.A., “Wychowanie narodowe – sprawa wykształcenia kobiety”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 17 (28 April 1929), pp. 267-268.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Friszke, “Naród, państwo, system władzy”, p. 70.

of behaviour became such an issue for commentators like Wasilewski and Świętochowski precisely because women's ostensibly private behaviour was seen as contravening basic conceptions of Polishness at a time when Poland continued to show signs of weakness and instability.

Behind these ideas rested the assumption that the so-called public and the private realms reflected and influenced one another. It made sense, then, to turn the fox-trot or women's new fashions into pressing national issues. Zygmunt Wasilewski articulated the connection well when he warned his readers in another *National Thought* piece not to believe that political problems were merely skin-deep: "To heal life, one must reach beyond politics into morality... which is the foundation of public life..."⁴⁹ Wasilewski submerged public and private life into a single category, and suggested that together, the private and the public realms imprinted themselves on the nation. This is one of the key ideas that is later taken up in the post-coup period and which underpins many of the Sanacja-era discourses about the nation.

The Crisis Mounts: The National Forum on Morality

Precisely because the Second Republic faced so many monumental problems, a reliance on a language of crisis and doom came easily, and a vocabulary that emphasized moral culpability and imminent demise was widespread even before the official political Sanacja emerged. The idea of Sanacja was able to take hold in the post-coup period, in part, because the foundations for a national forum on morality had been laid in the pre-coup period. The idea of Sanacja, that is, had been invented long before May of 1926. What critics, like those examined above, were calling for when they railed against women's fashions and the general state of moral life in the newly independent nation was a Sanacja, a cleansing and purge. Precisely because people had grown accustomed to

⁴⁹ Zygmunt Wasilewski, "Moralne podstawy twórczości", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 11 (13 March 1926), p. 162.

thinking about moral health and to employing language which teased moral implications from any given event or trend, they were that much more receptive in May of 1926 to the idea of a nation-wide project of cleansing and moral reform and were that much more eager to embrace the idea and the implications of Sanacja. Poles had been experiencing what prominent historian Jerzy Jedlicki calls a “moral hang-over” right from the start of independence, and they were engaged in the very difficult process of learning how to reconcile expectations with contemporary realities. “[U]pon this feeling of a moral hangover”, Jedlicki writes, “there appeared later the Sanacja”.⁵⁰ The Sanacja drew attention to these disappointed dreams and false expectations.

The year 1926 constituted a moment of reckoning. It is to the May coup of 1926 and to the ensuing period of Sanacja that we must look in order to really understand and explore the nature of interwar moral anxiety, of Poland’ sense of itself as a reconstituted nation after over one century of partition. The coup unleashed an ever-more focused and consistent emphasis on moral questions and sparked what we may call a profoundly divisive and serious moral crisis. The post-coup period was the moment when questions about national identity raged strong, when disputes about culture, civilization and nation-building asserted themselves with an intense ferocity; it was the moment at which varying interpretations of public, national and private morality confronted each other. The May Events, in part because they brought to the surface the formidable political divisions within the Second Republic, unleashed a deep and painful period of national reflection that turned on definitions of morality.

How and why could the coup work in this fashion and how could the Sanacja acquire such potent meaning? Piłsudski’s primary aim in May of 1926 was to prevent

⁵⁰ Jerzy Jedlicki, “Jesteśmy w Polsce, a nie gdzie indziej”, *Nowa Res Publica* 2: 77 (February 1995): 3. See also the very interesting article: Jerzy Jedlicki, “Polish Concepts of Native Culture”, in *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, eds. Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (New Haven, CT: Yale Centre for International and Area Studies, 1995), p. 7.

the assumption to power of the political Right, to put a decisive stop to political malfeasance and corruption, to guarantee himself a continued role in the affairs of the state, and to protect the army from what Piłsudski believed was destructive political interference. The Piłsudski-ites had spoken about the coup as marking a political turning point, as initiating a cleansing of Poland's public life and a reform of its malfunctioning political system. They had also spoken about the coup as launching a collective effort on behalf of the nation, as an opportunity for the beleaguered new state to devote attention to much-neglected "imponderabilia" and to launch an impressive and unprecedented national Sanacja.

The word "Sanacja" seemed ideally suited to characterizing this national agenda. The word had circulated in Polish society for a few years prior to May 1926, and was used to describe reforms in various areas of life, from political and economic to social. Piłsudski-ite ideologue Adam Skwarczyński (who will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three), first applied the word to Poland's political problems when he used the phrase "Sanacja of the state" in 1923.⁵¹ The word Sanacja had also been used repeatedly in the press to refer to the efforts of Prime Minister Władysław Grabski (1874-1938) to propose viable solutions to the nation's crippling financial crisis of 1923 and 1924.⁵²

⁵¹ Garlicki, *Józef Piłsudski*, p. 456, fn. 723. The phrase comes from: Adam Skwarczyński, "Przeгляд polityczny", *Droga* Nr. 9 (1923).

⁵² Grabski has served as Finance Minister from January 1923, and from December 1923, as Prime Minister. Grabski's Sanacja was moderately successful, as he lowered inflation, negotiated loans, attracted foreign investment to the country, stimulated industrial and agricultural production, introduced tax reform, lowered unemployment, and created the new Polish currency, the złoty. The Grabski government fell on 14 November 1925. See: Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, p. 29, fn. 4. Using "Sanacja" to refer to economic reforms was common. For example, see: n.a., "Praca", *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 15 (October 1924), p. 13; and n.a., "Kiedy?", *Gazeta Warszawska* Nr. 290 (23 October 1923), p. 186. Both page numbers provided here are archival page numbers. The articles were found at the AAN in the papers of Władysław Grabski, File 17. The link between the terms "Sanacja finansowa" and "Sanacja moralna" are also explored in: National Library, Warsaw, Manuscript Collection, mf. 47163, Ossolineum Manuscript 13260/II, Stanisław Głabiński, "Wspomnienia Polityczne. Część IV. Rządy Sanacji w Polsce, 1926-1939", pp. 14-15. For a similar usage of Sanacja, see: Kcz., "11:-owa 'Sanacja' p. Zdziechowskiego", *Robotnik* Nr. 8 (8 January 1926), p. 1; Ignacy Daszyński, "Sanacja", *Robotnik* Nr. 93 (3 April 1926), p. 1; Kcz., "'Sanacyjna'... Płaszawica!", *Robotnik* Nr. 102 (14 April 1926), p. 1; and n.a., "Sanacja cen", *Mysł Niepodległa* Nr. 933 (1 September 1928), p. 557. .

But when Piłsudski used the word *Sanacja* after he launched his successful military coup, it reverberated with the public in a way that it had never done before. Piłsudski spoke about the nation being sick, and about the need for Poles to reflect seriously on all those imponderabilia which had been suffering during the last years for want of attention. In not defining what exactly the future would entail, in failing to provide a clear vision of what the Piłsudski-ite *Sanacja* would look like, and in emphasizing only the desire to “strengthen the state above all else”, the idea of a *Sanacja* became available to anyone and everyone to use as they saw fit. In the post-coup period, “*Sanacja*”, “healing”, “rebirth”, “reform”, “cleansing” and “imponderabilia” became terribly popular words, as various constituencies attempted to make sense of the great political caesura of May 1926. Once they were unleashed, the Piłsudski-ites were unable to contain how they were used and to what effect, or by whom.

“Journalistic Troubadours of Moral Rebirth”⁵³

That there had been an official and dramatic proclamation of the need for national rebirth and moral revolution in May of 1926 surprised few, and indeed, many rushed in the immediate post-coup period to assert that, in fact, they had been communicating this need for some time. “Everyone” believed in the need for a *Sanacja*, though everyone also differed on just what kind of rebirth was necessary and for what end. This next section will offer several examples of the ways in which appeals to rebirth and change – to “*Sanacja*” – flourished in the post-May period.

The goals of rebirth, the language of moral healing, and the need to emerge on the other side of moral crisis were, of course, most evident in that part of the press that was tied openly to the *Sanacja* camp in the immediate post-coup period. In one article in the pro-Piłsudski *Voice of Truth* (*Głos Prawdy*) of 15 May 1926, the author stated what most

people, from all positions along the political spectrum, accepted to be true: that Poland had been physically reborn in November of 1918, but that this “had not been a complete moral rebirth of society.” The author described how he understood the May coup: “His [Piłsudski’s] name has become a symbol of renaissance... Around him has gathered an unorganized group of all the best yearnings and possibilities...”.⁵⁴ With his coup in the spring of 1926, Piłsudski had occasioned a springtime like no other, and the event was nothing short of a national renaissance. The coup itself was the “first act” in a far larger process of reform and rebirth, and had given Poland the opportunity to dispossess itself of the winter covering of mulch (“*chochoł*”) which had for too long stifled its creative potential.⁵⁵

Similarly, *The Helm of Zagłębia* (*Ster Zagłębia*), the organ of the Social-Political Club in the name of J. Piłsudski (*Organ Klubu Polityczno-Społeczno im. Józefa Piłsudskiego*), defined the reigning motto in post-May Poland as, simply, “Sanacja”, and declared its unqualified support for the idea of building a better Poland.⁵⁶ One author suggested that the Sanacja resembled the period of national reform launched between the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1772 and the subsequent partitions in 1793 and 1795. The first partition had sparked great reform efforts in all

⁵³ This phrase comes from: Władysław Kołodziej, “Odrodzenie narodu”, *Odrodzenie* Nr. 9 (September 1926), p. 11.

⁵⁴ n.a., “Rewolucja ducha”, *Głos Prawdy* Nr. 140 (15 May 1926), p. 293. *The Voice of Truth* (*Głos Prawdy*) was edited and published since 1923 by Wojciech Stpiczynski. For more on this publication, see: Paczkowski, *Prasa polska*, pp. 92-93.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 294. The straw mulch or *chochoł* was often used in Polish literature as a metaphor for a slumbering Polish nation; it symbolized stagnation and despair, but also the potential for hope and rebirth. It is best associated with Stanisław Wyspiański’s 1901 play, *The Wedding* (*Wesele*). See: Aniela Lempicka, *Wyspiański. pisarz dramatyczny idee i formy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1973), p. 339.

⁵⁶ n.a., “sanacja”, *Ster Zagłębia* Nr. 3 (18 July 1926), p. 1. The journal was established as a weekly in Sosnowiec in July of 1926 and was edited by Andrzej Kula. Its associates understood the coup as affecting a “consolidation of the Left” in Poland. See: Red., “Głosy o nas i nasze odpowiedzi”, *Ster Zagłębia* Nr. 2 (11 July 1926), p. 1. The Political-Social Club included members of the Riflemen’s Association and the Legionnaires’ Union. See: “Od Redakcji”, *Ster Zagłębia* Nr. 1 (4 July 1926), p. 1. Specific individuals involved included “citizens” Wroszek, Reybekiel, Wyspiański, Gosiewski, and Rychter. *The Helm* established “good relations” with the Union for the repair of the Republic, which will be discussed in

areas of life, and the period is remembered as the Polish Enlightenment. It was during this time, too, that the famed May Constitution of 1791 had been developed. *The Helm of Zagłębia* hoped that May 1926 would mark the start of a similarly illustrious period in Polish history.⁵⁷

A certain marginal group of interwar spiritualists grouped in the Brotherhood of Spiritual Rebirth (*Bractwo Odrodzenia Duchowego*) expressed no surprise that all of a sudden, after the coup, “everyone” was using the word “rebirth”, talking about morality and claiming a need for some kind of nation-wide catharsis. The Brother was anxious to point out, though, that the concept of “moral revolution” pre-dated the coup: “That which we are looking at today is the fruit of the seeds sown in the Polish soul by the greatest thinkers of the nation” many years ago.⁵⁸ The fact could not be denied, however, that a “psychosis of rebirth”, as the Brother referred to it, raged in post-May Poland; the word “rebirth” appeared in the press, in public opinion, in literature, theatre, and even in business with an amazing frequency.⁵⁹ Polish society would do well to “throw some cold water” on what the Brother referred to as the “journalistic troubadours of moral rebirth”. The Brother warned that any word and concept that gets used as much as rebirth has since the May coup would ultimately become meaningless. He joked that soon Poles would be buying “reborn cigarettes” (“*papierosy odrodzone*”) and would be lighting them with “reborn matches” (“*zapałki odrodzone*”).⁶⁰

Similarly, a poem entitled “The Newest Illness” appeared in the right-nationalist satirical magazine, *The Fly (Mucha)*, in June of 1926. The poem referred to the various

Chapter 4. See: n.a., “Z działalności Klubu Polityczno-Społecznego im. Marszałka J.P.”, *Ster Zagłębia* Nr. 5 (1 August 1926), p. 4.

⁵⁷ Zbik., “Czem jesteśmy?”, *Ster Zagłębia* Nr. 8 (22 August 1926), p. 2.

⁵⁸ See: Władysław Kołodziej, “Przez rewolucję moralną do rewolucji duchowej”, *Odrodzenie* Nr. 8 (August 1926), pp. 7-8. The journal was published by Józef Chobot and edited by Aleksander Borys. The Brotherhood’s interests included vegetarianism, international mysticism, universal ethics, and reincarnation. Most issues contain reports from Brotherhood meetings. The journal only published between 1926 and 1928.

⁵⁹ Kołodziej, “Odrodzenie narodu”, p. 11.

kinds of maladies that were appearing across Poland in the post-1918 period and also to “the new illness which has now arisen”. This unspecified new illness could, of course, only be taken as a reference to the recent May coup. This new malady was spreading quickly, through town and country, “entering homes through key holes”, infiltrating the Sejm, saturating literature and private life. There was no hiding from “the rotten illness”, and it would soon affect everyone. The problem, however, was that no one was certain what its effects would be.⁶¹

A similar embrace of a language of transformation, uncertainty and rebirth was evident in a Warsaw journal called *The Helm (Ster)*, which was billed as a non-party journal for and by the intelligentsia. Independent Poland, the first issue proclaimed, lacked a true appreciation of the crisis that was at hand. The journal had been established, therefore, to awaken people, to inculcate high citizen virtues in the populace, and “to effect a collective rebirth of the Polish spirit”.⁶² With the May coup waged and won, *The Helm* found a focus and inspiration for its ideas. *The Helm* explained that the coup had been caused by political factors, certainly, but that it had also evolved out of “deep moral causes”. Though associates of *The Helm* generally had reservations about the May coup, they nevertheless understood why the civil war had happened and they agreed that the coup was a symbol of deeper problems in Poland. These revolved primarily around the ways in which people were (or were not) expressing their responsibilities as citizens.⁶³ One contributor asked readers “to look into their hearts” and to determine whether they were doing enough to build honour, to foster decency and

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

⁶¹ Władysław Buchner, “Najnowsza choroba”, *Mucha* Nr. 24 (11 June 1926), p. 2. *The Fly* was edited and published by Władysław Buchner. See: Paczkowski, *Prasa polska*, pp. 286-287.

⁶² The first issue of *The Helm*, published on 3 May 1926, carried the subtitle, *Tygodnik Poświęcony Sprawom Państwa i Narodu* and sold at a cost of 50 groszy. The first editor was Tadeusz Nowacki. With the 11 December 1926 issue, Witold Giełżyński became the editor. Giełżyński was associated with the Work Club (*Klub Pracy*). The subtitle of *The Helm* became *Niezależny Tygodnik Polityczny* with the 1 January 1927 issue. Other persons associated with *The Helm* include: Antoni Ponikowski, Anna Brzezińska, Jan Zaglenczyński, and Mieczysław Szerer. See: n.a., untitled, *Ster* Nr. 1 (3 May 1926), p. 1.

to define the great imponderables, or whether, conversely, their commitment was to worshipping “ wine, women and song”. These latter, *The Helm* argued, were hardly appropriate mottoes on which to build a great and strong nation.⁶⁴ In searching for an opposition to what they regarded as noble virtues of citizenship, the author reached to these typical examples of a modern and, from their perspective, frivolous culture. *The Helm* held out hope that the coup would awaken people to the bitter reality that reigned in Poland; they hoped that it would motivate them to work for change and to become better citizens.

The potential for collective action on behalf of Poland that the coup had popularized in Polish society was further reflected in the morally conservative *The World and the Truth*. The journal’s associates believed that the coup amounted to “a removal of the cancer” in Polish life, and they were prepared to wait and see what kind of change would follow from the possibilities unleashed in May of 1926. Their analyses of contemporary life in post-May Poland were infused with references to health, cleansing and rebirth.⁶⁵ One author, for example, published a story in the summer of 1926 about the increased incidences of drunkenness among “beautiful, elegant, charming” young women, “most often from the best families...”. While their parents were out on the town, shirking both parental and national obligations, these “daughters of the citizenry” followed suit and got drunk. This behaviour was especially unacceptable, and such lapses in moral judgement were all the more shocking and offensive, the author stated, during what he referred to as a period of “national rebirth”. Women in particular, the author noted, had a special role to fulfill in ensuring that the good of the collective was protected: “the work of the mother-educator, mother-Pole... is as necessary as life

⁶³ C. Kalinka, “Hasła wyborcze”, *Ster* Nr. 25 (23 October 1926), p. 3.

⁶⁴ C.P. [Czesław Peche], “Na posterunku”, *Ster* Nr. 4 (28 May 1926), p. 8.

itself... Polish woman! History calls you to do right by your nation.” Women’s responsibility was to God and Nation.⁶⁶

A vocabulary of healing and rebirth was ubiquitous and powerful in the post-coup period. Regardless of what people felt about the Piłsudski-ites and about the coup specifically, the notion and the language of rebirth – of *Sanacja* – had wide appeal and was applicable to a wide range of topics. The idea of moral revolution permeated the contemporary discourses of the post-May period and “*Sanacja*” circulated with great frequency. As soon as the Piłsudski-ites released the term and the idea, “*Sanacja*” acquired a life of its own; contemporaries used it to refer to much more than the strictly formal realms of politics and state administration.⁶⁷

The idea and language of spiritual and moral rebirth was especially prevalent within Catholic circles, which were often tied to the nationalist-right. Before the war, Roman Dmowski, and the National Democrats generally, had had an ambiguous and sometimes strained relationship with the Catholic Church; National Democratic nationalism was a decidedly secular nationalism. But by the first decade of independence, Dmowski embraced Catholicism as an integral component of Polish national identity. Dmowski articulated this point unambiguously when he wrote in “Church, Nation and State” (“*Kościół, naród i państwo*”) in 1927: “Catholicism is not an appendage to Polishness... it is embedded in its essence, and in a large measure it *is* its

⁶⁵ Zenon Gałkowski, “Kto będzie silną ręką?”, *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 35 (June 1926), p. 780; and Editors, “Tak się stać musiało ...”, *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 36 (1 July 1926), pp. 10-16. The reference to cancer comes from p. 10.

⁶⁶ R.A., “Miażdżąca dłoń nałogu”, *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 36 (1 July 1926), pp. 1-3.

⁶⁷ One commentator in the pro-Piłsudski-ite *The Helm of Zagłębia* referred to what he called the many “ironic” ways in which critics used the term “*Sanacja*”. He compared these usages of the term to the sign which Jews placed on Jesus Christ’s cross: “J.N. King of the Jews”. See: Dr. J.B., “*Sanacja moralna*”, *Ster Zagłębia* Nr. 9 (29 August 1926), p. 2.

essence.” To remove Catholicism from Polishness, Dmowski continued, was to destroy the nation itself.⁶⁸

The fusion of Catholicism with right-nationalism is perhaps best represented in the Camp of Great Poland (*Obóz Wielkiej Polski*). The Camp was established by Dmowski in Poznań in December 1926 as a supra-party far-right political and social movement. Its goal was to rejuvenate the nationalist-right, especially in light of the existence of the Sanacja political camp, and to affect a kind of rebirth within National Democracy. The Camp described itself as “an organization of the conscious strengths of the nation”, and affirmed its commitment to the Roman Catholic faith, to fighting Jewish influences on Poland, as well as to “a high level of morality and moral discipline”. It operated outside of the Sejm, was extremely hierarchical, and incorporated elements of Italian Fascism into its structure and ideas. The Camp served as a radical-right-nationalist counter-weight to the Sanacja vision of moral rebirth, and as such, offered an altogether different kind of rebirth for the Polish nation.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Roman Dmowski, “Kościół, naród i państwo” (1927), in Roman Dmowski, *Wybór Pism. Tom IV*, p. 99; as quoted in and as translated by Andrzej Walicki, “The Troubling Legacy of Roman Dmowski”, *East European Politics and Societies* 14: 1 (Winter 2000), p. 32. The entire text appears in *Wybór Pism* on pp. 90-115.

⁶⁹ On the Camp, see: AAN, Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, File 3, Deklaracja Ideowa Obozu Wielkiej Polski. The declaration is reprinted in: n.a., “Głosy”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 47 (30 October 1932), p. 694. For an accessible printed excerpt from the group’s Declaration of Ideas, dated 4 December 1926, see: Rudnicki and Wróbel, *Druga Rzeczpospolita*, pp. 196-197. The National Democrats claimed between 250,000-400,000 members for the Camp of Great Poland, though some have disputed that membership figures even reached 200,000. The Camp was declared illegal by the Sanacja government on 28 March 1933. On the Camp of Great Poland, see: Roman Wapiński, “Niekóre problemy ewolucji ideowo-politycznej Endecji w latach 1919-1939”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* LXXIII: 4 (1966): 861-877; Zygmunt Kaczmarek, “Obóz Wielkiej Polski w Poznańskim w latach 1926-1932”, *Dzieje Najnowsze* VI: 3 (1974): 21-56; Wapiński, *Roman Dmowski*, ch. 7; Zygmunt Kaczmarek, “Obóz Wielkiej Polski w latach 1931-1933”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 91: 4 (1984): 884; Bogumił Grott, “Geneza i początek formowania się poglądów ‘młodych’ obozu narodowego na zagadnienia ustrojowe. Okres działalności Obozu Wielkiej Polski”, *Dzieje Najnowsze* XVI: 1 (1984): 115-126; Andrzej Micewski, “Polish Youth in the Thirties”, *Journal of Contemporary History* 4: 3 (July 1969): 155-167; Śliwa, *Polska myśl polityczna*, pp. 106-114; Andrzej Chojnowski, “Polish National Character, the Sanacja Camp, and the National Democracy”, in *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, eds. Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (New Haven: Yale Centre for International and Area Studies, 1995), pp. 32-33; Kawalec, *Roman Dmowski*, pp. 94-95 and 282-285; and Holzer, *Mozaika polityczna*, ch. 8. On the formation of the National Party, see: Garlicki, *Od maja do Brzeźcia*, pp. 227-235. For a discussion of the Camp’s fascist aspects, see: Antony Polonsky, “Roman Dmowski and Italian Fascism”, in *Ideas into Politics: Aspects of European History*

In addition to the Camp of Great Poland, we can point to many other examples of Catholics embracing in the post-coup period a vocabulary that emphasized change and rebirth. The relationship between mass Catholic organizations and the Sanacja regime, or between the Polish Catholic hierarchy and the Sanacja, is outside of the scope of this dissertation. It is nevertheless appropriate to note here that the early Sanacja era was one of peaceful relations between the regime, on the one hand, and on the other, the Vatican and the Polish Catholic Church hierarchy. This obliged the Polish Catholic Church hierarchy to tread carefully when it came to criticizing the Sanacja.⁷⁰ Yet when it came to “moral” issues, to questions of private morality, the Church (and Catholics generally) had far more in common with the National Democratic camp than with the Sanacja.

In an opening address to a Catholic Meeting in Poznań in early November 1926, Primate Hlond referred to the “crisis of spirit” in the eight-year-old independent state and to the “deep fissures” which thus far Poland had been unable to fill. At the end of 1926, Poland stood at a critical crossroads and was engaged in a full-scale process of soul-searching. That Poland was engaged in this process was hopeful, but the moment also required vigilance, according to Hlond. In one breath, Hlond railed against petty party wrangling and against divorce and broken homes. He called on all Poles “to rest the entirety of our private and public lives on a Christian base” and work towards rebirth. Hlond emphasized the need for a spiritual cleansing to accompany the purification of public life, for fear that neither would succeed alone.⁷¹ In his exhortations, made just

1880-1950, eds. R.J. Bullen, H. Pogge von Strandmann and A.B. Polonsky (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 141-143.

⁷⁰ Piłsudski had guaranteed the Catholic Church that it would have its basic interests and needs secured, and in return, the Vatican promised to favour the Sanacja government and discourage separatism among the Catholic national minorities in Poland. See: Neal Pease, “Poland and the Holy See, 1918-1939”, *Slavic Review* 50: 3 (Fall 1991): 524; Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 249-250; and Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism. Poland, 1933-1939* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem / Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994), pp. 30-31 and 36-39.

⁷¹ Primate of Poland, August Hlond, “Oreǳcie N.X. Prymasa Polski”, *Liga Katolicka* Nr. 11-12 (Nov.-Dec. 1926). Hlond's speech can also be found in: AAN, Zbiór Paderewskiego, File 3039, pp. 1-4. Hlond

months after the coup, during a time when it was not yet absolutely clear in which direction the political Sanacja would go, Hlond kept a safe distance from commenting directly on politics, and he underscored that the role of the Church was located outside of the formal political realm. At the same time, Hlond spoke about the paramount need for traditional values to prevail, for people to remember that politics and morality were intertwined and that, together, they determined the future of the state: “We call in vain for the healing of public life if we do not heal our individual souls with Christ.” Hlond referred a number of times throughout his address to “rebirth” and to the need to affect a cleansing of the Polish soul.⁷² He recognized the potential potency of the idea of moral rebirth that the Piłsudski-ites had popularized, and attempted to stake a Catholic claim to the idea.

A Catholic monthly entitled *The Knight of the Immaculate* (*Rycerz Niepokalanej*), one of the best-selling periodicals in the country, also accepted the need for rebirth.⁷³ The position of *The Knight*, however, was that the Piłsudski-ite Sanacja portended a morally spent and physically prostrate Poland. Shortly after the coup, *The Knight* reprinted a speech given by Andrzej Strug, “a prominent Mason”. In this speech, Strug praised the May events, called them a “victory of decency”, and looked forward to building the new Poland. *The Knight* responded by condemning Masons as “backward

continued with these themes in a pastoral letter dated 23 April 1932, and found in AAN, Zbiór Paderewskiego, File 3041.

⁷² Hlond, “Oreǳie N.X. Prymasa Polski”, p. 4.

⁷³ Founded in 1922 by Maximilian Kolbe, *The Knight* print runs regularly reached 400,000 in the later 1920s and 1930s. It was especially popular in the provinces and in rural areas. See: Krystyna Sierocka, “Czasopisma literackie – charakterystyka ogólna”, in Brodzka et al., eds., *Literatura polska*, p. 87; and Paczkowski, *Prasa*, pp. 242-245; and Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism*, pp. 41-42. An early 1932 issue of the journal states that the print run was 515,000. See: *Rycerz Niepokalanej* Nr. 1 (January 1932). The readers of *The Knight* seem to have been especially active in communicating with the journal, and often sent in letters asking for prayers, or simply relating a difficult or a happy event. In the five year period from 1922 to 1926, for example, *The Knight* received over 16,000 letters. See: *Rycerz Niepokalanej* Nr. 1 (January 1927). For an explanation of the importance of Mary to Polish Catholic culture, see: Father Bishop Michałkiewicz, “Przemówienie podczas uroczystości koronacyjnej Matki Boskiej Ostrobramskiej w Wilnie”, *Rycerz Niepokalanej* Nr. 9 (September 1927), pp. 259-263.

pagans” and as a threat to the moral health of schools, art, theatre, film and literature.⁷⁴ Implicit in this condemnation of the Masons was a scarcely veiled criticism of the Sanacja. According to *The Knight*, the connections between the post-May camp and international Masonry were all too clear. Articles in the months following the coup continued to refer obliquely yet assuredly to “the danger hanging over Poland” and to “the assaults on the Church and faith” that had emerged recently.⁷⁵ Piłsudski’s coup, in depriving the nationalist-right of power, also shut out *The Knight’s* supporters from the government.⁷⁶ As a result, it became all the more important for *The Knight* to defend and to promote Catholic-nationalist virtues; the coup and the ensuing Sanacja provided the paper with a concrete event around which to mobilize. *The Knight* became a forceful disseminator of the view that the moral and cultural qualities of the state affected directly its political well-being as well as its international potential and security. Its position was that the Sanacja would deprave the nation’s moral health and would thus jeopardize the very existence of the state. As one author in *The Knight* stated, “The times when it was sufficient to be a Catholic in private life have passed. Today one must be [a Catholic] everywhere.”⁷⁷ The rebirth which *The Knight* envisioned and hoped for in the newly independent state could not have been more different than that which the Piłsudski-ites envisioned.

The above-mentioned right-nationalist and Catholic *Current* was quick in the post-coup period to outline its views on what had occurred in Poland in the spring of 1926. The editors agreed that Poland needed to be re-built from its very foundations, and stated that indeed, for the last seven years, Poles had been talking about this necessity and had been discussing the moral values of the nation. It was only with the May coup,

⁷⁴ n.a., “Z ostatniej chwili”, *Rycerz Niepokalanej* Nr. 7 (July 1926), pp. 193-195.

⁷⁵ A.K., “Nie wolno milczeć”, *Rycerz Niepokalanej* Nr. 1 (January 1927), p. 10.

⁷⁶ *The Knight’s* support for Roman Dmowski is established clearly in: n.a., “Roman Dmowski o protestantyzmie”, *Rycerz Niepokalanej* Nr. 1 (January 1927), p. 14.

however, and the rise to pre-eminency “of those who are furthest from us” that the calls for rebirth became louder and more focused. And this state of affairs, the journal’s associates agreed, was troubling. Sanacja-era Poland would witness a very different kind of “moral rebirth”, one which was inconsistent with *Current*’s basic approaches to private and public life: “Without a doubt, more than ever before, religious, moral and national values are threatened in Poland.”⁷⁸

Together, these examples show that the coup and the official public declaration of the need for a nation-wide Sanacja resonated with the people of Poland; “everyone” was prepared to believe in the need for some kind of a rebirth, and everyone believed that there were extra-parliamentary problems which needed attention in Poland. The type of rebirth that was favoured, and how it would be achieved, however, were the source of much disagreement. It was the critics of the Sanacja who proved especially adept at appropriating the idea of rebirth and wielding it to advance their own visions of the “moral nation” that independent Poland should become: a Catholic-nationalist Poland. Political opponents of the Sanacja created a fascinating rhetorical link between, on the one hand, the political crisis that the May coup and the Sanacja represented, and on the other, the strictly moral and cultural crises which they identified everywhere around them. They used the coup as a convenient crisis around which to organize their ideas about morality and their assessments of national life.

The remainder of this chapter will continue exploring the ways in which opponents of the Sanacja used the caesura of May 1926 to launch a wider debate about moral health. This analysis is drawn primarily from the journal *National Thought*. As the theoretical mouthpiece of the strongest branch of right-wing nationalism, *National Thought* was vehemently opposed to Piłsudski and to the Sanacja. Many of the

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷⁸ n.a., “U progu zamagań”, *Prqd* Nr. 6 (June 1926), p. 289.

personalities associated with *National Thought*, as stated earlier, were prominent public figures – writers, journalists, politicians – whose names and opinions were well-known and gained wide currency through the press of the period. They believed, as did so many others, that some kind of rebirth was necessary in the Second Republic, and further, that Piłsudski and his entourage would not affect the right kind of rebirth. Opponents of the political Sanacja got in on the game, so to speak, fastened onto the event, and used it as the starting point for their own analyses of what was wrong with the Republic.

In doing so, these Sanacja opponents engaged, ironically, in the Sanacja-led nation-wide discussion about what Poland was and how it should rebuild itself for the future. In a partial and peculiar way, they fulfilled one of the coup's mandates: to stimulate a national forum on Poland. The coup was, at one level, about shaping an active citizen body that would work for the good of the collective and that would place the needs of the state first. Even those who bitterly opposed Piłsudski and the coup and all that it represented were mobilized to think, talk and write about the moral health of the newly independent nation. In devoting a great deal of attention to moral issues, and in admitting that more than just the structures of parliament or the nature of the constitution needed fixing in Poland, they embraced, after a fashion, the idea of effecting a Sanacja of Poland's political, moral and cultural life.

National Voices Against Immorality

National Thought's first published response to the events that had so fundamentally shaken Polish society came about one week after the coup d'état, on 22 May 1926. The piece was written by *National Thought's* co-editor, Jan Rembieniński, (1897-1948)⁷⁹ and was entitled, quite simply, "After the Coup d'état". Rembieniński

⁷⁹ Rembieniński was associated with the more radical wing of the nationalist-right. Early in 1928, he and 19 other members of the All-Poland Youth (*Młodzież Wszechpolska*), received revolvers from the Main Headquarters of the People's National Union. See: "Związek Ludowo-Narodowy", *Poufny Komunikat*

began cautiously by saying that it would be imprudent to pronounce judgement just yet as to precisely what effects the coup and the fierce civil war had exerted on the structures of the state and on its political organization. But, Rembieniński stated, “the moral atmosphere of the coup, the moral disintegration that is occurring under its influence, we can already describe today.”⁸⁰

Rembieniński conceded to his Piłsudski-ite opponents that indeed Poland was in dire need of a full-scale “moral rebirth” of society and that some extraordinary shake-up might well have been expected. But Rembieniński, a National Democrat, doubted whether Piłsudski and his supporters would be capable of affecting the right kind of moral rebirth. He referred to Piłsudski’s statement about having waged the coup in order to protect certain imponderables – like honour, virtue and courage – and wondered openly about whether an (illegal) military coup could ever constitute a moral good. Rembieniński predicted that the effects of the coup would be just the opposite of moral and just, and that the post-May camp would in fact breed licentiousness and immorality of all varieties.⁸¹ By excluding specifics from his warnings, Rembieniński left much to the imagination of his readers.

In his statement about the coup, made just weeks after the events, *National Thought*’s co-editor, Zygmunt Wasilewski, similarly expressed skepticism about the Piłsudski camp’s ability to lead the nation towards good health.⁸² Nevertheless,

Informacyjny Nr. 76 (Warsaw, 28 February 1928), in Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, *Komunikaty Informacyjne Komisariatu Rządu na m. st. Warszawę 11: 1 (3 stycznia 1928 - 26 czerwca 1928)* (Warsaw: Centralne Archiwum Ministerstwa Wewnętrznych, 1992), p. 113. These revolvers were for members’ personal protection. The action seems to have been provoked by the recent attacks on the nationalist-right by the Sanacja. Rembieniński was also associated with a secret organization called The Guard (*Straż*) or Polish Guard (*Straż Polska*), organized by Roman Dmowski in 1928. The Guard worked with both the National Party (*Stronnictwo Narodowe*) and with the Camp of Great Poland. See: Garlicki, *Od maja do Brzeźcia*, pp. 230-232.

⁸⁰ Jan Rembieniński, “Po zamachu”, *Myśl Narodowa* Nr. 20 and 21 (22 May 1926), p. 305.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Wasilewski’s first response to the coup appeared as: Zygmunt Wasilewski, “Jaki był motyw zamachu?”, *Myśl Narodowa* Nr. 20 and 21 (22 May 1926), p. 306. A brief examination of *National Thought*’s

Wasilewski feared that people might in fact be swept away by the rhetoric and the excitement created by what he referred to as the “apostles of morality” and might be duped into believing that their best interests laid with the Sanacja camp:

The Warsaw street gawked at this tragic battle just like one gawks at wrestlers.... Duped by a press ambush of pornography and sensation, the Warsaw street has allowed its thinking to become insane and has lost the feeling of whether and where truth exists, where lies the interest of the state.⁸³

Wasilewski suggested that people had lost their ability to distinguish between right and wrong and would be inclined to choose allegiances according to who offered the best slogans or the flashiest promises.⁸⁴ “Sanacja” was, after all, a seductive idea.

Wasilewski and Rembieniński presented analyses of the coup that were very much consistent with the criticisms that the nationalist-right camp generally offered of the May Events. Piłsudski had long been the nationalist-right’s sworn enemy, and the fact that he had seized power so audaciously in the young state further raised the nationalist camp’s antipathy towards him and all those who rushed to declare their allegiance to the Sanacja project. The People’s National Union, National Democracy’s political party, initiated a poster campaign within days of the coup. In this campaign, the nationalists attempted to counter the Piłsudski propaganda that affirmed the marvelous quality of the May events. One such poster stated plainly their objections:

Everything that constitutes the moral fabric of the Nation and the State – guarantees of the strength and solidarity of the army and faith and confidence, honour and brotherhood of arms, law and oath, were dirtied and quashed.⁸⁵

published responses to the coup (and especially of Świętochowski’s reactions) is found in Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski*, pp. 337-338.

⁸³ Zygmunt Wasilewski, “Kłamstwo”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 23 (29 May 1926), p. 322. The “apostles of morality” term is used on p. 321.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 322.

⁸⁵ AAN – Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, File 73, Poster addressed to “Country-people”, dated Warsaw 21 May 1926, published by the Parliamentary Club of the ZLN.

The key concern of the nationalist-right and of men like Wasilewski and Rembieliński was not only that the Piłsudski forces would divide the nation into two camps – into Dąbrowska’s “moral nations” – and would take the nation down a dangerous political path. Wasilewski also believed that this division would exert highly noxious effects on the morality of the nation, and he further warned that people underestimated the importance of morality to a nation’s political survival: “A lack of moral vigour. That is where Poland’s fall will be”, Wasilewski stated.⁸⁶ In another piece written in the autumn of 1926, Wasilewski reaffirmed these points and added that the price which Poland had to pay for addressing certain imponderables was already showing itself to be too high:

That which apparently, on the face of it, began because of the need to reorganize the army, and later took on the character of a parliamentary crisis, is slowly becoming a clear attack on the life of Polish civilization.⁸⁷

Roman Dmowski also believed that the May coup portended something rotten for Polish civilization, that it forced Poland to confront an ever-swelling “eastern wave.”⁸⁸

The Piłsudski-ites, after all, were former Socialists, some were Masons, some were of Jewish background, and were generally associated with a left-liberalism,

⁸⁶ Wasilewski, “Kłamstwo”, p. 321.

⁸⁷ Zygmunt Wasilewski, “Bunt przeciwko cywilizacji”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 36 (15 October 1926), pp. 141-142. Wasilewski took up these same themes in: Zygmunt Wasilewski, “Na widowni”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 7 (7 February 1932), p. 90. In 1921, Wasilewski defined civilization as “the whole person – the matters of his/her psyche”, and posited a direct link between Polish ethnicity, Catholic religion, west European civilization and commitment to nation. See: Zygmunt Wasilewski, *O życiu i katastrofach cywilizacji narodowej: Wstęp do rozważań nad programowemi zagadnieniami doby obecnej* (Warsaw: Nakładem Księgarni i Składu Perzyński, Niklewicz i Sp., 1921), pp. 3 and 10-11. For other analyses of the effects of the partitions on civilization, see: Aleksander Świętochowski, “Liberum Veto”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 2 (15 January 1928), p. 31; and Stanisław Szpotański, “Walka postępu z cywilizacją”, *Tęcza* Nr. 27 (7 July 1928), pp. 1-2. On “civilization” generally, see: John Rundell and Stephen Mennell, “Introduction: Civilization, Culture and the Human Self-Image”, and Lucien Febvre, “‘Civilization’: Evolution of a Word and a Group of Ideas” (1930), in *Classical Readings in Culture and Civilization*, eds. John Rundell and Stephen Mennell (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1-35 and p. 161. For a discussion of the how the concept of civilization and the idea of eastern Europe developed during the Enlightenment, see: Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1994), “Introduction”; and Larry Wolff, “Voltaire’s Public and the Idea of Eastern Europe: Toward a Literary Sociology of Continental Division”, *Slavic Review* 54:4 (Winter 1995), p. 933.

⁸⁸ Roman Dmowski, “Wschód i zachód w Polsce”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 39 (15 November 1926), p. 184.

secularism and progressivism.⁸⁹ They had a comparatively more inclusive sense of “Pole” and failed to enforce the view, at least at this early stage of the Sanacja, that a Pole was a Catholic, and only a Catholic. According to the nationalist-right, this apparent leniency constituted an affront to Polish history and a betrayal of Poland. The “war over culture” and civilization (and not just a war over politics and parliamentary power), the demoralizing of the Polish nation, occurred on this plain and over these issues.⁹⁰ The model citizenry which each side wanted to create – the “moral nations” which each extolled – were different in important ways. Critics of the Sanacja, grouped as they were around *National Thought* and other publications associated with the nationalist-right, believed that the problems in and attributes of the public sphere could not but be reflected on the private level. Like in the Italian Fascist context, the battle in the Second Republic was waged at least in part over the ideal relationship between the private and public spheres; the nationalist-right beseeched people not to forget the inherent politicization of the private sphere.⁹¹

Columnists in *National Thought* explored the links between the political and moral realms and made the point time and again, as one critic stated, that every (political) revolution, like the May coup, is caused by a “moral crisis”.⁹² *National Thought* editors elaborated on this basic association and made it a constituent feature of the journal’s analyses of the contemporary state of affairs:

...everything in the life of the nation is organically linked.... We see from experience of public life how economic life is linked with internal politics,

⁸⁹ Jan Rembieniński reviewed Piłsudski’s involvement in the Polish Socialist Party in: “Odwet ojczyzny”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 52 (1 December 1929), p. 337.

⁹⁰ Wasilewski, “Kłamstwo”, p. 322. The description of the Sanacja as a “war over culture” is also used in: J.E.S., “Głosy: w obronie Sanacji”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 25 (1 December 1927), p. 472. See also: Stefan Sacha, “Ciemności sanacyjne”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 36 (18 August 1929), p. 99.

⁹¹ Victoria de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women. Italy 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 9. See also: Emilio Gentile, “The Problem of the Party in Italian fascism”, *Journal of Contemporary History* 19 (1984): 264 for a discussion of the new “moral community” of Italians which the Fascists hoped to erect.

⁹² Henryk Glass, “Przewroty w umysłach”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 56 (25 December 1932), pp. 814-815.

and how the domestic side of politics is linked with external politics, and how all politics is linked with moral life...⁹³

Aleksander Świętochowski, too, used “Sanacja” to describe not just the political regime of the Piłsudski-ites, but to characterize pervasive moral decay and cultural crisis. His position was unambiguous: Sanacja-era Poland was, as he stated, “a swamp”.⁹⁴ He understood that the right kind of morality formed the basis for the right kind of nationalism: “decency” and “clean character” were the key determinants of “national culture”, and a healthy national culture, in turn, determined the viability and the potential of the state. Świętochowski compared Poland’s current situation to the Teutonic threat of the medieval period, and then jumped to the early modern period to remind his readers that the penalty last time for mismanagement and arrogance was the partitions. “Maybe Poland has never been so morally sick than it is today”, he concluded.⁹⁵

Did the Sanacja really represent such a threat, and was Sanacja Poland really so very “morally sick”? The star *National Thought* contributor Adolf Nowaczyński (1876-1944) certainly thought so. Nowaczyński was a playwright of some distinction, a journalist of acerbic wit, and generally, a public figure of considerable, and controversial, stature in the Second Republic.⁹⁶ Though he had dabbled in anarchism in his youth, Nowaczyński lived much of the interwar period as a committed right-wing nationalist and

⁹³ Editors, “O *Mysli Narodowej*”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 56 (29 November 1931), p. 329. For a similar sentiment, see: n.a. [Aleksander Świętochowski], “Na Marginesie”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 5 (25 January 1931), p. 63. Świętochowski left Warsaw and moved to the estate of Gołotczyzna in 1929. At this time, he stopped contributing regularly to the press, and ended his position with *Mysł Narodowa*, where he had been since 1925. By the early 1930s, Świętochowski was, after all, in his 80s.

⁹⁴ Aleksander Świętochowski, “Liberum Veto”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 15 (14 April 1929), p. 234.

⁹⁵ Aleksander Świętochowski, “Liberum Veto”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 33 (28 July 1929), p. 58. A similar sentiment is expressed in: Jan Rembieliński, “Narodowe... Państwowe”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 3 (19 January 1930), p. 33. Brykalska offers a good analysis of the role that a “moral sense” played in Świętochowski’s thinking. See: Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski*, passim and esp. pp. 517-518.

⁹⁶ In total, Nowaczyński wrote eight dramas for the theatre and sixteen “full spectacle” shows. See: Henryk Izydor Rogacki, “Nowaczyński o teatrze”, in Adolf Nowaczyński, *Porachunki i projekty. Teksty o teatrze z lat 1900-1938*, ed. Henryk Izydor Rogacki (Wrocław: Wiedza i Kultura, 1993), pp. 7-9.

viperous anti-Semite.⁹⁷ Nowaczyński reveled in his reputation as a bold and arrogant writer of clear nationalist-right political affiliations. During the period which interests us here, stretching from the mid- to late- 1920s through to the early 1930s, Nowaczyński maintained a regular column entitled “Offensive” (“*Ofensywa*”) (1921-1934) in *National Thought*.⁹⁸

Nowaczyński believed that indeed the political Sanacja could be linked clearly and directly to a generalized moral fall in Poland. He argued that the Sanacja coincided with the unleashing of a wave of moral extravagance in Poland, and that this could not but affect adversely the state of Polish independence. He stated:

every countryperson can inform him or her self how, beginning with the year 1926 and the seizure of power by the *Imperatrice* of the Sanacja, in *quarto*, we are wearing seven mile long shoes and are running in pursuit of a growth of criminality in Poland and, among other things, in the number of offenses against sexual morality...⁹⁹

Nowaczyński reinforced the point again when he added that this rise in immorality and criminality was attributable directly to the growth of a “sensationalist, gutter, marshal [*marszałkowskiej*], pornographical-criminalist press”.¹⁰⁰

Nowaczyński’s assertions are difficult to prove and to quantify because the supposed instances of sexual immorality which Nowaczyński identified around him did

⁹⁷ For a discussion of Nowaczyński as a literary critic, see: Anna Kieżun, *Spór z tradycją romantyczną. O działalności pisarskiej Adolfa Nowaczyńskiego* (Białystok / Uniwersytet Warszawski w Białymstoku, 1993). See pp. 103-112 for a discussion of Nowaczyński’s anti-romanticism. For a discussion of the role of *National Thought* as an anti-romanticist journal, see: Leszek Kamiński, *Romantyzm a ideologia. Główne ugrupowania polityczne Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej wobec tradycji romantycznej* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich / Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1980), pp. 12-13, and esp. ch. 3. Kamiński devotes much attention to Wasilewski and Nowaczyński in particular.

⁹⁸ Nowaczyński also contributed regularly to the *Warsaw Gazette* (*Gazeta Warszawska*) (1921-1922; 1924-1935 *ABC* (1927-1939), and *The Republic* (*Rzeczpospolita*) (1920-1925). See: Stasiński, *Poetyka i pragmatyka felietonu*, p. 55. Nowaczyński wrote under the following pseudonyms: (a.n.), A N, Ad. Now, nów, Adolf Nów, Przyjaciół, Adolf Przyjaciół, Halban, Clarus, Iunius, A. Nuewert. See: Artur Hutnikiewicz, “Adolf Nowaczyński”, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, tom 23, p. 249.

⁹⁹ Adolf Nowaczyński, “Ofensywa: ‘Przestępcy’ i przestępczość”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 21 (25 May 1930), p. 335. This article is rpt. in Nowaczyński, *Porachunki i projekty*, pp. 172-175. A later version of this article is printed as, “Sekty a przestępczość”, *Warsaw Gazette* Nr. 28 (26 January 1932), p. 4. A similar sentiment is expressed in: Adolf Nowaczyński, “Książki o teatrze”, in *Mysł Narodowa* Nr.22 (3 May 1931); rpt. in Nowaczyński, *Porachunki i projekty*, pp. 176-178.

not often constitute real crimes. What Nowaczyński described was a mood and a feeling, a reaction to change, and he assumed his readers would share and understand these views. He further gambled on being able to link this supposed growth in sexual impropriety with the political Sanacja and on his readers being able to understand the subtle connections which he drew between the political and the cultural realms.

Nowaczyński's observations, moreover, were made at the start of an increasingly tense political atmosphere in Sanacja Poland. As the Sanacja entered its more repressive phase, the regime's opponents advanced the point repeatedly that the political caesura had occasioned a cultural one, and that each reinforced the other. The political environment in the late 1920s was marked by an end to the so-called period of "*bartelowanie*". *Bartelowanie* took its name from Kazimierz Bartel (1882-1941), the Premier under a number of Sanacja governments until 1930. Bartel's governments were defined by some conciliation, moderation and compromise, but Piłsudski replaced Bartel whenever he needed a more ruthless and determined Premier; the end of the first decade of independence was just such a time.¹⁰¹ In the fall of 1929, the Polish Socialist Party, PSL-Piast, PSL-Liberation, along with the National Workers' Party and Christian Democracy, formed a potentially powerful left-of-center opposition bloc called *Centrolew*. This opposition party wanted to reinstate real democracy in Poland and to alleviate the suffering that the working people were feeling as a result of the Great Depression. The government's response to the growing opposition was categorical. When *Centrolew* organized a 30,000-strong Congress for the Defense of the Law and the Freedom of the People in Kraków in the summer of 1930 and demanded the resignation

¹⁰⁰ Nowaczyński, "Ofensywa: 'Przestępcy' i przestępczość", p. 385. The use of the adjective "marshal" is understood here as a reference to Marshal Piłsudski.

¹⁰¹ Kazimierz Bartel had served as Premier from May to September 1926, and from June 1928 to April 1929. In April 1929, Piłsudski replaced Bartel with the comparatively hard-line Kazimierz Świtalski, who formed a Cabinet that lasted to December 1929. Bartel became Premier again from December 1929 to

of the Piłsudski regime and its replacement by a real democratic government, it had gone too far. To prevent further demonstrations, which were already scheduled for the coming months, and to stamp out this and any other efforts to oppose the regime, the Sanacja authorities arrested close to one hundred Centrolew leaders as well as thousands of the opposition activists. They were all detained in the fortress of Brześć. The message was clear: opposition would not be tolerated in Sanacja Poland.¹⁰²

Nowaczyński learned this lesson the hard way. In May of 1931, he became the victim of an assault which left one of his eyes damaged.¹⁰³ His other eye had already sustained serious and irreparable injury in a previous attack in 1928 on Warsaw's Złota Street.¹⁰⁴ The first Sanacja bandits were never caught by the authorities. According to the *National Thought* columnist who reported on the more recent assault case in 1931, the aim of both assaults was clear: to blind the man regarded as one of the Sanacja's most vocal and incisive critics so that he would be unable to continue his campaign of exposing the Sanacja as the sham that all right-thinking Poles supposedly knew it to be. The situation in Poland was dire, the *National Thought* columnist concluded, and the latest attack on Nowaczyński only underscored just how low Polish life had sunk. The state of affairs, the reporter concluded, was "unfit for a European nation".¹⁰⁵

March 1930. See: Ryszard Świętek, "Kazimierz Świtalski, premier Rzeczypospolitej 14. IV - 7. XII. 1929," in *Prezydenci i premierzy Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, eds. Chojnowski and Wróbel, pp. 261-283.

¹⁰² Antoni Czubiński, *Centrolew. Kształtowanie się i rozwój demokratycznej opozycji antysanacyjnej w Polsce w latach 1926-1930* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1963).

¹⁰³ For a description of the first attack on Nowaczyński, see: Kazimierz Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień. Szkice tygodników społeczno-kulturalnych* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1976), p. 45. The attacks are also discussed by Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 235-236. The right-wing journalist and novelist Tadeusz Dołęga-Mostowicz also suffered an attack of this sort. See: Daria and Tomasz Nałęcz, *Józef Piłsudski*, pp. 66-67; and Zbigniew Mitzner, "Wstęp", in Tadeusz Dołęga-Mostowicz, *Kariera Nikodema Dyzmy* [1932] (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1955), p. 5. *The Career (Kariera)* is considered Dołęga-Mostowicz's revenge on the Sanacja and on his attackers. That novel launched his career as a fiction writer.

¹⁰⁴ Aleksander Świątchowski, "Liberum Veto", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 2 (15 January 1928), p. 31.

¹⁰⁵ n.a., "Głosy: Napad na Nowaczyńskiego", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 26 (31 May 1931), p. 347.

Poland's contemporary crisis, Nowaczyński offered in the autumn of 1931, had reached epidemic proportions and had outpaced western Europe. As Nowaczyński stated in his regular column:

In Sanacja Poland, in Poland of the First Brigade, it is bad and most monstrous. ...it's no longer a crisis or a slump, but a slow dying of the whole culture...¹⁰⁶

The attitude that Piłsudski's Sanacja had stimulated and continued to license a cultural decline alongside a political decline existed right from the start of Piłsudski's coup. This assertion remained rhetorically powerful even five years after the event, as the Sanacja tightened its grip on the political process and extended its preserve into a greater number of areas. After Brześć, the Sanacja camp was the undisputed master of Polish political life, and opposition to the regime had been quashed harshly and unmistakably. Critics like Nowaczyński underlined this fact by referring not to Poland or to the Second Republic generally, but rather, by referring specifically to "Sanacja Poland", or to "Poland of the First Brigade".¹⁰⁷

The First Brigade referred, of course, to the elite branch within the war-time Polish Legions which Piłsudski had commanded and which, many believed, had been decisive in securing Polish independence. The First Brigade was comprised overwhelmingly of men drawn from the intelligentsia, men who had formed the core of Piłsudski's political support since the earliest independence struggles and who would go on to support him through the coup and the Sanacja period. Contemporaries made clear discursive links between the Sanacja as a political event and reality, and the Sanacja as something so big and pervasive, sinister and ubiquitous that it came to define the period itself.

¹⁰⁶ Adolf Nowaczyński, "Ofensywa: Morga", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 49 (18 October 1931), p. 247. For another discussion of the post-war crisis in morality in Poland and in west European nations, see: Ignotus, "Imponderabilia", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 15 (26 March 1933), pp. 195-198.

Manipulating Morality and the Sanacja

It was possible to re-interpret a military coup waged by an ex-Socialist nationalist hero as an assault on Polish culture and good morality because of the fantastically broad definition and wide potential of “Sanacja” itself, as suggested. The Piłsudski-ite political Sanacja lacked clear and specific policy goals other than references to the primacy of the state and the need to change the constitution to provide for a strong executive. Appeals to work, unity and “moral rebirth” were similarly broad and flexible.¹⁰⁸ As political scientist Joseph Rothschild has stated, the Sanacja was “a frame of mind” rather than a “specific policy program.”¹⁰⁹

A warning about the open-ended and the imprecise nature of the Sanacja came, for instance, in a late May 1926 issue of *The Paths of Reform (Drogi Naprawy)*, which had declared a “cautious” attitude toward Piłsudski’s coup and the Sanacja. One author stated succinctly that mottoes like “raising the moral standard” and “battling inequality” were dangerously pliant and ambiguous. The ideas associated with these terms, rightly or wrongly, would explode in a variety of directions as everyone and anyone rushed to offer their own interpretations of what proper national morality entailed and required.¹¹⁰ And, as we saw above and as we shall see in the coming chapters, this is precisely what happened.

¹⁰⁷ Nowaczyński again referred to Poland as “Poland of the First Brigade” in: Adolf Nowaczyński, “Ofensywa: Marjanna a Sanator”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 51 (1 November 1931), p. 278.

¹⁰⁸ Stefan Sacha, “Czy istnieje filozofia polityki sanacyjnej?”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 35 (11 August 1929), pp. 81-83. These points about what the Sanacja was and was not are outlined in: Krzysztof Jakubiak, *Wychowanie państwowe jako ideologia wychowawcza sanacji* (Bydgoszcz: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1994), ch. 1, pp. 17-65. For a further discussion of the imprecise meaning of Sanacja, see: Jan Rembieniński, “O treść rządów”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 7 (17 February 1929), pp. 97-98. A similar sentiment is expressed by Rembieniński in: “Konkluzje”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 47 (23 November 1930), p. 735.

¹⁰⁹ Rothschild, *Piłsudski’s Coup d’état*, p. 195.

¹¹⁰ St. Sasorski, “Na tle ostatnich wypadków”, *Drogi Naprawy* Nr. 3 (29 May 1926), pp. 2-4. A similar exhortation for a more precise definition of the term Sanacja Moralna is offered in: Władysław Grabski, “Warunki sanacji moralnej sposobów rządzenia państwa”, *Drogi Naprawy* Nr. 5 (1 July 1926), pp. 4-7, but see esp. p. 6. This journal was formed as a bi-weekly in Warsaw in April of 1926. Its first editor and publisher was Tadeusz Kobyłański, and from late 1926, it was Henryk Tetzlaff. It included regular pieces by Władysław Grabski.

One *National Thought* commentator stated that he remained uncertain, even on the third anniversary of the coup, as to what the much-lauded Sanacja was all about.

Something was still clearly missing from the Sanacja project:

We have already had three years of the new epoch, the renaissance, the Sanacja ... Versions or diversions on the subject of the moral mission have been spreading like smoke, and yet an uncomfortable question remains: what, really, is the goal? We know the means, but what is the goal? Who knows the goal?¹¹¹

To further make his point, this columnist reprinted segments from various pro-Piłsudski proclamations issued immediately after the coup and lined these up for his readers. He made the point that the Piłsudski faction itself believed that morality was a central component of the Sanacja. Each excerpt was chosen to show that at the time of the coup, pro-Sanacja papers and columnists had extolled the virtues of the May event and heralded the coming of a “moral Renaissance”. Other excerpts revealed a vocabulary that emphasized hope and renewal, the “sunny days of May 1926”, and the wondrous nature of an event that “history will remember fondly”.¹¹²

Another columnist expressed his frustration with the Sanacja’s imprecise goals:

‘The Sanacja’ understands contemporary Poland as the seat of the worst physical and moral illnesses. We hear constantly about the ulcers and the gangrene, about cowardliness and about other horrors that were devouring Poland. They, the resuscitators, thus threw themselves onto the task of saving Poland... and they began to heal her... For three years they have been healing her...¹¹³

¹¹¹ n.a., “Głosy”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 21 (19 May 1929), p. 330.

¹¹² The term “moral Renaissance” was used in: *Głos Prawdy* Nr. 140 (15 May 1926), and was quoted in: n.a., “Głosy”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 21 (19 May 1929), p. 330. *Głos Prawdy* was edited since 1923 by Wojciech Stpicyński.

¹¹³ Stefan Sacha, “Rozkład i pustka”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 37 (25 August 1929), p. 117. See also: W. Lipiński, “Jeden z wielu”, *Mucha* Nr. 32 (6 August 1926), p. 2; and “Sanacja moralna”, *Mucha* Nr. 46 (12 November 1926), p. 8. Both of these last two references are to cartoons. Another interesting cartoon that mocks the notion that the Piłsudski-ite or the Belvedere camp was affecting a “real” Sanacja is depicted in: P. Andersen, “W inspektach Sejmowych”, in *Józef Piłsudski w karykaturze*, eds. Garlicki and Kochanowski, p. 62. The image shows a plant named “No. 1: Sanatio Belvederica Magnifica” which has grown to amazing proportions. The “No. 24: Endetia [the Endecja, or the National Democrats] Vulgaris” is pathetically small wretched by comparison. The gardener, Piłsudski himself, surveys his efforts and concludes that the Sanatio Belvederica has “grown beyond expectations”.

And yet nothing, no aspect of political or cultural life, of social or economic life, was ever declared to have been “fixed” in Sanacja Poland and no vision of the new and improved Pole had been presented. Though the coup happened to coincide with a bit of an economic upturn, this subsided by the late 1920s, and the re-emergent economic problems worked to further exacerbate the political and social turmoil and increased the sense that a profound moral crisis raged in Poland.¹¹⁴ The rhetoric simply continued to offer the same empty assertions that a Sanacja was somehow essential to the health of the state.

Commentators opposed to the Sanacja political grouping soon adopted a comical attitude towards this question of what precisely the agenda of the Sanacja was, and they mocked the empty promises of and vague references to moral rebirth that the Sanacja politicians continued to offer. The Sanacja, apparently, was a well-kept national secret. One cartoon from the period depicted the ambiguity well. It showed a man looking at the night sky through a gigantic telescope. The man’s associate turned to a third man and stated: “Please, Sir, tell the citizens of the Republic that neither on Earth nor in the heavens can we find a Moral Sanacja.”¹¹⁵

In a climate of general political turbulence marked by assaults on Sanacja critics, it was dangerous and imprudent to criticize the Sanacja openly. Brześć was definitive proof of this. Instead of launching clear and direct attacks on the political Sanacja camp,

¹¹⁴ The foremost researcher into economics of the period is Zbigniew Landau. Landau argues that the discernable improvements in the Polish economy after May 1926 began in early 1926; that is, before the coup. Landau further argues that the Sanacja governments pursued a policy of inactivity in the sphere of economics and simply continued pre-coup government’s economic policies. See: Zbigniew Landau, “Impact of the May 1926 Coup on the State of Polish Economy”, *Acta Poloniae Historica* 35 (1977): 169-171 and 175. Landau provides compelling evidence of the ways in which contemporaries in the Sanacja camp manipulated economic data in order to show that the coup had produced an economic upturn. See also: Wynot, *Warsaw Between the World Wars*, pp. 58-59; Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, p. 15; *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny*, 1931, Tables VIII and IX, p. 24; and Marian Marek Drozdowski, “Wpływ przewrotu majowego na gospodarkę narodową Polski lat 1926-1929 (Uwagi do dyskusji)”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 93: 4 (1986): 1105-1113.

¹¹⁵ N.a., “Obiecanki-cacanki, a Polakom radość”, in *Józef Piłsudski w karykaturze*, eds. Garlicki and Kochanowski, p. 40.

commentators wrote about the immorality of the era and extended the political Sanacja symbolically into the realm of morality and culture. It was clever, resourceful and prudent, that is, to suggest that in the Sanacja's appeals to unity and work lurked an insidious cultural agenda which would see Poland become a den of sin and vice. The Sanacja was an elastic and mobile symbol in the Second Republic, and could be manipulated easily and to great effect.

This tactic was especially useful given that censorship existed in the Second Republic. Criticizing specific individuals from within the Sanacja fold, or impugning the particular governments of the Sanacja era, virtually guaranteed the intervention of the censor. Despite the fact that the 1921 Constitution, in article 104 and 105, had guaranteed freedom of thought and freedom of the press, this freedom was dependent upon the implementation of other pieces of legislation. The short-term nature of successive Polish cabinets meant that legislators had been unable to devote sustained attention to issues of press freedom, and the Constitutional guarantees of press freedom were therefore not realized in full. In the fall of 1926, only a half year after the May coup, the Sanacja government issued a Presidential decree regarding censorship.¹¹⁶ The decree stated that spreading "untrue" information about the government and denouncing representatives of the government and the state was punishable with a considerable fine of between 100 and 10,000 złoty, or by a period of imprisonment from ten days to three

¹¹⁶ Bates, "Freedom of the Press", pp. 91-92 and 94-99. Bates details the specific legal loop-holes which prevented full freedom of the press. For a discussion of the controversy surrounding this decree and for the attempts to repeal it, see: Tadeusz Smoliński, *Rządy Józefa Piłsudskiego w latach 1926-1935. Studium prawne* (Poznań: Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza, Seria Prawo Nr. 115, 1985), pp. 105-107. See also Słonimski's defense of the concept of free speech: Antoni Słonimski, "Prośba do Sądu Najwyższego", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 4 (27 January 1929), p. 5. For an earlier criticism of press controls, see: Władysław Konopczyński, "Uczni wobec przewrotu", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 29 (15 July 1926), pp. 25-26. Also on the press and censorship in the Second Republic, see: Michał Pietrzak, *Reglamentacja wolności prasy w Polsce (1918-1939)* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1963); and Andrzej Notkowski, *Prasa w systemie propagandy rządowej w Polsce 1926-1939* (Warsaw: PAN, 1987).

months.¹¹⁷ This decree was presented by the government as part of an effort to maintain the respectability and honour of the state and its servants, and, ostensibly, to protect the public interest. The law applied to the author of the offending article, but potentially also to associates of the periodical in which a given article appeared, as well as to the editor or editors.¹¹⁸

Opposition to this decree was fierce, especially from journalists themselves, and many supporters of Piłsudski argued that this decree, which had emerged from within the ranks of the Sanacja government, constituted a sure move away from anything approximating a moral Sanacja.¹¹⁹ This 1926 press law was never ratified.¹²⁰ In the spring of 1927, two new ordinances regarding the press were considered by the cabinet. The new and unified law that resulted increased the number of potential violations which qualified as an infringement of the laws relating to free speech, and increased the penalties that could be distributed as a punishment for violations.¹²¹ The Sejm voted down this new press law, but Piłsudski failed to respect its decision and forced it through

¹¹⁷ As a point of comparison, a young single female student, working part time and living in Warsaw in the mid-1930s, paid 20 złoty a month in rent. The cheapest tickets to a concert cost 1 złoty, and lunch cost about 60 groszy. These figures are taken from the memoir of Julia Wiorkowska, as submitted to the Contest "Warsaw of My Memories" ("Warszawa moich wspomnień"). This memoir consists of a 14-page hand-written text, and is dated 26 March 1947. It is located in the Municipal Archives of Warsaw, File 449.

¹¹⁸ Bates, "Freedom of the Press", p. 95.

¹¹⁹ For one such condemnation of the decree, see: Eugenjusz Śmiarowski, "Dekret o niewoli prasy", *Ster* Nr. 28 (13 November 1926), pp. 3-5. Officially, the Polish journalists' organization, the Polish Union of Publishers of Dailies and Periodicals, was not formed until 22 October 1928. See: Jakubiak, *Wychowanie państwowe*, p. 77.s

¹²⁰ The decree was not ratified because the Sejm and the Senate were annulled in December of 1926. See: Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, p. 252.

¹²¹ Final decisions regarding the repression of newspapers rested with the Courts, but judges who overturned administrative recommendations and decisions were reported to the Interior Ministry and could be "removed". See: Bates, "Freedom of the Press", pp. 93-96. The April 1935 Constitution deprived freedom of the press of its constitutional status.

nevertheless.¹²² As the Sanacja regime grew increasingly authoritarian into the 1930s, censorship followed in the same direction.¹²³

This, then, was the atmosphere in which publicists operated in the Second republic. If a paper ran a piece that impugned the person of Piłsudski directly, boldly condemned the way that he had seized power in May of 1926, suggested the basic illegitimacy of the Sanacja camp, or implied that the assumption of power by the Piłsudski camp had ushered in few sustained improvements to the Polish economic and social situation, then it was guaranteed to draw unwelcome attention from the censors.¹²⁴ Daring declarations like "...the cause of Poland's unhappiness is Joseph Piłsudski", were almost too easy for the censors and assured their intervention.¹²⁵ Naming any of the key Piłsudski-ite figures directly was certain to draw the censors' attention. Mocking the very concept of a moral Sanacja and suggesting that the Piłsudski-ite version was a poor imitation of a real moral revolution also drew the censor's attention.¹²⁶

¹²² Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 252-253 and 274; and Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, pp. 226 and 257.

¹²³ Censorship came to affect the publishing of parliamentarians' statements in the Sejm. See: Bates, "Freedom of the Press", p. 96.

¹²⁴ The main periodical of PPS women, *The Voice of Women (Głos Kobiet)*, was subject to regular confiscation precisely because it often called upon women, as wives and mothers, to stand up and fight the despicable "Piłsudski dictatorship". *The Voice of Women* was first published in Cieszyn from 1907 to 1911, later in Kraków from 1914 to 1915, and lastly in Warsaw from 1919 to 1939. See: Zofia Sokół, *Prasa kobieca w Polsce* (Rzeszów, Poland: Szkoła Wyższa, 1998), p. 39. During the period which concerns us here, the paper was edited by Dorota Kłuszyńska, while the managing editor was Zofja Kwiecińska. From July to August 1928, the number of copies printed was 4,300. See: *Głos Kobiet* Nr. 7 (July-August 1928), p. 16. On the topic of confiscations, see, for example, *Głos Kobiet* Nr. 12 (November 1929), p. 5. As a result of frequent censorship, *The Voice of Women* was forced, ultimately, to reduce its print run to 2,000 from about 4,000. See: BN-PK, mf. 52694, Central Women's Department of the PPS, File 13511/III, Raport, 1 January to 1 November 1931, p. 3. The main Socialist paper, *The Worker (Robotnik)* was confiscated eight times in 1928, twenty-two times in 1929, fifty-one times in 1930, and one hundred and twenty times in 1933. At the beginning of the 1930s, a total of about two thousand confiscations were made yearly. See: Żółkiewski, "Kultura literacka", p. 42. *The Worker* generally published 25,000 copies of each issue, though sometimes this figure went as high as 50,000. See: Oskar Stanisław Czarnik, *Proza artystyczna a prasa codzienna (1918-1926)* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1982), p. 39.

¹²⁵ n.a., "Jasno i wyraźnie", *Gazeta Bydgoska* Nr. 78 (3 April 1930), p. 1. This censored article is part of the collection of the Polish Union of Newspaper and Periodical Publishers, located at the AAN, File 251, p. 39.

¹²⁶ Mocking the moral Sanacja was the one and only aim of a satirical paper called *The Moral Sanacja (Sanacja Moralna)*. It was established in March of 1929 in Warsaw by Olaf Słupski and Władysław Włodkowski. The first and only issue, dated 28 March 1929, was confiscated, and is located at the

Most publications, from the political Left and Right, were subject to some degree of censorship during the Sanacja period. At the same time, censorship was often executed in a sporadic, selective and unclear manner. Once censored, newspapers would often leave dramatic and telling blank spots in the distributed versions of their papers in order to remind one and all that freedom of speech did not exist in Poland. Many others engaged in "voluntary preventative censorship" as a way to avoid the heavy costs associated with pulling an entire edition from print.¹²⁷

As a vocal critic of the regime and a supporter of the political Sanacja's National Democratic opponents, *National Thought* was also a prime target of the censors.¹²⁸ In a sarcastic *National Thought* column on the topic of confiscations, Świętochowski proposed a simple solution: the Sanacja should ban outright all publication on permanent surfaces, such as paper or fabric, of anything by the Sanacja opposition. In this fashion, they could rest confident that only their own viewpoints would be recorded for posterity.¹²⁹ Świętochowski also added that perhaps the Sanacja should publish its own catechism in which all the commandments would be clearly outlined for all to read and obey. The only commandment, he suggested, which need not have been changed from the original Ten Commandments was: "You shall have no God other than me."¹³⁰

National Library in Warsaw, call number P.38656 A. The confiscation notice is also included in the file. 3,000 copies of the issue were printed, and each sold at a cost of 50 groszy.

¹²⁷ The practice of leaving an article unsigned was, in part, an effort to avoid being held liable for controversial or risky views expressed therein. See: Bates, "Freedom of the Press", pp. 96-97. The government offered attractive economic incentives to those press concerns which were sympathetic to the Sanacja. Such was the case with Marian Dąbrowski and his mammoth publishing consortium, *The Daily Illustrated Courier* (*Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*). See: Eugeniusz Rudziński, "Kształtowanie systemu prasy kontrolowanej w Polsce w latach 1926-1939", *Dzieje Najnowsze* 1: 1 (1969): 96-97.

¹²⁸ For a list of confiscations see: Jerzy Speina, "Mysł Narodowa", in Jerzy Kądziela, et al., eds., *Literatura polska w okresie międzywojennym. Tom I* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1979), p. 275. For a general discussion of confiscations, see: *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 5 (17 February 1928). The collection of *National Thought* issues at the National Library in Warsaw very often contain the confiscated issue as well as the edited or "cleaned up" issue. The edited issue normally came out as the next number in the sequence, and contained dramatic blank spots where the offending article(s) should have been.

¹²⁹ Aleksander Świętochowski, "Liberum Veto", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 3 (1 February 1928), p. 51. The same article is reprinted in: *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 6 (17 February 1928), pp. 71-72.

¹³⁰ Świętochowski, "Liberum Veto", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 3 (1 February 1928), p. 51.

Conclusion

The end of the partitions and the proclamation of independence introduced many serious political, social and economic problems to the Second Republic. As one way of coping with and understanding these problems, people subjected all manner of behaviour, possibility and expectation to intense scrutiny, such that a moral crisis emerged in addition to the political crises of the period. Elements of this crisis resonated in the pre-Sanacja period and prepared the way for a full-blown and nation-wide forum on morality in the period following Piłsudski's coup of May 1926. Contemporaries were quick to posit links between the political caesura that the coup had occasioned and what some referred to as the cultural caesura which it had inaugurated. In the post-coup period, public discourses about what the event meant and what a Sanacja was were creative and rich, and emanated from a wide variety of different constituencies. The period became one during which ideas about nationalism, citizenship, political participation and moral accountability were hotly contested. The Sanacja became such a resonant focus because, in part, the political Sanacja was itself a vague idea and lacked clear policy initiatives; it thus became available to be used in any and every way. The Sanacja resonated in a wide variety of unpredictable ways, in ways that Piłsudski and the Piłsudski-ites could not predict or control.

Chapter Two:

Poland Writes to Piłsudski

The post-1926 period in the Second Republic was marked by a constant invention and re-invention of the Sanacja idea. This chapter studies the ways in which ordinary men and women of the Second Republic used the coup as a springboard for launching their own analyses of what ailed the young state. We do so by exploring the letters which people wrote to Piłsudski from 1926 through to the mid-1930s. These letters serve as lenses through which to explore some of the broader themes that comprise this dissertation about what the Sanacja was, what it could have been, and what, in the opinions of some, it should have been. Piłsudski moved swiftly in the wake of the coup to establish a separate and formal office for dealing with the flood of correspondence which he quite rightly expected to receive from the public. This suggests that he had prepared for and was willing to accommodate a dialogue with the people of Poland, and that the people of Poland, for their part, certainly had much to say about the dramatic and controversial directions in which Sanacja-era Poland was moving.

In writing these letters, people inserted themselves into the emerging national forum on Poland and expressed themselves as citizens. The Sanacja had called for many changes in the expression of citizenship, and tried to encourage a broad notion of citizen activism and responsibility. The letters suggest that the Sanacja message about the need to create an active and engaged citizenry and to organize a national forum on the state of Poland's general health was in fact being disseminated and that its reach was wide. These letters constitute but one example of this widened participation. They support an implicit acknowledgement that "anyone" was equipped to comment on what was happening and what should happen in Poland, and that "everyone" was constituted by the political realities, divisions and language of the period.

There is little that is inherently unusual about the simple act of putting pen to paper and writing to famous and powerful political and social leaders, asking them for advice or assistance, or simply sharing with them ones' own views on a particular issue. It would indeed be surprising to find a public figure who did not receive at least some letters from random strangers.¹ The intention here is not to present a comprehensive review of all the various subjects with which people approached Piłsudski. Neither is the intention to evaluate the actual viability of peoples' suggestions, nor to propose that one can make unqualified generalizations, based on these letters, regarding the post-war cultural and social mood in Poland. Rather, these letters are used to show that people were anxious to add their own voices to the discussion regarding what ailed newly independent Poland and to propose their own ideas for a Sanacja of the nation. They are used to probe the language and mood of the Sanacja era and to reveal at least some of the preoccupations of the period.

These letters are especially interesting because they have not been examined before; they have been dismissed by historians of Poland precisely because they originated with arguably desperate and marginalized people, some of whom expressed delusional, far-fetched and simply laughable notions and analyses of political and cultural life in the Second Republic. As literary critics Peter Stallybrasse and Alon White have argued in their influential work, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986), the specific content of any given individual's outpouring, even if and when that individual is far removed from the mainstream, nevertheless reflects the same social and cultural cues which shape the wider discourses in a society. Far from being arbitrary, language,

¹ Of the individuals studied in this dissertation, see: AAN, Zespół Moraczewskich, File 71/I-89, mf. 2314/10.

representation, ideas and assumptions are rooted in and reflect the mood of the time and are constituted by the events, mood and preoccupations current at a given moment.²

We begin with Kazimiera Hłakowiczówna (1892-1983), an extremely well-regarded and successful interwar and post-war poet. From 1926 until Piłsudski's death in 1935, Hłakowiczówna also worked as Piłsudski's personal secretary at the offices of the Ministry of War, where she was in charge of answering the unsolicited mail addressed to Piłsudski from the general public. We then study a sample of letters which people wrote to Piłsudski after the coup. The specific letters were chosen from among the hundreds available at the Archive of Recent Documents in Warsaw because their authors engaged in varied speculations about what the coup and the Sanacja meant for moral and national health. These letters reflect the basic contention that people understood the Sanacja as being about much more than political reform, and they suggest that people did pause to think about what Sanacja meant and what it could mean. The exploration intended here requires that we step away momentarily from the elites and the Warsaw intellectuals who form the backbone of this exposition. It requires, however, that we remain committed to thinking of the Sanacja both as an actual political event and as a potential, as an idea that was twisted and pulled in a variety of directions.

Secretary Kazimiera Hłakowiczówna

Though Kazimiera Hłakowiczówna is best remembered as a poet of considerable distinction³, and as a frequent contributor to the interwar press on a wide variety of issues,⁴ she preferred to describe herself as a "civil servant" working for her country.⁵

² Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), passim., but see p. 196 for a clear articulation of the larger point.

³ For interwar analyses of Hłakowiczówna's poetry, see: Zygmunt Wasilewski, "I.K. Hłakowiczówna", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 27-29 (1927); and K. Czachowski, *Obraz współczesnej literatury polskiej 1884-1934*, tom 3 (Warsaw-Lwów, 1936), pp. 118-124. For post-war treatments of Hłakowiczówna's work, see: Lesław Eustachiewicz, *Między współczesnością a historią* (Warsaw: Pax, 1973), pp. 64-69; and Irena Maciejewska, ed., *Poeci dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*, tom 1 (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1982),

The fate of the nation forms one of the most persistent themes in Iłakowiczówna's poetry, and her verses are infused with great national pride. Piłsudski himself is the subject of a number of Iłakowiczówna's poems.⁶ In one poem Iłakowiczówna wrote:

...as if in the shadow of a great sycamore... I am growing in the shadow of a giant... When I try on his armour,/ a tide of miraculous power flows into me,/ by another's is my arm victorious,/ My eyes become a flash of the spirit,/ in my heartbeat beats a mighty star!⁷

Iłakowiczówna first met Piłsudski in Kraków in 1911. At that time, she was busy preparing her first volume of poetry and was engaged in her university studies. She had already given up an earlier involvement with the Polish Socialist Party.⁸ Shortly before the outbreak of the war, Iłakowiczówna was in London, and there she became involved in the suffrage movement, selling feminist pamphlets on the streets of the city. Later, she joined those London Poles who were organizing military aid to Piłsudski in expectation,

pp. 277-309. See also: Mirosława Oldakowska-Kuflowa, *Chrzescijańskie widzenie świata w poezji Kazimierzy Iłakowiczówny* (Lublin: Catholic University of Lublin, 1993), pp. 8-17.

⁴ Agnieszka Baranowska, *Perły i potwory. Szkice o literaturze międzywojennej* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986), pp. 10-11. Chapter One of Baranowska's text is about Iłakowiczówna. For a selection of Iłakowiczówna's writings in the interwar press, see: Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna, *Wspomnienia i reportaże*, eds. Jacek Biesiada and Aleksandra Włoszczyńska (Warsaw: Biblioteka Więzi, 1997). This collection includes works from the pre- World War One period through to the post- World War Two period, and addresses, for instance, Iłakowiczówna's travels to Romania and Hungary, and her thoughts on the "Jewish problem" in interwar Poland.

⁵ Like the vast majority of intellectuals in eastern Europe generally, and in Poland specifically, Iłakowiczówna supplemented her earnings as a working intellectual – which were meager – with employment in the civil service. See: Żółkiewski, "Kultura Literacka", pp. 32-33. Women formed about 8% of the civil servants in Poland in 1931. See: Michał Pietrzak, "Sytuacja prawna kobiet w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej", in *Kobieta i świat polityki w niepodległej Polsce 1918-1939*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996), p. 34.

⁶ Oldakowska-Kuflowa, *Chrzescijańskie widzenie świata*, p. 10. See specifically Iłakowiczówna's *Ballady bohaterskie* (Lwów: Wydawnictwo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1934). Iłakowiczówna's poetry devoted to Piłsudski appears in an interesting collection edited by Krzysztof A. Jeżewski: *W blasku legendy: kronika poetycka życia Józefa Piłsudskiego* (Paris: Editions Spotkania, 1988). The poems in this work are organized around the major events of Piłsudski's life.

⁷ Iłakowiczówna, "W cieniu wielkości", 1928, in *Z głębi serca* (Warsaw: Gebethner and Wolf, 1928), as quoted in: Danuta Zamojska-Hutchins, "Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna: The Poet as a Witness of History, and of Double National Allegiance", in *Literature and Politics in Eastern Europe. Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate, 1990*, ed. Celia Hawkesworth (London: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 96. The translation is from Zamojska-Hutchins.

⁸ Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi* (1939; rpt. Warsaw: Zelpress, 1989), pp. 19-20. Iłakowiczówna studied first in Warsaw, and later in St. Petersburg, and she audited classes at Oxford before moving to the Jagellonian University in Kraków to study English and Polish philology. She was fluent in English, German, French and Russian. In her memoir, *Path by the Road (Ścieżka obok drogi)*,

as Hlakowiczówna stated, of the coming great “uprising”.⁹ In this period, she also wrote her first letter to Piłsudski, and in it she declared her support for Piłsudski’s military activities. She let Piłsudski know that she was learning how to shoot, and then asked that he make her his aide-de-camp. To her letter she attached a copy of an army hymn, “Three chords”, that she had written for Piłsudski.¹⁰

Piłsudski’s response to Hlakowiczówna consisted of a long letter in which he made it clear that he did not actively support women’s involvement in the army. He outlined the “support roles” to which, in his estimation, women were better suited. Hlakowiczówna was both pleased that such a great person would write to her, and annoyed that he did not offer more, and especially that he did not comment on the hymn she had sent along with the letter; she tore up Piłsudski’s response.¹¹ From 1915 to 1917, Hlakowiczówna was involved in the war, mainly as a nurse.¹² The time that she spent actively participating in the war, she stated, “consolidated in me, in a manner not understandable, in a manner irrational, complete, arduous and unappeasable, a belief in Joseph Piłsudski.”¹³

Despite her apparent busy involvement in nationalist work, Hlakowiczówna continually berated herself for not devoting more time and energy to social and political

Hlakowiczówna is not specific about dates, and it is difficult to determine exactly what she did and where she was at any given point.

⁹ Hlakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, pp. 39-41.

¹⁰ Ibid. For a discussion and selected examples of popular war-time poetry, songs and hymns, see: Harold B. Segel, “Culture in Poland during World War I”, in *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914-1918*, eds. Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 58-88.

¹¹ Hlakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, p. 41. For a very interesting discussion of Piłsudski’s views on women, see: Jan Lechoń, *Dziennik* (London: Wydawnictwo Wiadomości, 1967), p. 186. Lechoń raises the idea that Piłsudski regarded Poland itself as a woman, but not as an “ideal” woman.

¹² Quite surprisingly, Hlakowiczówna states in her memoir that she joined the Polish spearhead of the Russian army (“Wstąpiłam do służby pielęgniarskiej, a w styczniu 1915 do polskiej czołówki przy armii rosyjskiej.”) It is not at all clear why a supporter of Piłsudski would have joined the Russian army at this time. The only clue which Hlakowiczówna provides is to write that immediately before entering the war, she was quite ill, and that she therefore lost contact with her friends in London who supported Piłsudski’s military efforts. See: Hlakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, p. 47.

¹³ Ibid., p. 48.

activism. In a manner typical for the time, generation and social circle, Iłakowiczówna was plagued by a self-critical attitude towards what she regarded as her own, and society's more generally, half-hearted embrace of citizenship in the reborn Polish state. Iłakowiczówna stated: "Life passed totally by me, great life, that which roars and thunders and expels pearls and monsters."¹⁴ The one common thread throughout her life became a burning desire to work for the betterment of Poland and to support Piłsudski more directly, even if this meant giving up those friends who were to become detractors of Piłsudski.¹⁵

Reflecting on Piłsudski's political career, Iłakowiczówna noted that it was only during Piłsudski's period of self-imposed political and social isolation in Sulejówek (1923-1926) that she had trouble understanding the Marshal's choices. Piłsudski was, after all, Poland's landlord and master of the house, and according to Iłakowiczówna, he could not, in good conscience, abandon his nation in such a fashion.¹⁶ Yet when Iłakowiczówna received a quite unexpected call in November of 1925 from [Helena] Sujkowska of Piłsudski's office, and was told to prepare herself for the time when Piłsudski would need her services, she realized that Piłsudski may have been planning something very important during his so-called retirement from public life.¹⁷

Just days after the May coup, Iłakowiczówna received the long-awaited second call from Sujkowska and was summoned to work. Iłakowiczówna, who lived at the time in the centre of Warsaw, found herself in the thick of the disturbances, and she described a chaotic and busy atmosphere in the city.¹⁸ She could not believe that Piłsudski and Wojciechowski could not arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement: "Only men can

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 61-62.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 89-90. On this period, see also: Maria Jehanne Wielopolska, *Pliszka w jaskini lwa: rozważania nad książką Panny Iłakowiczówny, Ścieżka obok drogi* (Warsaw: 1939), pp. 16-17.

¹⁸ Iłakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, p. 111.

organize things in this way, and so organize things for everyone”, Hlakowiczówna stated.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the news that Sujkowska delivered to Hlakowiczówna that day was simple: “The Commander wishes that you become his personal secretary.”²⁰ After some deliberation and initial reluctance (which critics of Hlakowiczówna simply could not understand and regarded as wholly insincere)²¹, Hlakowiczówna decided to leave her position at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where she had been employed from 1918.²²

Thus in mid-1926, Hlakowiczówna began a term in the Ministry of Military Affairs as Secretary to the Minister of Military Affairs, responsible only and directly to Piłsudski. She would remain there until Piłsudski’s death in 1935. Though her first days at her new job involved, as Hlakowiczówna remembers, simply pouring tea for Piłsudski (“who despised it when a man poured tea”), the next nine years would become, she offered, some of the busiest and most rewarding of her life.²³

Hlakowiczówna wrote her reminiscences about her tenure as Piłsudski’s secretary in *Path by the Road (Ścieżka obok drogi)*, first published in 1939.²⁴ It is a memoir of Hlakowiczówna’s personal and professional relationship with Piłsudski, written with a sense that it would be published and would be read by the public, though it is formally dedicated to and intended for her nieces. The book caused quite a media storm: surprisingly, *Path by the Road*, written by a unwavering Piłsudski supporter, was attacked

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 112.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 117 and 113.

²¹ See, for example, Wielopolska, *Pliszka*, pp. 20-24.

²² Hlakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, p. 120. Hlakowiczówna returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1936. See also: Hlakowiczówna, *Wspomnienia i reportaże*, pp. 239 and 189-193.

²³ Piłsudski insisted that Hlakowiczówna use “Secretary to the Minister of Military Affairs” as her official title. He argued that a public servant can only serve the Minister, and not an individual person. See: Hlakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, pp. 238-9 and p. 155.

²⁴ The text was written in Warsaw, dated February 1936. See p. 336. The original 1939 publication of the book was handled by “Rój” publishers, rather than by The Military Bookstore, (*Księgarnia Wojskowa*), as one might have expected for a book about Piłsudski. Hlakowiczówna’s critic, Maria Jehanne Wielopolska, speculated that the Military Bookstore refused to publish Hlakowiczówna’s work, and that she was therefore forced to look elsewhere. See: Wielopolska, *Pliszka*, p. 48.

by Piłsudski-ites, and was praised by opponents of Piłsudski.²⁵ One critic, the Piłsudski-ite author, Maria Jehanne Wielopolska, devoted an entire book to a critique of Iłakowiczówna's work. Wielopolska dismissed Iłakowiczówna's *Path by the Road* as unbelievable naïve, wildly arrogant, mean-spirited and self-serving, an immodest walk (via "the dark, dirty kitchen stairs") towards Piłsudski, "the largest and the most scared of personages".²⁶

Iłakowiczówna was clear throughout *Path by the Road* that she admired and respected Piłsudski, and she credited him and the May coup with, as she wrote, bringing Poland "out of the house of slavery".²⁷ At the same time, she depicted Piłsudski as a moody, bossy and arrogant individual accustomed to getting his way. She included in her text amusing anecdotes which her critics argued would be taken the wrong way by Piłsudski's opponents. Iłakowiczówna relayed, for example, that during a conversation with Piłsudski, he admitted to waging the May coup just so that he could assume the position of Minister of Military Affairs and could move into the beautiful Belvedere Palace. There, he would be allowed to drink out of the fine large china cups that were reserved for the Minister of Military Affairs.²⁸

²⁵ Baranowska, *Perły i potwory*, pp. 29-32.

²⁶ Wielopolska, *Pliszka*, p. 8. Wielopolska's work is a sarcastic and vitriolic chapter by chapter review of Iłakowiczówna's book and a mocking account of the way in which Iłakowiczówna interpreted all major historic events through Iłakowiczówna's own life. On the Iłakowiczówna-Wielopolska controversy, see also: Baranowska, *Perły i potwory*, pp. 45 and 48. Chapter 2 of Baranowska's work is entitled, "Lady Paradox" and is devoted to Wielopolska. Wielopolska was dubbed "Lady Paradox" by *Literary News (Wiadomości Literackie)*, and "Witch" (*Baba-Jaga*) by the trenchant National Democratic publicist Adolf Nowaczyński. See also: Stanisława Jarocińska-Malinowska, "Lady paradox des lettres polonaises. Marja Jehanne Wielopolska", *La Pologne Littéraire* Nr. 13 (15 October 1927), p. 1. The Iłakowiczówna-Wielopolska controversy is also outlined in Włodzimierz Wójcik, *Legenda Piłsudskiego w polskiej literaturze międzywojennej*, 2nd ed., (Katowice, Poland: Wydawnictwo Śląsk, 1986), pp. 87-91.

²⁷ This phrase is taken from one of Iłakowiczówna's poems, *Z domu niewoli*, written in 1914. The poem was dedicated to Piłsudski and encapsulated Iłakowiczówna's hopes, and the hopes of many others, that Piłsudski would lead Poland out of the slavery that had marked their existence for over a century. See: Zamojska-Hutchins, "Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna", p. 95.

²⁸ The comment about the china comes from Wielopolska, *Pliszka* p. 8. Publicist Wacław Lipiński further argued that Iłakowiczówna's memoir of Piłsudski had to be treated cautiously, for it rather unwisely put Piłsudski in the background and put the author in the foreground. See: "O wartości historycznej książki Kazimiera Iłakowiczówny. Wywiad z Wacławem Lipińskim.", *Gazeta Polska* (2 March 1939). The

Prior to the May coup and to Iłakowiczówna's assumption of the role of Piłsudski's personal secretary in charge of mail, there did not exist a single office responsible specifically and solely for receiving and answering letters addressed to Piłsudski from the general public. For a number of years prior to 1926, Michał [Miś] Galiński, an officer who, it was said, frequently lost attachments and important documents that people sent along with their requests, was charged with handling the incoming mail, but this was not a formalized or regularized process. As an author in her own right, Iłakowiczówna seemed ideally suited for the job. And as Wielopolska speculated, the general view prevailed that a woman would be "naturally" better suited to answering correspondence in a sensitive manner.²⁹

Piłsudski hired Iłakowiczówna as secretary in charge of correspondence immediately upon his re-emergence into political life, and thus quickly following the coup. This suggests both that Piłsudski was preparing himself for increased exposure to the public, and also that he expected a flurry of reaction to his decisions and to the path down which he was taking Poland. Piłsudski's *Sanacja*, moreover, rested on the idea of an active and engaged citizenry. In this sense, the establishment of a bureaucracy that would welcome and consider peoples' opinions served as a point of contact between the citizenry and their leader, and thereby cemented the idea of citizen participation in nation-building. Writing letters constituted a crude form of political engagement.

Mail addressed to Piłsudski reached the Cabinet Office of the Ministry of Military Affairs, where it was sorted into categories divided by the nature of the requests, and from which point it was forwarded on to the particular ministry which was best equipped

article is reprinted in Wielopolska, *Pliszka*, pp. 49-50. No original page numbers are provided for the article.

²⁹ Wielopolska, *Pliszka*, p. 27.

to respond to the request.³⁰ Hlakowiczówna stated that each letter was read and catalogued and received a response; the amount of work required in the role of secretary was, therefore, tremendous.³¹ From June to October 1926, there were twenty to forty requests daily, and from October, the number of letters doubled, and increased steadily from that time on. In February and March 1928, the letter count reached two hundred daily.³² By the end of Hlakowiczówna's nine-year term as Piłsudski's secretary, Hlakowiczówna estimated that she had responded to 250,000 pieces of mail.³³ This figure, however, does not include the "Madeira post", which refers to the mail that Piłsudski received while he vacationed on the Madeira Island off Portugal from 15 December 1930 to 29 April 1931. The Madeira post, the bulk of which consisted of simple greetings and well wishes, totaled approximately 1,400,000 pieces of mail, or two and a half tones.³⁴

One of the most common types of letters to Piłsudski consisted of direct request for aid.³⁵ Anyone who could claim a noble nationalist and military background

³⁰ AAN, Zespół Józefa i Aleksandry Piłsudskich, Part II, File 32, n.a., "Notatka Pro Domo", 1928, pp. 30-1 and 33.

³¹ AAN, Zespół Piłsudskich, Part II, File 32, Scaevola, "Projektowany wywiad. Nieaprobowany przez p. Hlakowiczówna", 31 December 1935, p. 5. The cover sheet for this interview comes from the Office of the Inspector General of the Armed Forces, E. Rydz-Śmigły, dated Warsaw, 6 August [193x], addressed to K.I. This cover sheet contains the one following sentence: "I am sending this to you after it was read by the General Inspector of the Armed Forces." See: p. 3. The interview contains Hlakowiczówna's general reflections on her experiences as the secretary of the Minister of Military affairs. It is not clear why the project was not approved, but one can speculate that Piłsudski's death may have had some bearing on this. The "Pro Domo Note" ("*Notatka Pro Domo*"), along with the text written by Scaevola, are the two major sources used here regarding who wrote to Piłsudski, in what frequency, and why.

³² n.a., "Notatka Pro Domo", p. 33. All figures given in the "Notatka Pro Domo" text are indicated as being approximate.

³³ Scaevola, "Projektowany wywiad", p. 4. The same figure is provided in: Hlakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, p. 191.

³⁴ Scaevola, "Projektowany wywiad", p. 4.

³⁵ Most of the letters from the general public to Aleksandra Piłsudska, Piłsudski's second wife with whom he had two girls, were requests for aid. For the six month period from September 1934 to February 1935, Piłsudska received 3,025 letters, or an average of 504 each month. The letters continued after Piłsudski's death, something which Hlakowiczówna found to be in very bad taste. See: "Notatka Pro Domo", p. 33. A large collection of letters to Aleksandra Piłsudska is located in: Zespół Piłsudskich, Part IV, File 29. These letters are dated 1922 to 1939. See also: AAN, Zespół Piłsudskich, Part II, File 31, "Listy Pani Marszałkowej", p. 144. Aleksandra Piłsudska wrote a biography of her husband: Aleksandra Piłsudska, *Piłsudski* (New York: Arno Press and *The New York Times*, 1971).

foregrounded it in their letter and used it to suggest that their service to the nation entitled them to special consideration. Piłsudski, people felt, would listen to them because they had shared with him an intense experience of war and because he was similarly motivated by a burning love for Poland. Much of the mail that Piłsudski received in the immediate post-war period came from veterans who, having fallen on hard times, appealed to memories of the war and to joint experiences in battle to try to solicit some sympathy and material aid.³⁶

This tendency to appeal to ones' own nationalist service became especially popular after the May coup. For admirers of Piłsudski, the coup functioned as a bold symbol of commitment to Poland, as the most recent and the most dramatic example of action undertaken with the good of Poland in mind. The coup had been waged, in part, to address many wrongs. One of these wrongs, surely, was that individuals who had fought for an independent Poland were now, in the Second Republic, in desperate straits. In an anonymous report entitled "*Pro Domo*" written in 1928 and concerning the mail sent to Piłsudski, the anonymous author stated that from the summer of 1926 to the autumn of 1927, people tended to appeal more forcefully to their national service records and were quick to emphasize that they had long been committed supporters of Piłsudski: "the tone [of the letters] was more emotional, lofty, familiar, warmer."³⁷ In her memoirs of the period, Hłakowiczówna noted that in the middle of May 1926, when she had just taken up her position as Piłsudski's secretary, Piłsudski had specifically asked her to give special

³⁶ Many letters to Piłsudski from veterans are found in: AAN, Zespół Piłsudskich, Part IV, File 29. The archival files of the Ministry of Military Affairs also contain letters from veterans asking for financial assistance. See, for example, Central Military Archives, Rembertów (Centralne Archiwum Wojska Polskiego, hereafter CAW), Gabinet Ministra Spraw Wojskowych, File L300.1.327. This file contains letters from 1926 to 1930. It even contains some very interesting letters from veterans of the 1863 January Uprising against the Russians. See, for example, the letter from Franciszek Moskiewicz dated 27 October 1930, Tarnów, p. 216.

³⁷ n.a., "Notatka Pro Domo", 1928, p. 32.

consideration to Legionnaires' requests for assistance. It was important to Piłsudski to maintain his identity as a soldier.³⁸

According to Iłakowiczówna, the letters asking for direct assistance broached such varied topics as: requests for divorce, especially in cases where the Catholic Church had already refused to grant one; complaints about arrests and police violence; complaints about being fired for having portraits of the wrong people in one's home, and for not having one of Piłsudski; objections to forms of land distribution; and protests against unjust court decisions. Requests for Piłsudski's presence at an infant's baptism were frequent, as were those asking Piłsudski to become a child's godfather. Piłsudski became the godfather to, among others, the daughter of a known thief sought by the police. In all cases, it was made clear that Piłsudski would fulfill these responsibilities from a distance, and that he was essentially only granting permission that his name be entered in the Church registry books. Someone else would hold the child during the baptismal ceremony, and moreover, it was underscored that no material benefits would accrue to Piłsudski's godchildren.³⁹

The most common types of requests, however, were for employment and financial assistance. Many letters simply outlined the details of the writer's hard life and were unclear about precisely what sort of aid was being sought. A typical letter in this regard came from one Jan Wiśniowski in 1930. He outlined his nationalist credentials and emphasized that he had spent six years as a "slave" in Russia. He was upfront about feeling "wronged both materially and morally" in the Second Republic, and about hoping to become a productive and useful citizen of the Polish nation. Wiśniowski was also open about being a "sympathizer of the ideology of the First Marshal of Poland, a great

³⁸ Iłakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, p. 148. On Piłsudski's attitudes towards veterans in the post-May period, see: Jerzy Halbersztadt, "Józef Piłsudski a mechanizm podejmowania decyzji wojskowych w latach 1926-1935", *Przegląd Historyczny* LXXIV: 4 (1983): 683.

³⁹ Iłakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, pp. 191-192.

admirer of his...”. Wiśniowski included the kind of information that would do the most work for him. He mentioned, also, that he was a member of the Piłsudski-ite Union for the Repair of the Republic (*Naprawa*), and that he was “an exponent of the motto of partylessness...”.⁴⁰

Iłakowiczówna described the great sense of despair that she felt upon hearing peoples’ complaints and plights, being, as she was, well aware that she could do little to help them. She realized that many people, often illiterate, broke and with nowhere else to turn, had sold their winter coats in order to pay someone to write a letter for them and to mail it to Piłsudski. Iłakowiczówna related in her memoir the story of a man who, instead of writing to Piłsudski, physically made his way to Piłsudski’s office, hoping to be granted a meeting with him. He had walked to Warsaw from a town called Łuck in eastern Poland, and was hungry and penniless. The guard at the Ministry of Military Affairs gave the man his own lunch, and Iłakowiczówna gave him five złoty, but that was all that they could do for him. The man’s story of desperation was familiar. The man arrived, according to Iłakowiczówna’s memory, sometime during the last five years of Piłsudski’s life, when Piłsudski seldom saw anyone, including Iłakowiczówna.⁴¹ Consequently, decisions about how to respond to such visits were exclusively in the hands of Iłakowiczówna, just as the form and content of the responses to letters addressed to Piłsudski was left exclusively to Iłakowiczówna’s discretion.⁴² Referring to the many desperate and pathetic entreaties, she stated, “My conscience would absolutely not allow me to leave these requests without a response.”⁴³

⁴⁰ CAW, Gabinet Ministra Spraw Wojskowych, File I.300.I.327, Letter from Jan Wiśniowski dated 8 July 1930, to the High Chancellery of the Minister of Military Affairs, Warsaw, p. 251. It is not at all clear why some letters are archived at the Central Military Archives (CAW) and some at the Archive of Recent Documents (AAN). See also Chapter 4 for a discussion of *Naprawa*.

⁴¹ For a discussion of Piłsudski’s withdrawal from public life, see: Maria Jehanne Wielopolska, *Józef Piłsudski w życiu codziennym* (Warsaw: Księgarnia Wojskowa, 1936), pp. 94-95.

⁴² Iłakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, p. 314.

⁴³ Scaevola, “Projektowany wywiad”, pp. 5-6.

Iłakowiczówna ultimately believed that writing to Piłsudski for assistance was a waste of time and money. She tried, therefore, to encourage people to write to their local governments instead. A letter addressed to Piłsudski followed a typical course. First, it went to Iłakowiczówna. If she believed the request had merit, Iłakowiczówna sent the letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which in turn sent it to the voivodeship or to the district, and finally to the municipality. The municipality would then contact the addressant of the letter and would take up the matter contained therein. It would have been easier, and faster, if people had turned first to the local authorities, Iłakowiczówna reasoned. Often people forgot to include their addresses, or were unclear about what it was that they hoped to receive from Piłsudski.⁴⁴

But Iłakowiczówna also understood that writing to the great Marshal was in and of itself an honour and a privilege, and she believed that the very act made people feel more powerful than they were and left them with an important sense of political engagement. Iłakowiczówna also understood this desire to write to the most senior statesperson as a hold-over from the partition period. She argued that under the partitioning powers, going “to the top” was well regarded, and that it was interpreted, even by the lower authorities, as a “sign of loyalty to that authority”. Despite the fact that a new generation had experiences in a Polish state and in Polish schools, this tendency to turn to the highest authority remained in effect. To not have responded to these letters or to have returned a package, for example, would have amounted to a slap in the face and an affront to this loyalty.⁴⁵ What the correspondence to Piłsudski showed, according to Iłakowiczówna, was that there existed “an incredible bond between the

⁴⁴ Scaevola, “Projektowany wywiad”, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Leader and the Nation”, and this stood as a testament, she claimed, to a strong sense of community in Poland.⁴⁶

Entering the World of Imponderabilia

The letters which were unclear about what the writer wanted or needed, or those which were simply analyses of or commentaries on various aspects of the Second Republic, are most relevant for our purposes. It is through these letters that we develop a sense of how people in the Second Republic understood Piłsudski’s coup, the Sanacja, and the call to focus on imponderabilia. People wrote these letters to Piłsudski because they wanted to address the Great Man himself and because the idea of Sanacja was especially compelling to them.

Iłakowiczówna herself stated that initially she, along with countless others, was disturbed by the May Events. She confessed to having focused only on the deaths and the violence that had accompanied the coup. In retrospect, however, she believed that the May events, as she said, “brought the country out of political and moral disorder, and were thus extraordinarily salutary in their effects.”⁴⁷ Iłakowiczówna stated:

I live in an epoch when the terms ‘Sanacja’ and ‘beautiful work’ are often used in a derogatory sense. But ‘Sanacja’ means healing, and ‘beautiful work’ is nothing else than working in a good mood.⁴⁸

Iłakowiczówna reflected that, in the months immediately following the May coup, there were few positive letters to Piłsudski, and indeed, there were many angry and brutal letters that frightened her.⁴⁹ The event had licensed and encouraged vociferous debate about the direction in which Piłsudski was taking Poland. People wrote about the event itself and what they believed its merits or demerits were, and they very often

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

⁴⁷ Iłakowiczówna, *Ścieżka Obok Drogi*, p. 114.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 315.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 186-187.

couched these opinions in general analyses of the Second Republic. These letters are interesting precisely for this reason.

One letter in particular is reflective of those which offered basic and general praise for Piłsudski and the coup. It came from a Warsaw man just days after the coup ended. The man wished to state simply that he believed the coup to have been a positive step in the direction of cleansing Poland from the “insects” that had infested its body. To have allowed the situation to continue as it was would have constituted an affront to Polish history and to the thousands of soldiers who had died over the centuries fighting for Poland. He wrote: “It was faith in you that allowed me to know that the days of a new era of moral rebirth and cleansing of the Nation ... have begun.”⁵⁰ The author used a vocabulary of health and duty, history and responsibility to describe and assess what had happened. He assumed both that rebirth was necessary and possible, and he did not express great concern about the fact that the specific features of this rebirth had not yet been publicly announced. Like this one author, many people were prepared to trust in Piłsudski, who was cast in the post-coup period, more than ever before, in the role of saviour of the nation. People reacted as much to the fact that it was Piłsudski himself who had launched the May action as they did to the action itself; the coup, the Sanacja and the post-May future could not be removed from the person of Piłsudski. As one observer from the period stated, Piłsudski became “not just a reformer and conqueror, but an educator – a creator of the future. Not just a blacksmith of accidents and happenings thrown down from above, but also a sculptor of souls...”⁵¹

Sometimes, letters to Piłsudski were far more specific about what and how the healing process should be organized. The post-May governments had themselves been

⁵⁰ CAW, Gabinet Ministra Spraw Wojskowych, File 483, Letter from Stefan [Brzowikowski], to Józef Piłsudski, dated 16 May 1926, Warsaw, pp. 91-92.

⁵¹ Wincenty Rzymowski, “Życiorys”, in *Idea i czyn Józefa Piłsudskiego*, eds. Wacław Sieroszewski, et al. (Warsaw: Biblioteka Dział Naukowych, 1934), p. 79.

slow to offer clear and tangible policy positions. They relied, instead, on vague appeals to imponderabilia, on the need to strengthen the state and purge immoral influences from its public face, and on the value of citizen participation in the larger process of political reform. This open-ended quality of the Sanacja left citizens free to propose a wide range of possibilities. One project for the reform of the Polish nation came from Stanisław Przybysz of Łódź, and was written just a month after the coup, on 13 June 1926.

Przybysz set out to answer what was perhaps the most pressing question in the Second Republic. He hand-wrote his analysis in a thick notebook: "What can be done to save the nation?", he asked. Taking up themes popularized by the proclamation of the Sanacja, Przybysz reached to a vocabulary of salvation, healing and reform. He expressed concern about the wave of fraud and thievery which had been plaguing Poland, and about the public immorality to which, ostensibly, the Sanacja would put a stop.⁵²

Specifically, Przybysz proposed that each individual caught breaking the law and offending public morality should be branded on his forehead and let out into the streets to suffer public censure. A second infraction of this sort would warrant a brand on the cheek, while the third would justify sending the transgressor promptly to the electric chair.⁵³ The author hoped that these rules would ensure that all public servants would be "of good moral character". He concluded, as a matter of course, that "the female sex" could not be hired for positions within the public service.⁵⁴

Upon first reflection, one may be tempted to dismiss Przybysz's rant as mere nonsense and as the voice of such an insignificant minority that the opinion itself is

⁵² AAN, Zespół Piłsudskich, Part II, File 31, Letter of Stanisław Przybysz, to Józef Piłsudski, dated 13 June 1926, Łódź.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid. The issue of married women working was a pressing and controversial one during this period. For a similar demand to prevent women "of means" from working, see: AAN, Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, File 163, "Radykalny Ruch Uzdrawienia", Katowice, 1 September 1933. See Point Three for the group's idea about working women. This group was established by Józef Kowal-Lipiński. For a discussion of the 1922 legislation which regulated women's employment in the civil service, see: Pietrzak, "Sytuacja prawna

utterly irrelevant. On the contrary, however. Przybysz's letter is typical in its embrace of the idea of the need for imminent change and for the right of individual citizens to act as partners with the state in stamping out corruption. His ideas reflect core Sanacja themes about citizen activism and responsibility for the shape of Poland. Piłsudski had himself remarked that the coup was launched in order to put a decisive end to governmental abuse of power, and calls to stamp out corruption reached a fevered pitch at this time.

The exclusive and elitist Piłsudski-ite paper *Imperatives of the Moment* (*Nakazy Chwili*), which was formed just after the coup in 1926 by prominent Piłsudski-ite Adam Skawrczyński, executed a plan that was far gentler, but not altogether dissimilar to Przybysz's proposal. *Imperatives of the Moment* was established, in part, to expose the kind of corruption, fraud and nepotism that the Sanacja had proclaimed it would destroy. The first issue of the paper presented what its editors referred to as a "black list" and a "grey list" on which the names of particularly "immoral" and unworthy public figures appeared. Piast leader Wincenty Witos made the black list in the first issue, while General Władysław Sikorski made it in the second issue.⁵⁵

As the Piłsudski-ites would find, however, and as historians have also shown, the Sanacja government was able to uncover very few cases of corruption in the government. Its frequent references to mass corruption and its appeals to public servants to reach for a higher morality constituted, according to historian Andrzej Garlicki, "primitive propaganda".⁵⁶ Indeed, it would be the Piłsudski-ite that would be implicated in what would become a very public and messy scandal involving election budgets and known as

kobiet w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej", pp. 36-37. This legislation required married women who wished to work in certain sectors to first secure the permission of their husbands.

⁵⁵ n.a., "Co trzeba zrobić?", *Nakazy Chwili* Nr. 2 (24 May 1926), p. 1. See also: Andrzej Garlicki, ed., *Herman Lieberman* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996), p. 209. Herman Lieberman was a prominent Socialist, and he was also one of those arrested during the Brześć affair. *Imperatives of the Moment* is further discussed below, in Chapter 3.

⁵⁶ Garlicki, *Przewrót majowy*, p. 290; Andrzej Chojnowski, "Rewolucja moralnego niepokoju", *Gazeta Wyborcza* Nr. 196 (23-24 August 1997): 16-18; and Kajetan Morawski, *Wczoraj: pogadanki o niepodległym dwudziestolecu* (London: Nakładem Polskiej Fundacji Kulturalnej, 1967), p. 150.

the Czechowicz Affair.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the Piłsudski-ites cleverly and successfully, at least for a time, maintained an image of demanding and personifying a higher public morality. This image had great appeal in the wider society, and Przybysz's letter is one example of the ways in which Piłsudski-ite rhetoric reached the public and resonated forcefully with it. Przybysz recognized the coup as a call for radical and deep changes in the way that social and political life were organized in Poland. He worked with some conception of what morality meant or should mean in the state, and he recognized that the coup included an important moral component. Through Przybysz's letter one develops a sense of the degree to which people were engaged with and were constituted by the new language and ideas that the era had produced. It is this fact of engagement as well as the forms of expression that are of interest, rather than the viability of the proposals themselves. In an underdeveloped democracy, as Poland was, individuals like Przybysz created their own openings for political participation by writing to the most senior statesman. Przybysz inserted himself into the political discourse and participated, in an admittedly basic and crude form, in the fledgling democratic process.

Another response to the May coup came from Jan Popławski of Białystok province. Popławski began his letter to Piłsudski, dated 21 June 1926, with a reference to the dire words of Wernyhora from Stanisław Wyspiański's famous national drama, *The Wedding (Wesele)* (1901): "You had the golden horn and the hat made of peacock's feathers, you boor... you lost them... only the strap is left."⁵⁸ Wyspiański's play was widely read and very well-known amongst a certain segment of the literate and theatre-going public. One of its main points – that the Polish nation had to rise from its slumber

⁵⁷ Gabriel Czechowicz (1876-1938) resigned from the Finance portfolio in March of 1929. He was threatened with impeachment over the ways in which state revenue was used to subsidize BBWR electioneering costs during the 1928 election campaign. See: Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, pp. 272-277; and Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 256, 316 and 333-338. For a criticism of the way in which the Sanacja government was dealing with corruption, see: Antoni Pączek, "Gdzie 'odrodzenie moralne'?", *Robotnik* Nr. 222 (14 August 1926), p. 1.

and act decisively to create a better future – was often cited in analyses of Poland's contemporary situation. Popławski was concerned about what was happening all over Europe, but especially in Poland, and he could not forget Wernyhora's mocking warning.

Popławski was critical of what he referred to as petty party wrangling, given that there were far more pressing economic and social issues that needed immediate attention in the new state. He praised Piłsudski for having fulfilled the role of "Poland's Providence", but feared that unless all the politicians, administrators and statespeople of the nation were to find a "common language" with which to work to "save Poland", Poland would again be doomed and would experience another tragedy on the scale of the late eighteenth-century partitions.⁵⁹ Popławski spoke directly to the divisiveness of Polish politics and to the impotence which people felt. Behind Popławski's statement, and indeed behind much of the era's own analyses of national problems, laid a powerful sense that tragedy was always lurking, and that "history" could not be forgotten. Memories of the fall of the Polish state and of the long period of partitions shaped responses to Polish independence and to reform strategies within the Second Republic.

Another letter to Piłsudski came just a half year after the coup, dated 7 December 1926, and was written by Andrzej Komorowski, a waiter in a dessert shop in Warsaw.⁶⁰ The letter bears the heading, "Praise Jesus Christ". Komorowski was supportive of Piłsudski, and thanked him for "waking up" the people of Poland, for renewing the nation and bringing order to the state. He even flattered Piłsudski by suggesting that he should become the King of Poland (which was not, incidentally, that uncommon a suggestion).⁶¹

⁵⁸ AAN, Zespół Piłsudskich, Part II, File 31, letter from Jan Popławski to Józef Piłsudski, dated 21 June 1926, Białystok province, p. 310.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 310a. Popławski was especially concerned about the supposed German threat to Poland, and to a lesser extent, the Jewish one.

⁶⁰ AAN, Zespół Piłsudskich, Part II, File 31, letter from Andrzej Komorowski to Józef Piłsudski, dated 7 December 1926, Warsaw, pp. 287-300. The letter is hand-written.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 294a.

Komorowski outlined the many areas in which he believed the Second Republic had gone wrong. The political shortcomings to which he pointed and the social unrest that plagued the state were familiar enough. Komorowski was especially appalled at the levels of corruption that had been raging in Poland. In addition to these problems, Komorowski wrote about another aspect of life that needed attention and which was in desperate need of healing. Komorowski stated that Warsaw had become a “Sodom and Gomorra” and he hoped that Piłsudski would improve Catholic morality in the city.⁶²

Komorowski’s letter is very bizarre and at times, downright confusing. Where it is useful, however, is in supporting the notion that the coup had licensed and encouraged various readings of the Sanacja. Komorowski was part of a much wider trend. Many different constituencies approached the coup in this way, of believing that it could be used to fix more than just the political problems or the military ones that were so important to Piłsudski himself. The Sanacja was expansive and malleable enough to suit a variety of interpretations, and this was one key source of its appeal.

The Piłsudski-ites had been clear about stating that public morality needed to be raised, for the good of the state. They had never stated openly that the Sanacja should be directed at private morality, and said nothing at all about sexual morality. People like Komorowski nevertheless applied the Sanacja language about moral reform and spiritual cleansing to the private sphere and defined “cleansing” widely. It is a curious irony that despite the right-nationalists’ accusations that the Sanacja camp would demoralize and debase the Polish-Catholic nation, ordinary Catholics – ordinary people – in Poland tended to support Piłsudski.⁶³ At the time that Komorowski wrote his letter, late in 1926,

⁶² Ibid., pp. 287-300.

⁶³ The issue of Catholic support for the Sanacja is a very complicated one. See: Pease, “Poland and the Holy See”, pp. 521-530; Konrad Sadkowski, “From Ethnic Borderland to Catholic Fatherland: The Church, Christian Orthodox, and State Administration in the Chełm Region, 1918-1939”, *Slavic Review* : 4 (Winter 1998): 813-839; and Konrad Sadkowski, “Church, Nation and State in Poland: Catholicism and National

it was not yet clear in which direction Piłsudski would move the Sanacja, and Komorowski took this as an opportunity to offer his own expectations of and hopes for the future. Komorowski used the coup as a starting point for his own analysis of what ailed Poland, and he interpreted private morality and public morality as two sides of the same coin.

“A Peasant and Old Woman Lament”

Iłakowiczówna herself described the bulk of the mail as coming from “the unenlightened masses, or the pseudo-intelligentsia”.⁶⁴ Everyone in Poland had some perspective to offer, some aid to request, some criticism to make. In summing up the tone of the letters to Piłsudski, Iłakowiczówna stated in her memoirs that: “All of Poland prayed to the Marshal in a peasant and old woman lament...” and expected that Piłsudski had the power and the will to affect great change.⁶⁵ Iłakowiczówna also wrote that she perceived an increase in the number of letters addressed to Piłsudski from women, such that by 1928, women constituted one quarter of all the addressants of letters. Women and girls wrote more frequently to ask for assistance in finding employment, or generally, for aid in improving an adverse economic situation.⁶⁶ Women, especially single mothers, may well have experienced more dire economic constraints, and thus would have had greater reason to write letters which asked for material assistance. There were plenty of such letters, as Iłakowiczówna’s records indicate.

Women, however, also wrote another type of letter to Piłsudski, the kind which engaged with the Sanacja idea and which expressed unambiguous opinions of the path down which Piłsudski was leading the nation. One could suggest that by the late 1920s,

Identity Formation in the Lublin Region, 1918-1939”, Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Michigan, 1995, pp. 232-234.

⁶⁴ Iłakowiczówna, *Ścieżka obok drogi*, pp. 191-192.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 313. See also p. 312.

⁶⁶ n.a., “Notatka Pro Domo”, pp. 30-32.

women had become increasingly aware of and comfortable with their new and full rights as citizens and were anxious to experiment with them in at least a tentative, informal, and even somewhat private fashion. Writing a letter constituted an expression of this right and of this sense of entitlement. One could also add, as will be argued in Chapter Four, that the Sanacja appealed to women in a unique way, in a way that earlier political configurations did not, and that women felt especially welcome to participate in the Sanacja. The Sanacja had mobilized a certain (middle-upper and intelligentsia) class of women into public activism. It had popularized notions of the need for a higher public morality, for improved national health and for more active community involvement in national affairs. The Sanacja celebrated the idea of morality as the highest virtue, and some women extrapolated from this that they, as women, and as the ostensibly more moral and caring sex, possessed real power to shape all levels of society. Women had special obligations to fulfill, as citizens, and they could do so by joining a group committed to public activism, for example, or they could write to Piłsudski directly.

In Piłsudski, some women found a great national figure who seemed to value precisely what they, as women, were seen as being best able to provide. Piłsudski's ideas about women's obligations to the nation were shaped by his own experiences growing up as part of the post-1863 generation. Piłsudski was raised on memories of the failed January Uprising of 1863/64, and was nursed in a climate of mourning as Russia gained an even tighter grip on its hold over its portion of Poland. What was obvious to Piłsudski and to many others during the partition period was the incredible commitment that women had shown to the national cause. It also became clear just how critical women's supposed primary roles – as mothers raising the future generations of Poles and as wives helping and supporting their husband – were to maintaining a sense of Polish nationalism and Polish traditions and memories during a time of national servitude. Women were the heroes, the silent backbone of the nationalist movement. In a 1925 statement to a

meeting of "The Army Family" (*Rodzina Wojskowa*), a women's organization that provided assistance to veterans, Piłsudski reiterated the importance of the family as "a nest" and of women's crucial role in building and maintaining that nest. Women molded the national family.⁶⁷

One particularly interesting letter to Piłsudski came from Helena Sokołowska of Warsaw. She wrote, as she described, a "quiet request" to her "beloved" Piłsudski on 26 September 1930.⁶⁸ Sokołowska wrote in the hope that Piłsudski might grant her an audience. Failing that, her letter was simply an attempt to gain from him the much-needed strength and courage to fight what she called the "most difficult battle of all": a moral battle. She paraphrased Piłsudski's own description of the task that independent Poland faced as follows: "We are embarking upon times which will be characterized by a competition of work, just as earlier there was a competition of steel, and before that, a competition of blood."⁶⁹ Sokołowska was distressed by the incidence of "cerebral ignorance" that she saw all around her, and had reached a point where she felt as though her wings had been broken.⁷⁰

As most letter-writers to Piłsudski, Sokołowska outlined her nationalist record, which was, indeed, long and impressive. Since 1912, she explained, she had had Piłsudski's image and inspiration in her heart, and had been propagating his good work through participation in various social and professional organizations as well as through her daily family routines. In addition, she had fought "energetically and with moral satisfaction" on Piłsudski's side during the Great War. But the reborn state has not turned

⁶⁷ Józef Piłsudski, as quoted in: Br. Bobrowska, "Kobieta-matka-obywatelka w pismach Marszałka Piłsudskiego", *Dla Przyszłości* Nr. 3 (March 1936), pp. 33-34. The Army Family was established in 1925 by Piłsudski. It was comprised of the wives, mothers, unmarried daughters and sisters of career army men. It organized these women for social and charitable work, and also put them through some military preparedness. See: J.M., "Zjazd Rodziny Wojskowej", *Kobieta Współczesna* Nr. 25 (22 June 1930), p. 13.

⁶⁸ AAN, Zespół Piłsudskich, Part I, File 29, mf. 23129, letter from Helena Sokołowska to Józef Piłsudski, dated 30 September 1930, Warsaw, pp. 157-163.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

out as she had hoped it would, and Sokołowska began experiencing a despair of the soul; this, then, was what had finally compelled her to write directly to Piłsudski.⁷¹

Sokołowska railed against those who were nominally on Piłsudski's side, but who nevertheless did not possess his ideals in their hearts and souls. These skeptics were uncertain of which side would ultimately be victorious, and they were choosing carefully and slowly. "Small and ignorant, they must be enlightened...", she suggested, "otherwise they will become trouble-makers."⁷² She was especially critical of women who had come out against Piłsudski, and went so far as to suggest that such women were rejecting their responsibilities, as women, and were neglecting their obligations to the nation.⁷³

In contrast to those women who had rejected the Sanacja, Sokołowska embodied the ideal of Sanacja-era femininity. Inspired by having been part of a delegation which had been granted an audience with Aleksandra Piłsudska at Belvedere, Sokołowska took the decision to commit herself more fully to Piłsudski. Sokołowska chose the Pomorze as the region in which to begin social agitation, as she was concerned about the influence of the German presence there. In Toruń she organized several successful conferences, with the assistance of the provincial governor and the district prefect; later, she organized conferences across Poland. The public response to her activities was positive, she wrote. Sokołowska understood herself to be motivating others, just as she was motivated by Piłsudski.⁷⁴ This was the "work" on which she believed the success of the Sanacja project depended. She embraced proudly the epithet which her detractors applied to her: she was a "gendarme" for the Piłsudski cause.⁷⁵ Sokołowska became, and she called on other women to become, "honourary soldiers" in the war that was being waged in Sanacja independent Poland.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 158-9.

⁷² Ibid., p. 162.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 162-3.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 159-160.

Sokołowska's emphases are interesting for a number of reasons. She clearly understood the Sanacja as a larger project, difficult to define, yet crucially important because it reached to some of the fundamentals of Polish life; the Sanacja was nothing less than a war which had forced people to choose sides and positions. Sokołowska also expressed absolute devotion to Piłsudski himself and held him up as a national saviour. In Sokołowska's understanding, Piłsudski was absolutely inseparable from the Sanacja. Further, she believed women possessed a special role within the Sanacja project, and took it upon herself to begin a massive mobilization campaign. The kind of activism which Sokołowska participated in, supported and encouraged will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Another letter to Piłsudski came from a woman who identified herself only as residing in Wilno / Vilnius and as "a common worker". It was signed, "With deep and sincere respect, I wish You good health, Marshal. I am the echo of millions." The only date indicated on the letter is one written by the receiving office: 20 February 1931.⁷⁶ The author, who stated that she has never before written to Piłsudski, began by affirming, "the heart sings from joy as a result of your having reached to the depths of the filth in Poland..."⁷⁷ What seems to have prompted this woman to write was the flurry of criticism directed at Piłsudski during the Brześć Affair. "I pity You as though You were my own son", the woman wrote to Piłsudski.⁷⁸

The Common Worker from Vilnius realized that Piłsudski himself might never read the letter, but hoped that if he did, the words of a "small person" would be a comfort to him. She wanted him to know that there existed in Poland those "who believe completely in Your integrity, and who, with complete sincerity and without ulterior

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 162-163.

⁷⁶ AAN, Zespół Piłsudskich, Part I, File 29, mf. 23129, Letter from a "common worker" to Józef Piłsudski, dated 2 February 1931, Wilno, pp. 176-78.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 176.

motives, love You...". She tried to comfort Piłsudski by suggesting that, if things sometimes failed to go as he had planned or hoped, he shouldn't worry or despair, for he could not accomplish everything alone. She reminded him, and hoped that she was not being blasphemous by doing so, that even the Lord could not possibly cope entirely well with the world, as evil exerted such a monumentally powerful force.⁷⁹ She wished that people would more eagerly embrace the "Joseph Piłsudski cause" and that they would work hard for the good of the collective. She remembered her days of working for the Polish Military Organization (*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa*, POW), and of giving away her last supplies to others who needed them more. She further recalled the time that her husband, now a sixty-six year old paralytic and former prisoner of war, was interned at Hawelberg. She expressed pride about how she had raised her children. At the age of fourteen, her son ran off to the Polish Military Organization, and by the age of sixteen he was a cadet and "helped kill Germans". She raised her daughter to be a nurse to soldiers.⁸⁰

The woman underscored in her letter that she and her family were never "parasites" on Poland. Instead, according to their strength and ability, they "cleaned" Poland: "...with my entire family, I work for Poland."⁸¹ She worshiped Piłsudski "to the point of ecstasy" and was grateful for all that he has done for Poland. Interestingly, this Common Worker also stated that she wrote to Piłsudski specifically in the capacity of "a Polish woman". She wished to send in her letter the following message to other Polish women:

Polish women, You, who are susceptible to [negative] influences but who are good, control your Polish men so that they shun trouble, vanity and greed, and so that they work like the Marshal...⁸²

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 177.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., p. 178.

Poland would not survive if it were to be treated as a full and rich trough which its people polluted at will. And the great Marshal Piłsudski could not exist simply to clean up after others. She reminded Polish women that they had nothing under the Muscovites, the Germans, and the Austrians. Whatever ills might have befallen independent Poland, and whatever other trials it would face in the future, she stated, Poland was independent, and no Pole would ever again have to tolerate “a kick from a Prussian boot.” The woman concluded her letter by appealing to everyone to trust Piłsudski and to let him do his work. To be successful and effective, she concluded, Piłsudski needed to know that the people of Poland stood behind him: “Write, talk and shout – you, the small people, so that the Marshal knows about this.”⁸³

“My dearest and beloved Grandfather”

An especially interesting correspondence developed between Secretary Hłakowiczówna and two girls named Jola and Marysia. Jola Knothe, a student in the fourth grade at St. Casmir’s school in Poznań, began her letter to Joseph Piłsudski, dated 22 May 1932, with the salutation, “My dearest and beloved Grandfather”. Piłsudski was commonly referred to as Grandfather, or “*Dziadek*” by his most ardent admirers.⁸⁴ On the heels of the girl’s compliments for Piłsudski and her praise for all that he has done for Poland, Jola offered an unequivocal expression of her disdain for the Sanacja camp’s committed opponents: the right-wing National Democrats or, as they were pejoratively referred to, the *Endeks*:

It makes me so angry that some bad people don’t love you and that they also teach their children not to love you these sorts of people are called abominable *Endeks* why don’t you Grandfather do something about them. Take away everything from all those *Endeks* who have houses, fortunes, stores, take it all away from them. When they are not good Poles why

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Włodzimierz Wójcik, *Pisarz i komendant. Literacka legenda Józefa Piłsudskiego* (Katowice: Towarzystwo Zachęty Kultury, 1996), p. 16.

should they have it good in a Poland for which You fought so long for such dirty swine. [sic]⁸⁵

Jola quickly moved from berating Piłsudski's opposition to bragging about herself and how diligently she has defended Piłsudski's name and honour on the school playground. Luckily, Jola's teacher, Ms Rozmuska, favoured Jola's position:

Ms Rozmuska always told us and at home we were also told that every decent person and good Pole should love you. Wash the dirty linen – that's what the *Endeks* are, my dear Granddad.⁸⁶

Jola's friend, Marysia Konopkówna, attached her own note to Jola's letter:

And me too, my dear Grand-Dad, I love you and I won't allow the *Endeks* to say anything bad about you, but Jola is like a boy and strikes fast...⁸⁷

Awed by Jola's boldness and determination, Marysia confessed that initially she was somewhat reticent and was afraid of getting written up in the school day-book. After a particularly insightful conversation with her Aunt, however, Marysia realized that, when it came to Piłsudski, the girls had permission to "strike and strike at these raging *Endeks*." Marysia's Aunt, as it turned out, believed that, "with children it is best to get to the soul through the body." Buoyed by a sense of license, Marysia declared: "I am happy and first thing tomorrow I will settle things with one of my wild *Endek* friends."⁸⁸

Not long after having mailed their letters to Piłsudski, Jola and Marysia received a response from Iłakowiczówna dated 6 June 1932. In her response, Iłakowiczówna thanked the two girls for their kind words about Piłsudski. But she condemned very clearly and adamantly the physical violence in which the girls claimed to engage. Iłakowiczówna informed Marysia and Jola that her job was to help others understand Piłsudski's message of compassion and love for all the different people who made Poland

⁸⁵ AAN, Zespół Piłsudskich, Part II, File 32, letter dated 22 May 1932, p. 96. The file contains the original hand-written copy of the letter, as well as an identical typed version. The quotations used here are taken directly from the typed copy.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 97.

their home. She exhorted the girls to stop their assaults on the National Democrats, and instead, to pray for Piłsudski and for his continued ability to work for Poland. She also sent them a book.⁸⁹

The correspondence does not end here, however. Jola wrote back to thank Iłakowiczówna for the gift, and took the opportunity to clarify a few apparent misperceptions. Most important to Jola was to explain who it was that actually started the fights. It was, of course, always the *Endeks*. Jola added that she only “punch[e]d them in the face” when it was absolutely necessary and warranted. She did finally concede, however, that if it were so important to Piłsudski that she show compassion for the *Endeks*, “then I will try to be quiet.”⁹⁰

In contrast, the originally more reticent Marysia, who again attached a note to Jola's letter, stubbornly and steadfastly maintained her position and stated that she and her friend were simply obliged to continue fighting Piłsudski's opposition. Nevertheless, Marysia remained polite and also thanked the secretary for the book, the arrival of which, she stated, had incited her dying uncle to claim a miraculous recovery from a long illness. Marysia also made a rather strange request: she asked Iłakowiczówna not to write back. It seems that Marysia's Aunt – the same one who believed that children's souls were best reached through their bodies – felt rather exposed and too harshly judged by the tone of Iłakowiczówna's letter: “Aunt cried about this shame that we brought upon [our home].” Another letter might have made matters worse, Marysia reasoned, and she was anxious to prevent that. The correspondence does appear to have ended there.⁹¹

What can we suggest about this brief communication between Secretary Iłakowiczówna and girls who, arguably, were too young to have a deep and original

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 91-92.

⁹⁰ AAN, Zespoł Piłsudskich, Part II, File 32, letter undated, p. 87. Jola's response to Iłakowiczówna's letter is undated, though Jola does indicate that she received the book and letter on 24 June 1932.

understanding of Polish history, Piłsudski, and the contours of Polish politics in the early 1930s? The letters of Marysia and Jola reveal much about the political polarization that had become so marked in the post-coup era, and indeed, much about the way in which the very notion of a Sanacja, of the need for a nation-wide debate about Poland's moral nations and the quality of independence, permeated far and deep into the language and cultural discourses of the period.

First, it is striking that the letters which Marysia and Jola wrote to Piłsudski were (very neatly) hand-written, but were later typed out by Iłakowiczówna's office. In contrast, many other letters mailed to the office were simply stamped as having been received and answered, and were left in their original hand-written or typed forms, whichever the case may have been. Speculations about the purpose of this re-copying have clear and obvious limits. One may nevertheless engage for a moment in thinking about why these letters were accorded special treatment and about what this suggests about the letters' impact and potential.

By 1932, the Sanacja needed all the positive publicity that it could get. The Brześć affair – the imprisonment and detention of members of the Sanacja opposition – had exploded in 1930 and had caused many staunch Piłsudski-ites to forsake the Sanacja as a brutal and authoritarian regime which in no way fulfilled the hopes which they had originally placed in it. These letters spoke to the tendency current at the time to separate Piłsudski out from some of the more unpleasant charges leveled against the Sanacja regime. Throughout the many challenging periods that the regime faced, Piłsudski himself remained popular among many people. Letters like Marysia's and Jola's would have played into this tendency to portray Piłsudski as somehow above the political process and removed from the difficult and grim choices which politics, regrettably,

⁹¹ Ibid. Jola wrote to secretary Iłakowiczówna again on 12 May and 1 December 1935 to express her great sadness about Piłsudski's death. See: AAN, *Zespół Piłsudskich*, Part II, File 32, pp. 79-82.

required. The letters, furthermore, had the potential to be all the more rhetorically powerful because they came from children.

The pro-Piłsudski press was always anxious to show that Marshal Piłsudski had a special rapport with children – a testament, it was argued, to his general kindness and gentleness. One contemporary biographer and fan of Piłsudski, for example, waxed poetic about how comfortable the great Marshal was playing with the Teddy Bear of a child seated on his knee. Piłsudski was represented as a gentle soul, a family man, a great national leader who nevertheless had time for everyone and everything.⁹²

Piłsudski's relationship with his own daughters, Wanda and Jadwiga, was often held up by the pro-Piłsudski press as a model for all Polish fathers.

In one popular account, Piłsudski produced a "Protocol of Lived Experience", dated 1 September 1928, and addressed it to "all Polish children". This document emerged as a result of his young daughters' request that their father, on his 1928 trip to Rumania, determine whether the water in the Black Sea was actually black, and whether it would colour black anything that was dropped into it. The Protocol stated that a blue ribbon left hanging in the waters of the Black Sea for one hour did indeed darken. It also noted, however, that the ribbon returned to its original colour after it dried, proving, of course, that the water in the Black Sea was not black after all. An apparently long-standing mystery was solved. The results of this little experiment were written up formally and the statement signed by Mjr S.G. Ludwig, a military attaché, as well as by the Marshal himself.⁹³

Furthermore, it is important to note that Jola and Marysia lived in Poznań in the north-west of Poland. The Poznań region was not known to be a stronghold of support for Piłsudski, so in this sense the girls', and the girls' families', positions represent a

⁹² Ron Landau, *Piłsudski and Poland*, trans. Geoffrey Dunlop (New York: Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press, 1929), p. 285.

departure from the regional norm. Poznań was located in the heart of the former Prussian partition, and was the most economically and culturally developed region of partitioned Poland.⁹⁴ Some people within this region had viewed with trepidation their inclusion into the Second Republic and regarded people from the Austrian and the Russian areas as backward and uncultured, as unfortunate and embarrassing cousins. The girls had a well-developed sense of Poznań's separateness: in Jola's initial letter to Piłsudski, Jola identified herself as living in Poznań, but at the same time, she qualified this fact by adding that she was a "Warsavian" ("*Warszawianka*").⁹⁵

During the Second Republic, Poznań cemented its reputation for political conservatism and a tradition of strong Catholicism blended with intense Polish nationalism.⁹⁶ Voting patterns in the region reflected these attitudes. The daughter of Emil Zegadłowicz remembered that when once she mentioned to a friend that her parents were voting for the Number One ticket – for Piłsudski and his Non-Partisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government, the BBWR – in the upcoming elections, she became a social pariah.⁹⁷ In most voting regions during the 1928 elections, for example, at least some voters from the political Right moved to the BBWR. In the Poznań and Pomorze regions, however, the BBWR failed to attract the Right vote and moreover, Centre votes in the region moved not to the Left (as they did elsewhere in Poland), but to the Right. That is, Poznań voted en masse for the Sanacja opposition, and as a result, the BBWR

⁹³ Wielopolska, *Józef Piłsudski w życiu codziennym*, pp. 89-90.

⁹⁴ See: Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 168-170.

⁹⁵ Zespół Piłsudskich, File 32, letter dated 22 May 1932, p. 96.

⁹⁶ On the political ideologies prevalent in western Poland, see: Tomasz Nodzyński, '*Straznica Zachodnia*', 1922-1939. *Źródło do dziejów myśli zachodniej w Polsce* (Zielona Góra: WSP TK, 1997).

⁹⁷ Zegadłowicz was the editor (from 1928) of *Tęcza*, a Poznań-based journal of the Catholic intelligentsia. On *Tęcza*, see: n.a., "*Tęcza*", *Myśl Narodowa* Nr. 25 (1 December 1927), pp. 473-474. See also: Wójcik, *Pisarz i komendant*, p. 7.

made the worst showing in western Poland. Poznań was the heart of National Democratic territory.⁹⁸

Interwar opponents of the Sanacja were proud of this fact, and believed that this only underscored the extent to which Poznań constituted the healthiest and most civilized city in Poland. In his memoirs, National Democracy's co-founder, Roman Dmowski, described interwar Poznań in the following way:

It was a healthy, strong part of a living Poland... possessing a most strongly developed collective will... It didn't simply wish to be in the Polish state; it had something to say in this state. And that's why, because it had something to say, it was reluctantly viewed by the degenerate type of Poles. In our quest to wrestle this land from German hands, we were not only the representatives of wide Polish thought – the only kind that had a right to call itself Polish – but we were also the creators of a strong living will on this land of the Polish nation.⁹⁹

The writers from the National Democrats' theoretical journal, *National Thought*, raised Poznań to the position of Poland's "moral capital".¹⁰⁰ Poznań was heralded as the city which had overcome most successfully the political, economic, social and especially moral crises that had marked the partition period. "The Polish soul" had been able to flourish in interwar Poznań, and, *National Thought* columnist Zygmunt Wasilewski affirmed, the city had successfully created "a clean atmosphere of work". Even after the supposedly dark days that followed the May 1926 coup, Poznań had managed to hold

⁹⁸ Groth, "Polish Elections", p. 659. For Piłsudski's views on Poznań, given just a week after the coup, see: "Wywiad udzielony korespondentowi *Le Matin*", in Józef Piłsudski, *Pisma wybrane* (London: M.I. Kolin, 1943), pp. 416-417.

⁹⁹ Roman Dmowski, as quoted in Zygmunt Wasilewski, "Wschód i zachód", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 24 (5 June 1926), p. 338. For another similar description of Poznań, see the special Poznań issue of the French-language Warsaw publication, *Messenger Polonais: Quotidien Politique, Économique et Littéraire* (April 1928). A copy of this journal is located in: AAN, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, File 18, volume I, pp. 541-652.

¹⁰⁰ Adolf Nowaczyński, "Ofensywa: Antiwersal", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 28 (7 July 1929), p. 15. Nowaczyński offered another defense of Poznań in "Wystawa Poznańska", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 23 (1929), as rpt. in: Lesław Eustachiewicz, *Dwudziestolecie 1919-1939* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1982), pp. 232-235. The article concerns the choice of Poznań over Warsaw as the site for the 1928 Universal National Exhibition (*Powszechna Wystawa Krajowa*). The representations of Poznań and Warsaw in the National Exposition would make an interesting study. This important exposition was organized in Poznań to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Polish independence in 1929. For a brief write-up

steadfastly onto its Catholic and nationalist principles and to resist the onslaught of immorality and depravity that the coup, in the opinion of Wasilewski and others associated with the nationalist-right camp, had unleashed.¹⁰¹

From the perspective of conservative Poznań, Poland's capital city constituted an "orgy", a site of license and perversion of proper Catholic mores and Polish national traditions.¹⁰² Reaching to the all too familiar tactic of ascribing "Jewishness" to any supposedly immoral trend or idea, commentator Mieczysław Piszczkowski stated plainly in *National Thought* that because Warsaw was home to all the various "channels of Jewish propaganda", it unquestionably formed the heart of the demoralized nation.¹⁰³ Whatever Warsaw was or was thought to be, Poznań represented the opposite.

The letters of Marysia and Jola to Piłsudski further suggest the degree to which politics in Sanacja-era Poland had descended to the same low level that had marked the pre-coup era. The most significant lesson that the girls had seemed to absorb was that Piłsudski and the post-May camp were good, and the Endeks were not. The girls also seemed to have learned that a belief in the morality of one's position gave one license to commit acts that would have been condemned at other times. Piłsudski had done this with the imprisonment of opposition members at Brześć, and the girls were doing this, albeit on a far less dramatic scale, at their own local level. Hłakowiczówna, for her part, was aware of the complexity of the situation, and seemed desperate to convince the girls that they had Piłsudski's message all wrong.

and for some good photographs and posters from this event, see: Maja i Jan Łozińscy, *Życie codzienne i niecodzienne w przedwojennej Polsce* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Prószyński i S-ka SA, 1999), pp. 36, 41-42.

¹⁰¹ Zygmunt Wasilewski, "Odsiecz z Poznaniu", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 30 (14 July 1929), p. 17. An interesting article contrasting Poznań with Sulejówek is: n.a., "Tydzień", *Prawda: Niezależny Organ Tygodniowy* (Łódź) Nr. 21 (23 May 1926), pp. 1-2. As used in this context, "Sulejówek" represents, of course, the whole Piłsudski camp. Also on Poznań, see: Tadeusz Hołowko, "Pod adresem Poznańskiego", *Robotnik* Nr. 140 (22 May 1926), p. 1.

¹⁰² Wasilewski, "Wschód i zachód", p. 338.

¹⁰³ Mieczysław Piszczkowski, "Krytyka obyczajowości współczesnej", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 54 (22 November 1931), p. 316.

Citizen Piłsudski: Sculptor of Souls, or the Bandit from Belvedere? ¹⁰⁴

In the several cases examined above, we see the central role that Piłsudski played in writers' understanding of and relationship to the Sanacja. In the minds of contemporaries, the Sanacja could not be separated from Piłsudski himself; he was the master of the house, Poland's landlord and saviour, a dear old granddad. Historians of the period have argued that Piłsudski was the singlemost important unifying element of the Sanacja, that he held the Sanacja together and provided it with shape and purpose. This is all the more important to recognize in light of the fact that the Sanacja lacked a very specific policy agenda other than the strengthening of the Executive and reform of the constitution. This last section constitutes a study of Piłsudski's centrality within the Sanacja agenda and within the model of citizenship that Piłsudski embodied.

For many in the Second Republic, Piłsudski's name was synonymous with selfless and proper Polish manliness, with unqualified nationalist commitment, physical prowess and self-assuredness.¹⁰⁵ Piłsudski's army uniform, which he always wore, was unadorned by medals, and functioned to remind people, gently but assuredly, that without his Legions and his Miracle on the Vistula, there would be no Poland.¹⁰⁶ Piłsudski's supporters emphasized how devoted he was to his children, how modestly he lived, and how little he valued material comforts and money. Time and again, contemporaries reproduced images of Piłsudski's bedroom in Sulejówek. The room contained only simple and functional furniture and little ornamentation, and the message which this

¹⁰⁴ The phrase "the bandit from Belvedere" is taken from: Adam Michnik, "Kto to ma czelność zwać mnie odszczępińcem?", in Paweł Kądziera and Artur Międzyrzecki, eds., *Wspomnienia o Antonim Słonimskim* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Więzi, 1996), p. 178. The phrase "sculptor of souls" comes from: Rzymowski, "Życiorys", in *Idea i czyn Józefa Piłsudskiego*, p. 79

¹⁰⁵ For a selection of laudatory texts about Piłsudski, see: Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, *Piłsudczycy* (1925; rpt. Białystok: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1990); n.a., *Józef Piłsudski 1867-1935* (Kraków: Małopolska Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1935); Julian Woyszwiłło [Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski], *Józef Piłsudski. Życie, idee i czyny 1867-1935* (1937; rpt. Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1990); and Władysław Baranowski, *Rozmowy z Piłsudskim 1916-1931* (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy 'Biblioteka Polska', 1938).

conveyed was that Piłsudski was a humble person with basic needs, an “everyman” to which all Poles might relate and whom many would admire.¹⁰⁷ A portrait of Napoleon hung over Piłsudski’s bed, along with a photograph of Piłsudski’s brother, who had died in 1918, and a painted view of the city of Wilno, the city of his youth and devotion. Beside the bed rested a photograph of Piłsudski’s mother.¹⁰⁸

The Union of Legionnaires (*Związek Legionistów*) called Piłsudski an incarnation of “the holy victory of the Polish noble soul”, and his name a symbol of a new great era in Polish history. Newspapers which supported the Sanacja regularly ran articles in praise of Piłsudski and paid homage to his greatness. His Name Day, the Feast of St. Joseph on 19 March, was the occasion for many a paper to publish glowing retrospectives of the man and his work for Poland. The May coup of 1926 invariably figured in these Name Day wishes, and the coup’s effect of having rejuvenated the nation and of having sparked concerted action on behalf of “independence” was reiterated frequently.¹⁰⁹

Members of Poland’s left-liberal intelligentsia also praised Piłsudski. The Skamander poet and *Literary News* (*Wiadomości Literackie*) publicist, Antoni Słonimski, for example, was known to have kept three photos on his desk: one of the great Polish romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz, another of novelist Stefan Żeromski, and a third of

¹⁰⁶ Zbigniew Zaporowski, *Józef Piłsudski w kregu wojska i polityki* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1998), p. 44.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Jan Starzewski, “Obraz duszy”, in *Idea i czyn Józefa Piłsudskiego*, eds. Waław Sieroszewski, et al. (Warsaw: Biblioteka Dział Naukowych, 1934), p. 82. See also: Jan Starzewski, *Józef Piłsudski. Zarys psychologiczny* (Warsaw: Nakładem Księgarni F. Hoesicka, 1930), pp. 248-250. Herman Lieberman, to name just one skeptic, was cynical about Piłsudski’s rejection of lavish material comforts. Lieberman objected to the way in which Piłsudski fashioned himself as morally superior and used this supposed superiority to justify many (illegal) actions. See: Garlicki, ed., *Herman Lieberman*, p. 209. See also: Wielopolska, *Józef Piłsudski w życiu codziennym*, p. 14; and Baranowska, *Perły i potwory*, p. 65.

¹⁰⁸ Anna Borkiewicz-Celińska, “Muzeum Józefa Piłsudskiego w Belwederze (1935-1939)”, *Niepodległość* L (1999): 257.

¹⁰⁹ For one such article, see: Stanisław Estreicher, “Józef Piłsudski”, *Czas* 67 (21 March 1928), p. 1. An interesting collection of Name Day cards and letters sent to Piłsudski is reproduced in: Janusz Ciborowski, *Józef Piłsudski w zbiorach Janusza Ciborowskiego* (Pruszków, Poland: Oficyna Wydawnicza ‘Ajaks’, 1996), ch. 1. This book contains many other fascinating examples of Piłsudski memorabilia, including coins, busts, special editions of magazines, and caricature. See also: AAN, *Związek Legionistów Polskich*, File 49, *Imieniny Marszałka Piłsudskiego*, 25 March 1925, p. 142. On Name Day celebrations in Silesia

Piłsudski.¹¹⁰ Dr. Hanna Pohoska, who wrote widely on education questions during the Sanacja era, and who was married to the parliamentarian and Society for Moral Rebirth member Jan Pohoski, held Piłsudski up as “a living symbol of citizenship”. Pohoska emphasized that Piłsudski had given Poland so much more than just territorial independence, for he had handed Poland the opportunity to pursue spiritual independence. The latter he had achieved by impressing upon people the need to build a real and deep understanding of imponderabilia.¹¹¹ As noted modern-day historian of ideas, Andrzej Walicki summarizes, Piłsudski was regarded by many in the post-independence period as embodying distinctively Nietzschean qualities; he was regarded as “a sort of superman, a new incarnation of the King-Spirit.”¹¹²

Piłsudski, however, certainly had many interwar critics, too. His opponents argued that Piłsudski personified unmitigated egoism and a lust for power, a willful disregard for procedure and rules and an irrational and misplaced eagerness; he was Poland’s scourge and villain.¹¹³ According to this way of thinking, Piłsudski had allowed the Jewish-Bolshevik-liberal forces to gain a foothold in the Republic and to pervert the Polish soul in frighteningly unrecognizable ways. Some called Piłsudski “the first Piłsudski-ite” to reinforce the point that Piłsudski nursed an arrogant belief that he was Poland’s most important citizen and that he regarded himself as spearheading a veritable movement of reform. Along these same lines, Piłsudski was understood by others to be nothing short of a Mafia boss; his army boys (*Chłopy*) were fanatically and blindly

specifically, see: Heidi Hein, “Uwagi o formach i funkcjach kultu Józefa Piłsudskiego w województwie Śląskim”, *Niepodległość* XLIX (1997):22-24.

¹¹⁰ Michnik, “Kto to ma czełność?”, p. 172.

¹¹¹ Hanna Pohoska, *Wychowanie obywatelsko-państwowe* (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, 1931), p. 241.

¹¹² Andrzej Walicki, “Nietzsche in Poland (before 1918)”, in *East Europe Reads Nietzsche*, eds. Alice Friefeld et al. (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs / Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 66-67.

¹¹³ The polarized opinions on Piłsudski are nicely summed up in Wacław Bitner’s memoir, “Dramat Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej”, *Archiwum Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego* (hereafter A-BUW), File 1767, p. 123. Bitner was a founding member of the Christian-National Party, and was a Sejm member

devoted to their charismatic and powerful Grandfather (*Dziadek*) and would do anything for him.¹¹⁴ Still others emphasized the simple fact that Piłsudski was single-handedly responsible for putting an abrupt stop to Poland's democracy and for dragging Poland towards authoritarianism: Piłsudski was a dictator, plain and simple.¹¹⁵ The epithet *Dyktator* emerged among his critics as a blend of "dictator" (*dyktator*) and the Polish word for "daddy" (*tatus*). *Primo de Brigada* worked similarly, as a reference simultaneously to the fascist Primo de Rivera and to the First Brigade.¹¹⁶

Few historians would disagree that Sanacja-era Poland conformed to the definitions of an authoritarian state, especially after the Brześć affair broke out in 1930 and just as the Sanacja adopted a comparatively harsh approach to opposition generally. In the Second Republic of the Sanacja period, parliamentary democracy was curtailed severely, elections were not entirely free, freedom of press, speech and association were limited progressively, and the interests of the almighty state – though no one was clear on what these were – were heralded as the most important determinants of policy and action.

during the Sanacja era. This memoir constitutes an interesting telling of the political history of the 1922 to 1935 period. It was written shortly after the Warsaw Uprising in 1944.

¹¹⁴ Piłsudski as the "first Piłsudski-ite" comes from: Marjan Porczak, *Dyktator Józef Piłsudski i 'Piłsudczycy'* (Kraków: Nakładem Autora, 1930), p. 27. Piłsudski as the leader of a Mafia comes from: Marjan Porczak, *Piatiletka sanacyjna w piątą rocznicę zamachu majowego 1926 r.* (Kraków: Nakładem Tow. Uniwersytetu Robotniczego, oddział im. Adama Mickiewicza w Krakowie, 1931), p. 14.

¹¹⁵ A perusal of any of the major periodicals tied to the various opposition political groupings reveals this attitude to Piłsudski quite well. See, for example, *The Worker (Robotnik)* for the socialist view, and *The Warsaw Gazette (Gazeta Warszawska)* for the right-nationalist view. For the views of Centrolew (the opposition block against which Piłsudski acted in 1930), see, for example, "Deklaracja Centrolewu z 5 IV 1930", *Robotnik* Nr. 95 (6 April 1930).

¹¹⁶ Stasiński, *Poetyka i pragmatyka felietonu*, p. 69. See also the satirical depiction of Piłsudski by Antoni Wasilewski, "Dyktator: Primo de Madera", in *Józef Piłsudski w karykaturze*, eds. Garlicki and Kochanowski, p. 146. Madera is a reference to the island off the coast of Portugal where Piłsudski vacationed. The political authoritarianism of the day is further reflected in the replacement of "Senator" by "Sanator" as a way of describing the domination of the Polish government by members of the Sanacja camp. See, for example: J.E.S., "Głosy: w obronie Sanacji", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 25 (1 December 1927), p. 472; Aleksander Świętochowski, "Liberum Veto", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 3 (1 February 1928), p. 51; Aleksander Świętochowski, "Liberum Veto", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 6 (17 February 1928), p. 71; n.a., "Na Marginesie", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 37 (25 August 1929), p. 127; and Tadeusz Bielecki, "Pozory siły", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 51 (20 November 1932), p. 734. The 25 August 1929 article defines a "Sanator" as a lackey. See also: Adolf Nowaczyński, "Sanator o Sanatorach", *Gazeta Warszawska* Nr. 32 (1927); rpt. in Bolesław Chomicz, ed., *Sanacja czy dezorganizacja. Rzecz o polskiej dyrekcji ubezpieczeń wzajemnych*

Piłsudski was the spectacular leader around whom co-conspirators and the people at large gathered. It was no secret that during the 1920s Piłsudski had been a keen admirer of Mussolini, and historians have made qualified comparisons between Piłsudski's May coup and Mussolini's March on Rome in 1922. Both men were understood, by some, to have saved their nations from catastrophe and anarchy and to have launched a powerful and vibrant movement of reform.¹¹⁷

Poles themselves were aware, of course, of the growing cult status of Piłsudski from the earliest days of independence. Jan Lipiecki (pseudonym of Irena Pannenkowa, 1879-1969), railed against Piłsudski in *The Legend of Piłsudski (Legenda Piłsudskiego)* (1922). *The Legend* reached best-seller status, selling several thousand copies in just six weeks. Its publication caused quite a media sensation. This was so, in part, because it was written by someone who, during the war, had worked with Piłsudski and had considered herself a Piłsudski-ite. Pannenkowa moved away from the Piłsudski camp in the early independence period and changed her political orientation, building her reputation as a National Democratic supporter and publicist. She later contributed to, among other journals, *The Republic (Rzeczpospolita)* and *ABC*, where she attacked the women's rights activist Tadeusz Boy Țeleński and his ideas of sexual and moral reform.¹¹⁸

People mistakenly regarded Piłsudski, Pannenkowa argued, as a national hero, as a moral beacon, and as the only and best possible symbol of nationalist commitment.

(Warsaw: Drukrania Polska, 1927), pp. 12-13. The ironic usages of "Sanator moralny" are discussed in: Dr. J.B., "Sanacja moralna", *Ster Zagłębia* Nr. 9 (29 August 1926), p. 2.

¹¹⁷ For an exploration of the Mussolini cult, see: Piero Melograni, "The Cult of the Duce in Mussolini's Italy", *Journal of Contemporary History* 11: 4 (1976): 221-238. For a discussion of Piłsudski's views of Italian fascism and German Nazism, see: Kulesza, *Koncepcje ideowo-polityczne*, pp. 233-291. See also: Jerzy W. Borejsza, "Italian Fascism and East-Central Europe, 1922-1943", trans. Jerzy Jastrzębowski, in *Poland at the 14th International Congress of Historical Sciences in San Francisco. Studies in Comparative History*, eds. Bronisław Geremek and Antoni Mączak (Wrocław: Polish Academy of Sciences, 1975), pp. 257-285.

Instead, the author highlighted Piłsudski's egoism and megalomania, and emphasized that Piłsudski had been part of a larger movement in the partition and war-time periods which surely would have produced another leader had Piłsudski not stepped into the limelight.¹¹⁹ Pannenkowa maintained that it was her responsibility to expose the falsehood surrounding the name of Piłsudski. She offered up these criticisms of his cult so that the all-important rebirth of the society, which she did not deny needed to take place, could do so in an atmosphere of honesty and sober thinking.¹²⁰ This tone suited the National Democrats quite well. *National Thought* described Pannenkowa's text as a "fundamental, essential, measured, tactful, manly, bold, documented demasking of a commercial orgy."¹²¹

At the same time, one would do well to emphasize the differences between the status of Piłsudski as a cult figure and the cult status that other interwar leaders attained. For the last several years of his life, Piłsudski shunned public appearances. He did not organize the kinds of parades and festivals that had become standard fare in building cult status during this period in the European context. In part this was the case because by the late 1920s, and certainly into the 1930s, when Piłsudski was the undisputed master of the state, he was already quite seriously ill. In addition, the image that Piłsudski valued and strove to create – one of frugality, honesty and integrity – worked to the Sanacja's advantage; the Sanacja would not have supported easily an ostentatious leader. The message behind this image of modesty was central to the very idea of the Sanacja and to the idea of national unity, good citizenship, and honest work as the highest calling;

¹¹⁸ Daria and Tomasz Nałęcz, *Józef Piłsudski – Legendy i Fakty* (Warsaw: Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1986), p. 46. Pannenkowa outlined her position with respect to Tadeusz Boy Żeleński (the subject of Chapter 5), in: Irena Pannenkowa, "Kłamstwa", *ABC* Nr. 1 (1 January 1932), p. 3.

¹¹⁹ Jan Lipecki (pseud. of Irena Pannenkowa), *Legenda Piłsudskiego* (Poznań: Wielkopolska Księgarnia Nakładowa Karola Rzepeckiego, 1922), *passim.*, esp. pp. 33 and 83. A segment of this work is rpt as: "Irena Pannenkowa o polityce wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego w 1920 r. i o Piłsudczykach", in Borkowski, ed., *Józef Piłsudski o państwie i armii*, pp. 89-90.

¹²⁰ Lipecki, *Legenda Piłsudskiego*, p. 129.

¹²¹ *Mysł Narodowa* (date not provided), as quoted in Nałęcz and Nałęcz, *Józef Piłsudski*, p. 48.

people needed to put aside their selfish and partisan or personal interests and to come together to work actively for something bigger than them all: for Poland.

Conclusion

Piłsudski was central to the idea of the Sanacja, and the letters examined above reveal this centrality well. The letters further show that Piłsudski's coup sparked a flurry of unexpected, and sometimes unusual, reactions. The letters which people wrote to Piłsudski after the coup have been used here to suggest the multitude of ways in which people understood Polish independence generally, and the Sanacja specifically. The letters reveal much about the political and cultural mood of the period and about the preoccupations and anxieties of the citizenry. They suggest that people were attentive to the political events of the day and that they were shaped by the language that the Sanacja had popularized. People had all kinds of ideas about what Piłsudski's coup and the ensuing Sanacja portended, and they expected much to change after the coup.

As the letters further suggest, however, people were not quite sure just what the Sanacja was really about, other than a project devoted to stimulating "national health". The imponderables to which the Sanacja was devoted were, quite simply, difficult to define and constituted poor markers for charting a course for future action. The Sanacja was indeed a broad and easily manipulated category that could mean anything and everything. In the next chapters, we will study specific organizations that people built in the post-coup period with the intention of answering the imponderables to which Piłsudski had referred. What these random letter-writers were only able to hint at and to suggest, organizations like those that form the subject of the next two chapters, were able to synthesize into more coherent political, cultural and social agendas.

Chapter Three:

Building the Army of Moral Action: Warsaw's Society for the Moral Rebirth of the Nation (*Towarzystwo Odrodzenia Moralnego Ojczyzny*), 1926-1932

On 29 April 1926 a conference entitled "The moral obligations of the present day" was held at the Warsaw Public Library. A number of individuals from this conference – Aniela Samotyhowa, Helena Sujkowska, Walery Sławek and Jerzy Radomski – went on to form The Commission for Moral Rebirth (*Komitet Odrodzenia Moralnego*). They agreed that the Second Republic was frightfully sick, that in addition to the political, social and economic problems it faced, newly independent Poland was beset by a wide-reaching cultural and moral crisis. Some eight years after independence, what was increasingly clear was that Polish society had not been emotionally, morally or spiritually prepared to be independent. If citizens' complacency and spiritual listlessness were to continue unabated, members of the Commission predicted, Poland would face certain ruin. The failure, this time, would come exclusively from within, and as a result, would be all the more contemptible. It was agreed that the Commission would work to eliminate the proclivity in Polish public life towards lying and indecency, and that it would attempt to confront what those present regarded as a national tendency towards "cowardliness" and a "lack of sobriety". Aniela Samotyhowa identified the over-arching mandate of the Commission as, simply, "a battle with evil".¹

¹ Archiwum PAN-Warsaw. Papiery Towarzystwa Kultury Moralnej w im. Edwarda Abramowskiego (hereafter TKM), File 4, Protokół 1-ego Posiedzenia Komisji, 29 April 1926. The name that the Polish Academy of Sciences gives to the Society's papers appears to be a composite of the two different names which the Society used at different times during its existence. The first of these names is The Society for the Moral Rebirth of the Nation (*Towarzystwo Odrodzenia Moralnego Ojczyzny*). The Society registered itself under this name in May of 1927, at which point it also registered its statute. See the registration notice, File 1. It is signed by Commissar Krzysztof Siedlecki of the Warsaw municipal government. The Society changed its name in 1930 to The Society of Ethical Culture (*Towarzystwo Kultury Etycznej*). In the interests of simplicity and consistency, I will refer to the Society only as the "Society for Moral Rebirth". In the footnote references, I will use the title accorded to the Society by the Archives:

Just a couple of weeks after this inaugural meeting of the Commission for Moral Rebirth, Piłsudski launched his coup d'état, in mid-May 1926. The Commission greeted the coup with great anticipation and interpreted the event as the ideal catalyst for national rebirth and moral rejuvenation. The Commission pledged its full support for the coup, for Piłsudski and for the idea of Sanacja. It renamed itself the Society for the Moral Rebirth of the Nation, and later in 1926, it adopted the name the Society for Moral Rebirth in the name of Edward Abramowski (*Towarzystwo Odrodzenia Moralnego im. Edwarda Abramowskiego*). From 1930, until its disbanding in 1932, the group was known as the Society for Ethical Culture in the name of Edward Abramowski (*Towarzystwo Kultury Etycznej im. Edwarda Abramowskiego*).²

The Society for Moral Rebirth is used here as one example of Polish society's general readiness to accept Piłsudski's challenge to define imponderabilia, to assess critically the quality of independence, and to work for a better future. Even before the May Events, the group embraced an evocative language of health, illness, morality, healing, work and community. After the May Events, the Society seized upon the idea of Sanacja as a rallying point for its cause, heralded the coming moral rebirth of the nation, and committed itself fully to realizing the goals of national renaissance and fundamental change.

A study of the Society for Moral Rebirth provides a window onto an important segment of the pro-Piłsudski leftist intelligentsia centred in Warsaw. The individuals who were involved in this group were long-time Piłsudski-ites. Many had worked

Towarzystwo Kultury Moralnej, abbreviated to TKM. All Society meetings took place in Warsaw, and all correspondence initiated by the Society also came out of Warsaw. The archival collection pertaining to this group consists of fifteen separate files. None of the pages is numbered. Though each file is named, the collection lacks proper and useful organization. The collection has only been used twice before, once in 1973 and once in 1984.

alongside Piłsudski in the pre-war socialist movement, and some had been a part of the war-time Legions. This was a generation who knew well the period of partition slavery, born as they were in the 1870s and 1880s, and who had exhibited noble determination in working to re-establish a Polish state. Their patriotic commitment to Polish independence and to the idea of Poland was dedicated and passionate. It was this group that formed the core support for Piłsudski's coup and for the so-called post-May camp, and it was this group that was so devoted to discussing ideas about national morality and moral reform. The Society for Moral Rebirth represents an attempt by a group of Piłsudski-ites to take stock of independence and to work toward shaping one vision of the moral revolution that the May coup had proclaimed.

The Piłsudski-ites associated with the Society for Moral Rebirth, moreover, included especially well-known and particularly influential people in the Second Republic. Colonel Walery Sławek (1879-1939), who was present at the initial meeting of the Commission for Moral, remained a part of the group for a short time during 1926. Sławek was widely regarded as Poland's "second in command", as Piłsudski's most trusted advisor and friend and as an uncommonly honest and decent politician.³ Janusz Jędrzejewicz (1885-1951) also showed a brief interest in the group. He was a prominent Piłsudski-ite politician, and would go on to serve as the Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Education from 1931-34.⁴ Antoni Anusz (1884-1935) was a longer-term member

² PAN-Warsaw. TKM. File 6. Protokół z Walnego Zebrania T-wa Kultury Etycznej im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 17 June 1932.

³ In addition to serving in the Legions, Sławek helped organize the Polish Military Organization (*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa*) during the war. He was President of the Legionnaire's Union (*Związek Legionistów*) from 1928 to 1935, President of the BBWR from 1928 to 1935, a parliamentarian from 1928 to 1938, and the Premier from 1930 to 1931, and again in 1935. On Sławek, see: Tadeusz Schaetzel, *Pułkownik Walery Sławek* (Jerusalem: Hamadpis Liphshitz Press, 1947); Włodzimierz Suleja, "Walery Sławek", *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* tom xxxviii, pp. 586-595; and Wapiński, *Świadomość polityczna*, p. 148.

⁴ Jędrzejewicz was also a parliamentarian from 1928 to 1930, and from 1930 to 1935. He was a Senator from 1935 to 1938, and from 1938 to 1939. On Jędrzejewicz, see: Jan Hulewicz, "Janusz Jędrzejewicz",

of the Society, and was a well-known career politician, associated first with the pro-independence socialists of the pre-war period, and later with the left-wing peasant party. PSL-Liberation, from which he was elected to the Sejm (1919-1922 and 1922-1927).⁵ Jan Pohoski (1889-1944) was a well-established Piłsudski-ite, and was married to Dr. Hanna Pohoska (1895-1953), a prominent exponent of the Sanacja camp's education policies.

Aniela (Miłkowska Jelowicka) Samotyhowa (1876-1966) was an especially active member of the Society for Moral Rebirth, serving alternately as the Society's President and Vice-President.⁶ At various times throughout her life, Samotyhowa worked as a teacher, art critic, writer, and social activist. In her personal life, Samotyhowa experimented with the radical cultural ideas of her age and was a passionate "free love" advocate.⁷ Though Samotyhowa was only one individual in a larger organization, she was uniquely active in shaping the direction of the Society's discussions. She was, moreover, one of the few individuals who remained with the group from its inception in

Polski Słownik Biograficzny tom 11, pp. 231-235; Tadeusz Katelbach, "Janusz Jędrzejewicz – Swej idei do końca wierny", *Zeszyty Historyczne* 27 (1972): 228-234; and Janusz Jędrzejewicz, *W służbie idei. Fragmenty pamiętnika i pism* (London: Oficyna Poetów i Malarzy, 1972). For details on Jędrzejewicz's two marriages, see: Dorota Zamojska, "Cezaria Baudouin de Courternay Ehrenkreutz-Jędrzejowiczowa", in *Kobieta i kultura*, tom IV, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: DiG, 1996), p. 168.

⁵ In 1928 Anusz entered the Sejm on the BBWR ticket. See: Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'État*, p. 385. Anusz published a collection of articles about Piłsudski in 1927: *Rola Józefa Piłsudskiego w życiu narodu i państwa* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Wydawnictwa 'Głosu Prawdy', 1927). A segment from this work has been reprinted as "Antoni Anusz o stosunku Józefa Piłsudskiego do Sejmu ustawodawczego", in Borkowski, ed., *Józef Piłsudski o państwie i armii*, pp. 94-95. See also: Antoni Anusz, *Podstawy wychowania obywatelskiego* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Związku Strzeleckiego, 1930). A stamp on the cover of this booklet indicates that 3,000 copies were published. Anusz was a regular contributor to the press. For one interesting example, drawn from the pre-coup period, see: "Tam, gdzie się kończy państwo", *Kurier Poranny* Nr. 104 (16 April 1926), p. 1.

⁶ Samotyhowa's papers are contained in the Krasiński Palace Manuscript Collection of the National Library (Biblioteka Narodowa), hereafter referred to as BN-PK. For Samotyhowa's personal and biographical information, see: BN-PK, Papiery Anieli Samotyhowej, File IV.11.003, Dokumenty Osobiste. This file also contains (p. 73) Samotyhowa's Personal Identification Papers (*Dowód osobisty*), Nr. 32422, dated 26 August 1926, as well as a kind of curriculum vitae (p. 55).

⁷ In the pre-independence period, Samotyhowa contributed to *The Warsaw Courier* (*Kurier Warszawski*), and *The Workers' Gazette* (*Gazeta Robotnika*) (where she wrote under the pseudonym Konrad Radwar),

1926 to its demise in 1932. The Society for Moral Rebirth, in many ways, bears clearly the stamp of Samotyhowa. Samotyhowa's personal writings, together with the official records of the Society for Moral Rebirth, allow an extraordinarily rich insight into the discourses that nourished the intellectual mood in pre-May 1926 Poland and which gave rise to the Sanacja.

Despite the affiliation of these prominent individuals with the Society for Moral Rebirth, the group remained small and relatively unknown throughout its six-year existence: the group's membership never exceeded more than a few dozen people. The Society failed to make an indelible impression on the Polish political or cultural scene, and it failed utterly to attain its lofty and rather fantastic goal of a complete cultural and moral transformation of Poland. As such, its existence is hardly ever mentioned in the standard political narratives of the period, and it has not been the subject of a single study.⁵ This study, then, represents a first. Regardless of the group's failures as an activist organization, I argue that the Society for Moral Rebirth serves as a useful barometer of the anticipation and hope that the Piłsudski-ite leftist intelligentsia invested in the May Events.

This chapter will begin by exploring how the Society for Moral Rebirth defined moral revolution, why it understood the May Events as forming a constituent part of the coming renaissance, and what it hoped to achieve. It will also locate the Society's ideas within the wider context of twentieth-century Polish romanticism, and specifically within the context of Piłsudski-ite neo-romanticism associated with prominent Sanacja ideologues like Adam Skwarczyński and the important Piłsudski-ite journal *The Way*

and *Bluszcz*. See: BN-PK. Papiery Samotyhowej, File IV.11.003, Praca na tle biograficznym Neli/Anieli/z Miłkowskich Samotyhowej, pp. 59-65.

(Droga). We will then explore the specific features of the group's activism, or lack thereof, and will assess the place that the philosopher, psychologist and cooperativist Edward Abramowski occupied in the group's ideas and approaches. We will end with an analysis of why the group failed, and what this failure suggests about the wider Sanacja vision. Part and parcel of this last section will be a suggestive analysis of the predominant role played by women in the Society.

Organizing for Rebirth

In a several-page-long diary entry dated 14 May, a day of heavy fighting in the capital, Samotyhowa began chronicling the circumstances that were unfolding before her eyes as Piłsudski and his forces confronted President Wojciechowski and those army contingents which had remained loyal to the government. Samotyhowa wrote about what she observed from the windows in her downtown Warsaw home and about what she experienced during her brief and uneasy excursions into the streets of Warsaw. The mood she described was one of tension, excitement, and fear, as crowds gathered to watch and wait for circumstances to unfold. She registered her own sleepless nights wondering what would befall the nation, poised as it was on the brink of civil war.⁹

Though Samotyhowa knew that the final outcome had not yet been decided, she sensed that she was moving towards, as she wrote in her diary, "an internal understanding" of the significance of the events. As so many others would later describe, Samotyhowa herself characterized Piłsudski's actions as having launched a national catharsis. She attached tremendous significance to what was happening:

⁹ A single and brief reference to the group is made in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, under Aniela Samotyhowa's entry. The group is also mentioned in passing in a recent biography of Edward Abramowski: Urszula Dobrzycka, *Abramowski* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1992), p. 10.

The removal of heavy boulders, the pushing down of the scarecrow with the straw violin playing a somnambulant song of yesterday's life, a life without a future. It is possible that this will become the prologue to a real Polish Renaissance.¹⁰

On Saturday the 15th of May, Samotyhowa was thrilled to read the *New Polish Courier's* (*Nowy Kurier Polski*) description of the events as "a battle over ethical postulates" and as the first such revolution in history. Piłsudski, she wrote, "had achieved a monumental, heroic, Herculean act..."¹¹ A short time later she outlined where she stood with respect to the coup and to Piłsudski in the plainest possible language: "...I am most entirely, completely and absolutely a supporter of Piłsudski and that which has happened..."¹²

Samotyhowa described the reaction that Piłsudski's coup had occasioned, not just in herself, but within the larger left-liberal social and cultural milieu of which she formed a part. She expressed a sentiment which would be repeated time and again in the post-coup period: "After the May coup, the feeling of a need to form some strong 'moral front' increased."¹³ Those men and women who had come together at Warsaw's Public Library at the end of April 1926 to form the Commission for Moral Rebirth approached news of Piłsudski's coup d'état with eager anticipation, and they were quick to identify themselves with what they perceived as the ideals that had inspired Piłsudski's actions. The coup provided the impetus to organize formally and quickly and to develop a clear

⁹ BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File II.11.006, Volume 2: 1922-1927: Aniela Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 14 May 1926, pp. 69-70. Samotyhowa used *My Book* (*Moja książka*) as a kind of journal and forum for working through her ideas.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 15 May 1926. After May 1926, referring to Piłsudski as a "Hercules" and describing his acts as "Herculean" became quite common. See: Wójcik, *Pisarz i komendant*, p. 16.

¹² Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 27 June 1926, p. 75. Shortly after the coup, Samotyhowa became involved in a conflict at the school where she worked. The principal accused her of being too forthright in her support of Piłsudski.

¹³ TKM, File 6, Protokół z Walnego Zebrania Towarzystwa Kultury Etycznej im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 17 June 1932.

statement of influences, goals, and intentions. And thus, the Society for Moral Rebirth was born.¹⁴

The first line of the group's declaration statement, which was drafted during the spring and early summer of 1926, began with a bold reference to the May Events, calling them a "symbol of the rebirth of Poland".¹⁵ With the coup, the declaration read, Piłsudski had elevated "everything that constitute[d] strength, valour, courage and dignity", while he had dealt a death blow to all that which was "weak, criminal, low".¹⁶ The Society for Moral Rebirth seized upon the coup as a nation-wide wake-up call, as a plea made to every individual citizen to fulfill his or her "obligations to the fatherland".¹⁷ It was time, as Walery Sławek stated at a Society meeting shortly after the coup, in June of 1926, for Poland to build its independence actively and creatively.¹⁸ Now that the Piłsudski-ites were in a position of power and their political opponents – the much-despised right-wing nationalists – relegated to secondary status, this might at last be possible.

But what precisely did it mean to "build independence"? How did one go about realizing a "Sanacja"? This was the singlemost important (and most difficult) question to which the Society, and indeed, the Piłsudski camp generally, committed itself. Society

¹⁴ Those who signed the founding statute of the Society are: Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Jan Póhoski, Helena Sujkowska, Aniela Samotyhowa, Juliusz Poniąkowski, and Jadwiga Joteyko. See: TKM, File 6, Protokół z Walnego Zebrania, 17 June 1932.

¹⁵ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 2, Deklaracja Programowa Towarzystwa Odrodzenia Moralnego Ojczyzny, 1926. Though there is no date noted on the statement, the declaration was read to all those present at the Society meeting of 12 June 1926 (as well as on the 30 June meeting). See: TKM, File 4, Zebranie Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego, 12 June 1926. In the protocol from the 30 June 1926 meeting, Helena Sujkowska made reference to the Committee for Moral Rebirth as having drafted the declaration statement and statute in April of that year. The declaration was significantly reworked after the May events. It is not clear how many versions of the declaration existed, or how each changed. See: TKM, File 4, Protokół. Zebranie organizacyjne Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego 30 June 1926.

¹⁶ TKM, File 2, Deklaracja Programowa Towarzystwa Odrodzenia Moralnego, 1926.

¹⁷ Ibid.

members believed that independent Poland suffered from a poor sense of individual “ethical responsibility” as well as from a generally poorly developed sense of collective culture. These shortcomings needed to be confronted if the much-dreamed-of Renaissance were to be achieved. The goal was to make citizens of the Second Republic understand that they were in fact citizens, and that they possessed obligations to the state and duties to fulfill. The Society’s Declaration statement continued: “At issue is the raising of the value of an idea, of the value of heroism and greatness...”¹⁹ The Society for Moral Rebirth regarded it as their duty, and the duty of every citizen of Poland, to seize the initiative of the coup, to go forth with Marshal Piłsudski, and to create what members described as the “army of moral action” that would work to transform citizenship in Poland.²⁰

The Society’s approach to the question of independence and reform was rooted firmly in the Piłsudski-ite intellectual and political fold. The Society’s declaration statement is peppered with a vocabulary typically used by the Piłsudski faction, turning as it did on references to profound change and imminent rebirth and emphasizing collective will and action, heroism, citizen responsibility, the “new person”, the primacy of the state and “work as the highest religious act”.²¹ It is to this Piłsudski-ite ideological fold that we now turn.

¹⁸ TKM, File 4, Zebranie Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego, 12 June 1926. The people present at the 12 June 1926 meeting included: Baranowska, Dziubińska, Godecki, Póhoski, Samotyhowa, Sławek, Weychert-Szymanowska, Sujkowska and Budnówna.

¹⁹ TKM, File 2, Deklaracja Programowa, 1926.

²⁰ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 4, Protokół Zebrania, 22 May 1926. The phrase “the army of moral action” comes from Captain Radomski.

²¹ This phrase comes from: n.a., “Co to znaczy rewolucja moralna?”, *Nakazy Chwili* Nr. 3 (27 May 1926), p. 1. For a discussion of the tension between the Sanacja’s emphasis on state-building and the development of civil society, see: Joseph Rothschild, “Marshal Józef Piłsudski on State / Society Dialectics”, in *Poland Between the Wars: 1918-1939*, ed. Timothy Wiles (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Polish Studies Center, 1989), p. 29.

The Way and Piłsudski-ite Neo-Romanticism

A group of the most prominent Piłsudski-ite ideologists and activists was centred around a journal called *The Way (Droga)*. *The Way* had been established in 1922 by Adam Skwarczyński, Adam Koc, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Jan Pohoski and Tadeusz Hołówko, among others.²² With *The Way*, these Piłsudski-ites had created an important forum in which to experiment with, shape and debate approaches to independence.²³ The papers of the Society for Moral Rebirth contain one reference to working with the editors of *The Way* in an effort to popularize the goals behind the May coup. The fact that some associates of *The Way*, like Jan Pohoski, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Walery Sławek and Antoni Anusz, were also members (at least for a brief period) of the Society for Moral Rebirth reveals much about the intellectual underpinnings of the group.²⁴

The Way was edited until 1927 by Adam Skwarczyński (1886- 1934), who became one of the best-known exponents of a modern Piłsudski-ite romanticist vision that emphasized such broad concepts like the need to develop unity and purpose in what was

²² These (and other) men were associated with the National-State Union (*Unia Narodowo-Państwowa*). This group had been formed in 1922 by Tadeusz Hołówko. Its immediate successor, in 1924, was the Confederation of People of Work (*Konfederacja Ludzi Pracy*). The Confederation was a social-political Society that included as its members, in addition to Hołówko, Adam Skwarczyński, Walery Sławek, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, and Kazimierz Świtalski. See: Jakubiak, *Wychowanie państwowe*, ch. 1; and Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy*, p. 223. Hołówko was head of the Eastern Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1927 to 1930, where he devoted himself to Polish-Ukrainian problems. He was elected to the Sejm in 1930 on the BBWR ticket. On Hołówko, see: Iwo Werschler, "Stanowisko Tadeusza Hołówki wobec kwestii mniejszości Słowiańskich w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (1918-1927)", *Dzieje Najnowsze* XII: 4 (1980): 41- 60; and Iwo Werschler, *Z dziejów obozu Bełwederskiego: Tadeusz Hołówko. Życie i działalność* (Warsaw: PWN, 1984).

²³ The effort was in some ways a continuation of that represented by *Government and Army (Rząd i Wojsko)*, a secret journal published from 1916 to 1918 by the Piłsudski-ites in the underground Polish Military Organization (where Jan Pohoski worked, as part of the Political Bureau, under Sławek). Pohoski was on the editorial committee, along with Janusz Jędrzejewicz, of *Government and Army* from 1916-1917. See: Stanisław Konarski, "Jan Pohoski", *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, tom 27, p. 231; Jakubiak, *Wychowanie Państwowe*, p. 101; and Wapiński, *Świadomość polityczna*, pp. 307-308. Pohoski, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Adam Skwarczyński and Tadeusz Hołówko worked together in the elite Piłsudski-ite organization, The Union for Public Good (*Związek Dobra Publicznego*) during WWI. See: Hulewicz, "Janusz Jędrzejewicz", p. 232.

²⁴ PAN-Warsaw, TKM. File 3, 4-e Zebranie Zarządu, 22 October 1926.

regarded as a chaotic and quickly changing post-war world.²⁵ If the Sanacja had a primary ideologue and exponent of its position, this was Skwarczyński. Skwarczyński, dubbed, “the angel of the Sanacja camp”, was a committed and long-time supporter of Piłsudski, and had fought under Piłsudski in the First Brigade.²⁶ Skwarczyński argued that newly independent Poland needed to shape a new “citizen-person”, but that this could only be achieved once a “new morality”, marked by the embrace of public responsibility and accountability, developed. The Piłsudski-ite neo-romanticists rejected political parties and programs and parliamentarism generally, and believed, instead, that the new morality would emerge only once people were organized into productive and focused social groups and once education priorities were changed to reflect the new morality.²⁷

Once organized into productive social groups, people would “work” to affect change and to create the new morality. Skwarczyński and his associates elevated work to the highest possible position, calling it a patriotic and moral imperative to which all citizens were subject; through work one fulfilled a duty to history, to the collective

²⁵ Daria Nałęcz, “Droga jako platforma kształtowania się ideologii Piłsudczyków”, *Przegląd Historyczny* LXVI: 4 (1975): 590-591. *The Way* published as a bi-weekly in 1922, and as a monthly in 1923. Other contributors to *The Way* included: Tadeusz Hołówko, Adam Koc, Jan Póhoski, Hanna Póhoska, Walery Sławek, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Antoni Amusz, Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, Wacław Sieroszewski, Andrzej Strug, Stefan Starzyński, Kazimierz Świtalski, Jerzy Braun, Jan Lechoń, Julian Tuwim, and Adam Wazyk. See: Jakubiak, *Wychowanie Państwowe*, pp.100-116. For a discussion of Skwarczyński, see: Micewski, *W Cieniu Marszałka*, pp. 62-95. Historian Ludwik Hass names Skwarczyński as a Mason. See: Ludwik Hass, *Masoneria polska XX wieku. Losy, loze, ludzie* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo KOPIA, 1996), p. 176. Skwarczyński sometimes published in *The Way* under the pseudonym Adam Płomieńczyk and Jan Ogiński. For a discussion of economic views expressed in *The Way*, see: Jan Borkowski, “Sprawy społeczno-gospodarcze w Drodze, 1922-1937”, *Dzieje Najnowsze* XI: 3 (1979): 51-83.

²⁶ Wójcik, *Legenda Piłsudskiego*, p. 31. For a discussion of the importance of Skwarczyński to the Sanacja camp, see: Micewski, *W cieniu Marszałka*, ch. 2.

²⁷ Adam Skwarczyński, *Mysli o Nowej Polsce*, 2nd ed. (Warsaw: W. Daszewskiego, 1934), p. 66. Many of the articles in this text first appeared in *The Way*.

society of which one formed a part, and to the future.²⁸ As Skwarczyński wrote in *The Way*:

He who wants the nation to create, for the nation to rise to the top, to fulfill a mission – must look into his heart, change, raise his soul, reform the whole of human life. This will not be done through philosophy, words, mottoes. This can be accomplished only through work. It is the only sacrament ... that forms peoples' moral sense, forms their character, establishes between them collective desires, aspirations and collective action.²⁹

This focus on “work” and on a committed and active citizenship was typical for the Piłsudski-ites of the Sanacja era, as it was for the Society for Moral Rebirth. One author in the Piłsudski-ite paper *Voice of Truth (Głos Prawdy)*, writing to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Polish independence, referred to “work”, quite simply, as the highest and most noble virtue which citizens possessed.³⁰

This prevalence of a language of work represents an interesting return to some of the themes that defined the period of “organic work” of the positivist era in the mid to late nineteenth century in the Russian partition. The period following the defeat of the 1863/64 nationalist insurrection in Russian Poland is traditionally regarded as having precipitated an end to romanticist and idealist approaches to nation-building, which had been marked by an over-riding belief in the cosmic injustice of the partitions and which had been focused on winning independence through force of arms. The failure of the January Uprising sparked what has come to be known, in contrast to the romanticist era,

²⁸ For an emphasis on the collectivity, see: Skwarczyński, *Myśli o Nowej Polsce*, p. 23. In these emphases on work, the collectivity and moral revolution, Skwarczyński had much in common with European syndicalists of the period. Syndicalists rejected political parties and believed that people should be organized in small groups. Skwarczyński's syndicalism is mentioned in Śliwa, *Polska myśl polityczna*, p. 104. For a contemporary perspective on the syndicalist elements within the Sanacja camp, see: Kazimierz Zakrzewski, *Kryzys demokracji* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Drogi, 1930). For a historical analysis of this question, see: Micewski, *W cieniu Marszałka*, pp. 261-268; and Chojnowski, *Piłsudczycy u władzy*, p. 16.

²⁹ Skwarczyński, *Myśli o Nowej Polsce*, p. 27. In Nałęcz, “*Droga*”, p. 601, Nałęcz uses a version of this quote, and states that it comes from an article of Skwarczyński's entitled, “*Myśli z powodu styczniowej mowy Piłsudskiego*”, published in *Droga* Nrs. 1-2 (January / February 1924), p. 5.

as a period of positivism or political realism. This latter period was marked by an effort on the part of national leaders to accept the fact of the partitions, to work within the limits imposed by the partitioning powers, and to focus on building the social, economic and cultural strength of the nation before bearing arms. The goal during the positivist period was, in a sense, to achieve, independence on a different level.³¹ With territorial independence achieved, elements of this nineteenth-century emphasis on rational and scientific approaches to society, on collective will and action, and on building strong foundations reappeared and formed what some scholars have referred to as a twentieth-century neo-romanticism.³² The May coup of 1926 launched a wholesale embrace of neo-romanticist language and attitudes towards independence and nation-building.

The May coup, according to Skwarczyński, announced boldly the start of a “moral revolution” in newly independent Poland. For Skwarczyński, the May moral revolution that Piłsudski launched ranked with 11 November 1918 as a vitally important day in the history of Poland and marked the beginning of something new and profound.³³

³⁰ Wojciech Stpiczyński, “Pierwsze dziesięć lat ofiary, mozołu i radości”, *Głos Prawdy* Nr. 313 (11 November 1928); rpt. in Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem*, p. 61.

³¹ Stanislaus A. Blejwas, *Realism in Polish Politics: Warsaw Positivism and National Survival in Nineteenth Century Polish Politics* (New Haven: Yale Concilium on International and Area Studies, 1984); and Stanislaus A. Blejwas, “Warsaw Positivism, - Patriotism Misunderstood”, *The Polish Review* XXVII: 1-2 (1982): 47-54. One of Blejwas’ major points is to argue that the polarization in the historiography between the romanticist and the positivist periods is too rigid, and that elements of each period can be found in the other. See also: Adam Bromke, *Poland’s Politics: Idealism vs. Realism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967); and Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 337-342.

³² This argument is also made by Nałęcz, “*Droga*”, p. 601. Neo-romanticism is addressed within the context of a larger discussion on the reception of postmodernism in Poland in: Edward Mozejko, “Paradigms of Postmodernist Writing in a Totalitarian Society: The Polish Case Study”, in *Postmodernism in the Literature and Culture of Central and Eastern Europe. Papers Presented at an International Conference Organized by the University of Silesia, Ustroń, 15-19 November 1993* (Katowice, Poland: Śląsk, 1996), p. 101. See also: Kamiński, *Romantyzm a ideologia*, passim.

³³ Skwarczyński stated explicitly: “This caesura [the coup] had been called the moral revolution”. See: Adam Skwarczyński, “Rewolucja moralna”, *Droga* Nr. 5 (1926), p. 1; rpt. in Nałęcz, ed., *Adam Skwarczyński*, pp. 157-160; and rpt. in Borkowski, ed., *Józef Piłsudski o państwie i armii*, pp. 150-152. See also: Skwarczyński, *Mysli o Nowej Polsce*, p. 139; and Śliwa, *Polska myśl polityczna*, p. 102. Much later, in 1933, *The Way* organized a series of ten lecture evenings. At each event, a few chosen individuals gave papers on various topics concerning Polish history, culture or politics, and then a

The promises of the revolution would only be realized, however, if people seized the initiative and developed a sophisticated sense of what the goals were. Skwarczyński envisioned his role, as one historian has stated, as “the teacher of the nation”.³⁴ In addition to using *The Way* as a forum for his ideas, Skwarczyński established, immediately after the coup, what would be a short-lived newspaper entitled, *The Imperatives of the Moment: A Publication Dedicated to the Moral Revolution in Poland* (*Nakazy Chwili: Pismo Poświęcone Sprawie Rewolucji Moralnej w Polsce*). Historian Janusz Faryś has called this paper, along with *The Voice of Truth* and *The Way*, as the main organs of the moral revolution.³⁵

During a 22 May 1926 meeting of the Society for Moral Rebirth, member Jan Pohoski endorsed the establishment of the newest organ of the moral revolution, *Imperatives of the Moment*, and he called this paper a powerful testament to the wave of societal enthusiasm for rebirth; he looked forward to the changes that would flow from the May Events.³⁶ The imperatives of the moment to which the referred included the assumption of the Presidency by Piłsudski; the dismissal of the current parliament and the calling of new elections; a general purge and healing of Poland’s political system; and

discussion about the given topic would ensue. These lecture evenings were published by Skwarczyński as *Pod znakiem odpowiedzialności i pracy*. For a passionate defense of the view that the Moral Sanacja was a noble motto around which to organize, see: Wanda Prażmowska, “Dyskusja”, as part of a session that included Wanda Prażmowska, Helena Millerówna and Marja Uklejska and entitled, “Znaczenie charakteru w życiu społecznym Polski”, in *Pod znakiem odpowiedzialności i pracy: dziesięć wieczorów*, ed. Adam Skwarczyński (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Droga, 1933), pp. 37-38.

³⁴ Kamiński, *Romantyzm a ideologia*, p. 25.

³⁵ Only eight issues of *The Imperatives of the Moment* were ever published, in May and June of 1926. See: Faryś, *Piłsudski i Piłsudczycy*, p. 78; Micewski, *W cieniu Marszałka*, pp. 67-68; and Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, p. 175. Four articles from the journal have been reprinted in: Nałęcz, ed., *Adam Skwarczyński*, pp. 146-156.

³⁶ TKM, File 4, Protokół Zebrania, 22 May 1926. The chair of the 22 May meeting was Mr. Godecki. The people present at this meeting were, among others, Jerzy Radomski, Helena Sujkowska, Walery Sławek, Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka, Władysława Weychert-Szymanowska, Marja Chmieleńska and Jan Pohoski.

a vigilant approach to stamping out corruption and abuse of power in the government.³⁷

But the imperatives of the moment also referred to far less precise goals. It was on the pages of these papers that the Piłsudski-ites tried to establish their neo-romanticist approach to Polish independence and to teach people what moral revolution meant.

Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Society member and *Needs* contributor, described the new publication as “an aggressive organ of the moral revolution”. Though Piłsudski had made it possible to begin a new life in Poland, the success of the May coup, Jędrzejewicz stressed, depended on the public at large and on the will of the whole society to act.³⁸ It depended, in fact, on people like those grouped around the Society for Moral Rebirth; members of the Society represented the ideal citizens, those who took the initiative and prepared themselves to work for the good of the whole. But the task would be a fantastically difficult one. Society member Jerzy Radomski (1892-1943), an army bureaucrat with the rank of Captain, was clear about just how trying this whole process of self-examination and of building a new moral citizen-person would be. The situation in Poland was grim and dire, and a frightening amount of work needed to be done. Captain Radomski stated: “Polish life has entered the swamp, at the bottom of which lies deceit.”³⁹ Radomski pointed to a lack of cooperation as well as to a poor sense of responsibility and public honour in the young state. The transformation of Polish society would not be accomplished easily or quickly.⁴⁰

³⁷ Janusz Jędrzejewicz, n. t., *Nakazy Chwili* Nr. 1 (22 May 1926), p. 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.* The emphasis on the whole of society needing to participate in achieving moral rebirth is reflected throughout the paper. For another example, see: Adam Skwarczyński, “Czego chciał i co osiągnął Piłsudski”, *Nakazy Chwili* Nr. 2 (24 May 1926), p. 1. Each edition of the paper was only two pages long, and cost 15 groszy. On the journal, see also: Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy*, p. 257.

³⁹ TKM, File 4, Protokół Zebrania, 22 May 1926. Jerzy Radomski wrote under the pseudonyms Tadeusz and Jerzy R. In the pre-independence period, Radomski was associated with the Second Proletariat as well as with the PPS-Revolutionary Faction. See Radomski’s entry in the *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, tom 29, pp. 736-737.

⁴⁰ TKM, File 4, Protokół Zebrania, 22 May 1926.

Further, Radomski echoed a belief that had been popular in Piłsudski-ite circles for some time and which had been especially evident on the pages of *The Way*: that modern political parties exerted a detrimental influence on parliamentary life and thus, on the state generally. Political parties, Radomski offered, did not even themselves believe in their abilities to develop effective programs for political and cultural transformation.⁴¹ For his part, Sławek underscored that Poland was not alone on the Continent in having nurtured a sense that formal politics and political parties were “something dirty” from which decent people ran far and fast.⁴² A number of organizations had formed in Europe during this period and had built their identities around this idea of rejecting traditional political groupings, questioning contemporary practices of democracy, or indeed, simply rejecting outright the very concept of democracy.

The Society for Moral Rebirth believed that the May events existed as a testament to political parties’ impotence. Members of the Society proclaimed loudly that they stood, intellectually and in principle, “beyond politics” and above the party wrangling which they believed had been destroying the Republic. At the same time, they believed that the May Events functioned as a call to non-political bodies to organize themselves and work for change.⁴³ Following the views expressed by the Piłsudski-ites in *The Way*, the Society believed that smaller social organizations rather than mass political parties constituted the wave of the future. Only non-parliamentary organizations could be relied upon to create the kind of moral citizen-person that the new state so desperately needed. Participation in carefully constructed and useful organizations would help citizens feel

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² TKM, File 4, Zebranie Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego, 12 June 1926. See also: TKM, File 3, 1-sze zebranie zarządu T.O.M., 16 September 1926 for an expression of a similar sentiment. For a discussion of Sławek’s views on the importance of extra-parliamentary social activism, see: Chojnowski, *Piłsudzczycy u władzy*, pp. 150-157.

⁴³ TKM, File 4, Protokół Zebrania, 22 May 1926.

connected to the state and would build the kind of civic responsibility that was vitally important to its longevity.⁴⁴ The Society hoped that their group would be just one of the many organizations born of the May events.

Above all, as Society members emphasized clearly, the people who committed themselves to working for the Sanacja through small, local organizations would have to be "absolutely decent" and as Captain Radomski stated, would have to want to "create good".⁴⁵ The Society was focused on attracting individuals, rather than already-existing organizations, for membership in the group.⁴⁶ And right from the start, the Society's organizers repeated that it was better to have just a few people who were willing to devote themselves selflessly to the cause than it was to have numerous people who were only half-hearted in their commitment: "it is better to go for depth rather than for width", member Marian Godecki (1888-1939) affirmed. Sławek echoed this view and at this juncture, in mid-1926, he, and the Society generally, eschewed the idea of a single large mass organization that would support the Sanacja. Sławek, who would go on in 1928 to form and lead the Sanacja's mass and supra-party group, the Non-Partisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (BBWR), added that in Poland, it had always been, and would likely continue to be, a small number of very influential and committed people that ultimately made the difference.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Nałęcz, "Droga", p. 594. See also: Jakubiak, *Wychowanie Państwowe*, pp. 33-34; and Faryś, *Piłsudski i Piłsudczycy*, p. 100.

⁴⁵ TKM, File 4, Protokół Zebrania, 22 May 1926.

⁴⁶ TKM, File 4, Protokół 1-ego posiedzenia Komisji, powołanej przez zebranie w Bibliotece Publicznej, 29 April 1926. The same sentiment is conveyed by Chmieleńska in: File 4, Protokół Zebrania, 22 May 1926. In the end, organizations could in fact also become members, and a 1930 list of such groups includes: the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, the Association of Working Women, the Polish Eugenics Society, among others. See: PAN Warsaw, TKM, File 13, Listy członków, 1930.

⁴⁷ TKM, File 4, Zebranie Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego, 12 June 1926. For a similar analysis of how democracy needed to be built by the few rather than the many, see: PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 2, Sprawozdanie z działalności Zarządu T.O.M. im. E.A., 30 June 1926 to 14 December 1927. This report is signed by the following persons: Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Jan Pohoski, Helena Sujkowska, Walery Sławek,

There was no time to waste in pursuing the Polish renaissance. Piłsudski's coup had handed Poland the opportunity to transform a mood that people had discerned since the start of independence but had not named. Samotyhowa offered her own analysis of the atmosphere that prevailed in Poland: "It is suffocating, terrifyingly suffocating... an intellectual and spiritual narrowness... a heavy boot is extinguishing in Poland the sparks of enlightenment, culture, thought..."⁴⁸ Just as some nationalist-right commentators used the coup's proclamation of moral Sanacja to launch wholesale criticisms of the state of moral and cultural life in the young Republic, as we saw in the first chapter, so others used the moral Sanacja to embrace the future and to focus on the positive potential which they discerned in the notion of a Sanacja. By remaining in what Samotyhowa referred to as her own private "cloister" – a private internal space free of the "tumult, brutality and ugliness of daily life..."⁴⁹ – Samotyhowa realized that she, and others like her, were shirking their responsibilities and preventing their growth as citizens. Worst of all, they were jeopardizing Poland's growth as a nation.

With the Sanacja, Poland was offered the chance to break out of the cloister once and for all and to shake off the continuing vestiges of partition slavery. According to the Society for Moral Rebirth, Piłsudski's coup had ushered in "the new era".⁵⁰ The key, Samotyhowa argued, was not to squander the energy engendered by the event and not to waste the momentum.⁵¹ She was bothered by the fact that so many stubbornly narrow individuals failed to see beyond the lives lost in the "civil war".⁵² If the positive energy

and Aniela Samotyhowa, among others. For a discussion of the role of the elite in the Piłsudski-ite ideology formed on the pages of *The Way*, see: Nałęcz, "Droga", passim.

⁴⁸ Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 3 November 1923.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, entry dated 20 July 1922.

⁵⁰ TKM, File 4, Zebranie Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego, 12 June 1926.

⁵¹ See, for example, Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 15 May 1926.

⁵² *Ibid.* The term "civil war" was often used by contemporaries to describe the May Events. See, for example, Stanisław Kutrzeba, *Polska odrodzona 1914-1928*, 3rd ed. (Warsaw: Gebethner and Wolff, 1928), p. 291.

that had come out of the events was not maintained, things would fall again “into the hands of little people”, and the “bird’s wings”, as Samotyhowa said, would not be allowed to grow.⁵³

Abramowski and the Moral Revolution

Instead of looking to politicians in the traditional sense of the word, the Society for Moral Rebirth instead looked for guidance and inspiration to “philosophers” and spiritual guides, to figures drawn from Polish history, such as the romantic poet Juliusz Słowacki,⁵⁴ one of the three Polish bards, or to Piłsudski himself, Poland’s newest creator and saviour, its patron and romantic hero. For Samotyhowa, Piłsudski was a “loved, dear, great Grandfather. A good, intelligent person.” She wrote in her diary about having listened to Piłsudski’s radio broadcast delivered on the eighth anniversary of Polish independence, on 1 November 1926. She was charmed by the technology itself, and wrote about the aura that surrounded Piłsudski, about his “melodious voice, beautiful, strong, hot”, and about his “very pantheistic existence”.⁵⁵ Piłsudski shared with his listeners a fairy tale about a maiden and a frog, and Samotyhowa expressed her sense of awe at how magnificent his simple story was.⁵⁶ Poland was lucky, according to Samotyhowa, to possess a man as noble and selfless as Piłsudski, a man to lead Poland

⁵³ Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 15 May 1926.

⁵⁴ Samotyhowa devoted a great deal of thought to Słowacki and to his importance in Poland. See, for example, her list of aphorisms, drawn from Słowacki’s own writings, in: Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 27 June 1927. The Society printed 16,000 leaflets containing excerpts from Słowacki’s writings, and organized three readings of his works. It also participated in the large project to repatriate Słowacki’s remains to Poland. See: TKM, File 6, Protokół z walnego zebrania T-wa Kultury Etycznej im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 17 June 1932.

⁵⁵ Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 11 November 1926. The inaugural radio broadcast occurred in Poland in February of 1925. See: Żółkiewski, “Kultura literacka”, pp. 18-19; Wynot, *Warsaw Between the World Wars*, pp. 292-295 and 354, fn. 68; and Daria Nałęcz, *Kultura Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1991), p. 47. Interesting photos pertaining to the radio in Poland are found in: Łoziński, *Życie codzienne*, pp. 109-112.

⁵⁶ Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 11 November 1926. A version of Piłsudski’s address is recreated in: Reddaway, *Marshal Piłsudski*, pp. 239-242.

through this difficult period of work and growth and to teach its citizens how to confront the evil that had plagued the country for the last century. Pilsudski ended his anniversary address. Samotyhowa recalled, by wishing his radio listeners a “reborn soul” for the year.⁵⁷

That Samotyhowa and the Society more generally regarded Pilsudski as the ideal model of a citizen and as the inspiration behind the moral revolution is clear. But the declared spiritual and intellectual father of the Society for Moral Rebirth was Edward Abramowski (1868-1918).⁵⁸ The Society did not formally become The Society for Moral Rebirth “in the name of Edward Abramowski” until October of 1926, and it is important to remember this when assessing the relative importance of Abramowski in terms of shaping the goals and motivations of members. As late as 1931, Samotyhowa herself expressed confusion about the specific role that Abramowski occupied in the group and wondered out loud whether he was “just” a symbol and an inspiration, or whether he was much more than that.⁵⁹ Ultimately, the Society kept Abramowski at an arm’s length. The Group did not set out to apply Abramowski’s ideas piece by piece to the modern setting of the Second Republic. Rather, it reached to Abramowski for inspiration.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ A fragment of Edward Abramowski’s correspondence is located at the National Library in Warsaw, in the Manuscript Division of the Krasinski Palace (hereafter BN-PK.). See: BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File III.11.053, Fragment Korespondencji E. Abramowskiego. The letters of Emilia (Andronowska-Waryńska) Abramowska, second wife of Edward, to Aniela Samotyhowa are also located there. See: BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File II.11.017, Listy Emilii Abramowskiej do Anieli Samotyhowej, tom IV (1911-1930), and tom V (1931-1940). For the letters of Aniela to Emilia, see: BN-PK, Samotyhowa, File III.11.052, Listy Anieli Samotyhowej do Emilii z Androwskich / Abramowskiej / Waryńskiej, tom I (1901-1925), and tom II (1928-1940). The two women appear to have been very close, and maintained a rather heavy correspondence. Samotyhowa’s other significant correspondent was her brother, Jan Milkowski. Her letters to Jan have also been deposited at the National Library. See: BN-PK, Samotyhowa, File III.11.013, Listy Anieli Samotyhowej do Jana Milkowskiego. There is only one letter from 1924, and the hundreds of others cover the period from World War Two to 1966. Much of the Aniela Samotyhowa archive was purchased by the National Library from Jan Milkowski in 1971.

⁵⁹ TKM, File 6, Protokół z Zebrania Zarządu T.K.E., 9 October 1931.

The parallels between Abramowski's ideas about moral revolution and a change in consciousness as precursors of far-reaching political, economic, social and cultural change, on the one hand, and the Sanacja's own call for moral reform on the other, undoubtedly resonated powerfully for the men and women of the Society for Moral Rebirth. Adam Skwarczyński of *The Way* was himself known to be a great admirer of Abramowski, and Abramowski, generally, was an important to the Piłsudski-ite intelligentsia.⁶⁰ For all these reasons, it was both tempting and logical to articulate an Abramowskian analysis of the Sanacja and to incorporate Abramowski's ideas into analyses of May 1926 and into the plans for future action.

Edward Abramowski was a highly regarded philosopher and psychologist conversant with the dominant trends within west European thought of the pre-war and war-time periods, and is widely recognized as one of the founding fathers of modern Polish sociology.⁶¹ He was associated, from his early days, with the workers' and socialist movements.⁶² At the beginning of the twentieth century, he was already actively contemplating the relationship between ethical living and political life, and was

⁶⁰ Adam Skwarczyński, "Kryzys demokracji", *Droga* (10 October 1926); rpt. in Nałęcz, ed., *Adam Skwarczyński*, pp. 169-174. See also: Micewski, *W cieniu Marszałka*, p. 68.

⁶¹ For a discussion of the development of Polish sociology, see: Janina Markiewicz-Lagneau, *La formation d'une pensée sociologique. La société polonaise de l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1982), esp. pp. 30-32.

⁶² On Abramowski, see: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, tom 1, pp. 16-18; Dobrzycka, *Abramowski*, passim; Zbigniew Krawczyk, *Socjologia Edwarda Abramowskiego* (Warsaw: PiW, 1965); Romuald Jezierski, *Poglądy etyczne Edwarda Abramowskiego* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1970); Bohdan Cywiński, "Myśl polityczna Edwarda Abramowskiego", in *Twórcy polskiej myśli politycznej: Zbiór studiów*, ed. Jan Miś (Wrocław: Nakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich / Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1978), pp. 29-105; Śliwa, *Polska myśl polityczna*, pp. 34-36; and Zygmunt Pietkiewicz, "Ważna karta dziejów socjalistycznego ruchu niepodległościowego (Z moich wspomnień)", *Niepodległość* 2: 1 (3) (1930): 83-94. Abramowski's first wife was Stanisława Motzówna (1866-1892), a socialist activist associated with the Second Proletariat. Motzówna died in childbirth in 1892. For a brief biography of Stanisława Motzówna, see: Dionizja Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, *Nie po kwiatkach los je prowadził: kobiety polskie w ruchu rewolucyjnym* (Warsaw: Iskry, 1987), pp. 191-195.

pondering the place of economics in what he believed was the coming revolution.⁶³

Abramowski is also regarded as the main theoretician and promoter of the cooperative movement in Poland, with cooperativism forming, according to Abramowski, the cornerstone of what he called the "third way to socialism".⁶⁴

Early in the twentieth century, Abramowski moved away from socialism and Marxism.⁶⁵ According to noted historian of ideas Andrzej Walicki, Abramowski was critical of the Marxism of the Second International, of positivist science, and of objectivism. He criticized the glorification of labour and the extolled, instead, "the contemplative state of the soul". Abramowski increasingly believed that the psyche and human consciousness, ethics and morality, constituted the sources of historical change.⁶⁶ And these were the ideas which the Society for Moral Rebirth found especially compelling. Abramowski explored these ideas from 1910 until his death in 1918. During this period, he served as the Director of and a lecturer in the Psychology Institute in Warsaw, a department which he himself had founded.⁶⁷ During the Great War, when Abramowski was already very ill, he was associated with the Polish Military

⁶³ Nela Samotyhowa, *Edward Abramowski i jego poglądy na znaczenie dobra i piękna w przebudowie życia. Odczyt, wygłoszony dn. 20 listopada 1928 r. w Kamienicy Ks. Mazowieckich na wieczorze poświęconym pamięci Edwarda Abramowskiego* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Kultury Etycznej im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 1931), p. 13.

⁶⁴ Abramowski established the Society for Social Self-Help (*Związek Towarzystw Samopomocy Społecznej*), in 1905; and in 1906 he founded the journal *Cooperative (Społem)* with Stanisław Wojciechowski, the President of the Polish Republic in May of 1926, and the man who represented and led the pro-government forces in the battle with Piłsudski. For Wojciechowski's memoirs of Abramowski, see: Stanisław Wojciechowski, *Wspomnienia, orędzie, artykuły*, eds. Maria Gron-Drozdowska and Marian Marek Drozdowski (Warsaw: Bellona, 1995), *passim*.

⁶⁵ For a periodization of Abramowski's various intellectual phases, see: Damian Kalbarczyk's "Preface" in Edward Abramowski, *Rzeczpospolita przyjaciół. Wybór pism społecznych i politycznych*, ed. Damian Kalbarczyk (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1986), pp. 10-11.

⁶⁶ Andrzej Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 51 and 153. The quote is from p. 153. For Walicki's comparison of Abramowski and Brzozowski, see pp. 210-212.

⁶⁷ Samotyhowa, *Edward Abramowski*, p. 14; and Andrzej Flis, "Edward Abramowski's Social and Political Thought", in *Masters of Polish Sociology*, ed. Piotr Sztompka (Wrocław: Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1984), p. 32.

Organization and with Piłsudski's Legions,⁶⁸ and even helped to organize prayer books for soldiers.⁶⁹ In describing Abramowski's last days, Samotyhowa wrote, with a sense of awe and great respect, that even during his final morning of life, Abramowski read the Polish romantic poet Slowacki.⁷⁰

Abramowski suited the Society for Moral Rebirth for a number of reasons. First, there was the personal connection between Abramowski and Samotyhowa. Abramowski and Samotyhowa knew each other in Geneva, where Samotyhowa had pursued her studies.⁷¹ Samotyhowa wrote a book about Abramowski and published it in 1931, and she also initiated, through the Society for Moral Rebirth, a number of smaller projects to popularize his name and ideas.⁷² The well regarded writer Maria Dąbrowska had earlier published a book about Abramowski, in addition to publishing a number of articles in prominent journals of the period. Though Dąbrowska was not a member of the Society for Moral Rebirth, she and Samotyhowa had known each other for many years, and had been part of the same milieu in Geneva. Dąbrowska explained the importance of and the need for Abramowski in language that would later resonate in the Society's characterizations of independent Poland: "Chaos has arisen in all souls, without

⁶⁸ See Ruta Światło's introduction in Edward Abramowski, *Filozofia społeczna. Wybór pism* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965); and Wojciech Gielżyński, *Edward Abramowski zwiastum Solidarności* (London: Polonia Books, 1986). Abramowski enjoyed a renewed popularity during the Solidarity period of the early 1980s.

⁶⁹ Samotyhowa, *Edward Abramowski*, p. 14.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷¹ Samotyhowa graduated from the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Geneva in 1897/1898. She began work on a Ph.D. in Botany, but stopped her studies by February 1899. There were many Polish students at the University of Geneva during the turn-of-the-century period. See: BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File IV.11.003, Tabela Osobista A. Miłkowska-Samotyhowa, p. 55.

⁷² Samotyhowa's book was called *Edward Abramowski*. See also: Nela Samotyhowa, "Pamięci Abramowskiego", *Epoka* Nr. 37 (10 September 1933), pp. 10-11. Samotyhowa also published a brochure of Abramowski's aphorisms, planned the erection of a monument in honour of Abramowski, and organized an application to the municipality of Warsaw to have a street named after him. Much of this work she undertook with the context of the Society for Moral Rebirth. See: PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 8, Letter from the Society to the Magistrate of Warsaw dated 6 June 1930; and TKM, File 2, Sprawozdanie z Działalności T-wa Kultury Etycznej im. E. Abramowskiego, 13 February 1931 to 17 June 1932.

exception; all the markers have fallen, we are 'like we were on the first day of creation'."⁷³

Moreover, as a philosopher and thinker, Abramowski enjoyed a general resurgence in popularity in the Second Republic. His ideas about ethics as the motor force of change experienced a revival in the independent state, and this became especially pronounced after Piłsudski's coup.⁷⁴ From 1924 to 1928, four volumes of his *Writings* were published.⁷⁵ Some of his works were even translated into French, contributing to his popularity in the west, and then in turn, furthering his influence in Polish intellectual circles.⁷⁶ Abramowski was becoming, arguably, a thinker of European-wide significance, one whose ideas resonated especially well in the tumultuous post-war period. For the Society to have incorporated Abramowski into their name may well have worked to lend the group social credibility. Including Abramowski's name into the Society's allowed the

⁷³ Maria Dąbrowska, *Życie i dzieło Edwarda Abramowskiego* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Związku Polskich Stowarzyszeń Spożywców, 1925). The book is a modified version of a series of articles which Dąbrowska published in the influential journal of the liberal intelligentsia, *Literary News (Wiadomości Literackie)*, in 1924. See the following articles by Maria Dąbrowska: "Pisma Edwarda Abramowskiego", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 9 (2 March 1924), p. 1; "Edward Abramowski jako socjolog", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 16 (20 April 1924), p. 3; and "Abramowski jako psycholog", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 18 (4 May 1924), p. 1. Dąbrowska also mentions Abramowski in: Dąbrowska, *Dzienniki 1914-1932*, pp. 276-378. As literary scholar Hanna Kirchner argues, Abramowski's influence on Dąbrowska is evident in Dąbrowska's very choice of career, in the nature of her literary works, and in her basic commitment to literature as a form of social and cultural service. See: Hanna Kirchner, "Proza – Maria Dąbrowska", in *Polish Literature*, eds. Brodzka et al., p. 658. Dąbrowska was known to support cooperativism and syndicalism, and she pursued a great interest in questions of land reform. On syndicalism, see: Wojciech Roszkowski, "Syndykalizm polski 1918-1929", *Niepodległość* XLVI (1993): 199-230. Roszkowski traces the syndicalist currents in both the Union for the Reform of the Republic (*Związek Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej*), which will be discussed in the next chapter, and in the Union for Work in the Countryside and in the Cities (*Związek Pracy Wsi i Miast*). Wojciech Gielżyński has referred to Abramowski as an anarcho-syndicalist because of Abramowski's belief that individuals, rather than the state, needed to organize and pursue specific goals, and because of his belief that work is central to human purpose. See: Gielżyński, *Edward Abramowski*, p. 6.

⁷⁴ Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych*, pp. 53 and 56-57.

⁷⁵ The second volume of Abramowski's writings, edited by Konstanty Kreczkowski, came out in early 1924. See: Dąbrowska, "Pisma Edwarda Abramowskiego", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 9 (2 March 1924), p. 1.

⁷⁶ Samotyhowa, *Edward Abramowski*, p. 14.

organization to call upon a noted and respected authority and to provide immediate reference to their intellectual antecedents, ideas and approaches.

Abramowski's ideas about the need to plan and build a better society resonated forcefully in the new Polish state. One of Abramowski's fundamental beliefs was that change could only occur once individuals organized themselves in productive social groups and exhibited a will and a creative plan for making things happen. As Urszula Dobrzycka argues in her recent biography of Abramowski, Abramowski believed that active participation in the life of society was an indispensable component of the intellectual's task, and that social engagement was vitally important to understanding and fulfilling intellectual precepts. In the broadest sense, Abramowski linked intellectualism with activism.⁷⁷ And it was precisely this aspect of Abramowski's thought which appealed to the Society for Moral Rebirth, and which reflected European-wide trends in terms of fostering an engaged citizenry and ultimately, a stronger and more viable state.

The Society reached to Abramowski's ideas as one way of thinking about and developing a modern political culture.⁷⁸ Studies of political culture contend, in part, that what happens in the formalized structures of political life – voter turn-out or the structures of a given political system – are important, certainly, but that these events and trends cannot be removed from the wider cultural discourses in which they are embedded. Such studies claim that politics is in fact determined by what people believe is happening or perceive to be happening as much as it is an analysis of what is actually happening.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Dobrzycka, *Abramowski*, p. 9.

⁷⁸ For an interesting review of the genesis and development of the concept of "political culture", see: Glen Gendzel, "Political Culture: Genealogy of a Concept", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XXVIII: 2 (Autumn 1997): 225-250. Gendzel's bibliography is excellent. On political culture in the Polish context specifically, see: "Kultura polityczna w II Rzeczypospolitek: dyskusje i polemiki", *Dzieje Najnowsze* XII: 1 (1980): 95-118. The historians who took part in this discussion include: Marian Drozdowski, Tadeusz Jędruszczak, Andrzej Micewski and Janusz Żarnowski, among others.

⁷⁹ Gendzel, "Political Culture", p. 247.

Applying these ideas to interwar Poland is instructive. The Piłsudski-ite neo-romanticists popularized a rhetoric which provoked some people to think about Poland's problems as symptoms of much deeper and far more noxious ailments that reached to the very core of "Polishness". The real problem was located within the people themselves and within some elusive notion of the "Polish national character". Samotyhowa herself devoted a fair bit of attention to defining those aspects of the Polish national character which she believed needed serious redress and transformation. She understood the basic and natural characteristics of the Polish national psyche to include a tendency to complain, a propensity for malcontentism, and a predisposition towards looking for someone else to blame and waiting for someone else to lead. These qualities, she argued, had produced a culture where the few led and the majority followed and accepted listlessly whatever was handed to them. The citizenry of the Second Republic, Samotyhowa believed, exhibited a "sick will".⁸⁰

Samotyhowa also argued that many of these qualities were a product of Poland's partition legacy. In a lecture she delivered to the Society in June of 1926, Samotyhowa pointed specifically to peoples' indifferent attitude toward the state and to their reluctance to trust the state.⁸¹ Too many people were content simply to "have Poland", and as a result, Samotyhowa stated, they failed "to reflect on their relations with her or on the need to build her."⁸² Poland needed to break out of these habits, and to raise new generations, generations which would not be mired in a partition-era psychological state, generations which, as Samotyhowa hoped, would have entirely different psyches from

⁸⁰ PAN-Warsaw. TKM, File 4, Przemówienie Samotyhowej: Działalność Towarzystwa Odrodzenia Moralnego, 30 June 1926.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 10 September 1925.

those which characterized the 1863 and even the 1905 generations.⁸³ These older generations were not adequately trained or psychologically prepared for living in freedom. “We are late”, she once wrote of independent Poland. As Piłsudski himself had stated: “a couple of generations must first pass before a Polish state culture will again form”.⁸⁴ Piłsudski’s Sanacja had introduced a certain new energy into the air. Samotyhowa believed, and represented the opportunity to break out of partition-era patterns, to break out of what Samotyhowa had called “the cloister”, and to work for Poland in a more meaningful way.⁸⁵

The coup and the introduction of the idea of nation-wide cleansing and reform offered an opportunity to focus these ideas. Sanacja rhetoric about the need for fundamental transformation resonated so forcefully precisely because so many people agreed on the need for basic change. The Society for Moral Rebirth constitutes one example of how people used the coup and the Sanacja to organize their ideas about healing Poland. The Sanacja wielded language of basic change and deep moral reform. The Society embraced this language and linked it to Abramowski’s key belief that without moral revolution, formal political independence might prove to be virtually meaningless.⁸⁶ Like Abramowski, the Society believed that the results and the enduring

⁸³ BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File III.11.004, Aniela Samotyhowa, “Myśli, uwagi, obserwacje”, tom II (1927-1930), entry dated 15 July 1928, p. 175. Roman Wapiński has written extensively on the different generations in the Second Republic. The two major generations with which he deals are: those born shortly after 1863, and those born around the turn-of-the-century. See: Wapiński, “Pokolenia Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej”, pp. 483-504; and Wapiński, *Pokolenia Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, passim.

⁸⁴ BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File IV.11.003, “Uwagi o kulturze”, no date, p. 32. Samotyhowa paraphrased Piłsudski’s original statement.

⁸⁵ Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 13 October 1927.

⁸⁶ BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File IV.11.026, Aniela Samotyhowa, “Artykuły i notaki o Ed. Abramowskim”, pp. 41-53. Samotyhowa’s article on Abramowski is both untitled and undated, but is signed “N.S.”. It was written no earlier than 1928, as Samotyhowa makes reference to this year in the body of the text. It is likely that this article became a part of her 1931 publication, *Edward Abramowski i jego poglądy*. See also: PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 3, 8-e Zebranie Zarządu, 15 December 1926; and Flis, “Edward Abramowski’s Social and Political Thought”, p. 42.

quality of a given political upheaval or change were determined by the moral qualities of a given society.⁸⁷

The Society saw in the coup the potential to achieve the kind of moral transformation about which Abramowski had written and which would lead to wholesale social and political transformation. Samotyhowa believed, following Abramowski, that this transformation would come when the individual citizen was educated “for the collective”. She wrote: “Only a transformed person can create a new social world.”⁸⁸ Abramowski’s original version, which appears in a collection of his aphorisms assembled by Samotyhowa into a brochure and published by the Society, reads: “... a new social world requires new people. Institutions of freedom cannot develop from enslaved natures.”⁸⁹ The same sentiment was articulated repeatedly in Society meetings: “There cannot be social transformation without moral transformation”, one member stated at a Society meeting in June of 1926.⁹⁰ The results of political revolutions, like the May coup, could only go as far as the moral revolution that preceded it.⁹¹ Changes in legislation and political processes would come last, and existed only to formalize the previous processes. Abramowski had himself written, “Because conscience is the strength of the world; from it new life, new forms and new Societies are born.”⁹²

Whether Abramowski himself would have regarded the May coup as, to use Abramowski’s own words, “an intelligent plot of revolutionists who know how to take

⁸⁷ Flis, “Edward Abramowski’s Social and Political Thought”, p. 42.

⁸⁸ Samotyhowa, “Artykuły i notaki o Ed. Abramowskim”, p. 49. For the expression of a similar sentiment, see: Samotyhowa, “Myśli, uwagi, obserwacje”, entry dated 6 July 1931, pp. 138-141.

⁸⁹ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 14, untitled, no date. The Activity Report for the year 1929 makes reference to the Society’s desire to publish a brochure of Abramowski’s works. See: TKM, File 2, Sprawozdanie z Działalności TOM im. E.A. za rok 1929. The brochure is entitled, “Abramowski and his views on the meaning of good and beauty in the rebuilding of life”. See: TKM, File 2, Sprawozdanie z Działalności Kultury Etycznej im. E.A., 3 March 1930 to 13 February 1931. The same quotation appears in Dobrzycka, *Abramowski*, p. 112, and see also pp. 89-90.

⁹⁰ TKM, File 4, Zebranie Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego, 12 June 1926.

⁹¹ Samotyhowa, “Artykuły i notaki o Ed. Abramowskim”, p. 49.

advantage of the situation”, is highly debatable and too speculative to be useful.⁹³ The world in which the Society for Moral Rebirth operated was one that Abramowski could never have even imagined. What is important is that the Society itself understood that the May coup represented the potential to realize a better future. Piłsudski’s Sanacja, according to the group, represented the potential for an ideal blend of the political and the moral. The May coup presented the Society with “the revolution” that often appears, though in a markedly different sense, in Abramowski’s writings. The coup was a welcome caesura: it provided the promise of positive change, and popularized a vocabulary that fit well with the organization’s own analyses of Poland’s problems.

Though individuals within the larger group may themselves have wished for a “real” socialist revolution, and though it is easy to read elements of socialism into the Society’s conception of problems and their proposed solutions, the group remained very cautious in this regard, and the attention that it gave to so-called socialist questions was uneven and tentative. Neither the Society nor Samotyhowa explicitly named their conception of the future as a socialist one. While socialist politics were in vogue among a certain segment of the population, they were anathema to others. To have deliberately and eagerly advertised socialist commitment would undoubtedly have done more harm than good. Moreover, as historian Daria Nałęcz has argued, the romanticist Piłsudskites emphasized unity, harmony and cooperation, peaceful co-existence and cultural strength. The language of class struggle, and indeed the division of society according to classes, fit rather uncomfortably into the new emphases.⁹⁴

⁹² TKM, File 14, untitled, no date.

⁹³ Abramowski, *Problemy socjalizmu*, p. 149, as quoted in Flis, “Edward Abramowski’s Social and Political Thought”, p. 45.

⁹⁴ Nałęcz, “Droga”, p. 603.

The Inactive Army

How precisely did the Society for Moral Rebirth go about realizing these fantastically monumental goals? The previous section outlined the group's intentions, vague as they were, and their intellectual underpinnings. The following section will explore the various projects which the Society actually initiated or planned to initiate in its pursuit of moral reform. Few of these efforts were successful, however. The Society's criticisms of contemporary society and its speculations about moral rebirth remained, for the most part, in the planning stages. But it is precisely in the group's ideas about Poland's moral state that we find an interesting elaboration of a Piłsudski-ite vision of the relationship between formal politics, culture, and morality.

The Society for Moral Rebirth was well aware that it had to move beyond these vague avowals of a need for change and that it needed to propose a concrete agenda. The group thus outlined six broad areas on which it would focus. These areas were identified in the declaration statement under the following headings: upbringing, education, administration, economic questions, matters of justice, and social issues. The Society planned to organize conferences and discussion sessions, to establish libraries and reading rooms, and generally, to spread the idea that people could achieve great personal satisfaction from participating in the state in a more direct and meaningful way. This sense of fulfillment would derive from the simple fact that peoples' efforts would form part of a great collective effort to build a better Poland.⁹⁵

The Society divided itself into three branches in order to facilitate this work on the six areas outlined above. These branches were: ideology-education; politics; and propaganda. The ideology-education branch of the organization was broadly concerned

⁹⁵ TKM, File 3, 4-e Zebranie Zarządu, 22 October 1926.

with eliminating dishonesty in public life, with educating people on issues of general national importance, and with "building honour". The influence of Piłsudski's post-coup statements are clearly evident in the Society's language and in their assessment of what ailed Poland. The political branch would concern itself with national minority issues, including schools for minorities, which they supported (and for which many Piłsudskites had a fair degree of sympathy, at least during the early stage of the *Sanacja*).⁹⁶ This branch would also devote attention to what the group referred to as cleanliness, propriety and professionalism in the administration of the state. The third and last branch outlined the need to work on shaping public opinion through meetings and discussion evenings, and through influencing the press, theatre and film production.⁹⁷ The group considered it within its scope and interest to consider all sorts of topics, ranging from forms of democratic participation, to morality in the modern world, women's issues, and the death penalty.⁹⁸

Educational initiatives, broadly conceived, were central to the Society's strategy of reform. The Second Republic had taken decisive steps to address the shortcomings of partition-era education, such that with a 1919 decree, elementary education became compulsory, universal and free in Poland for a period of seven years, for girls and boys

⁹⁶ Piłsudski himself subscribed to a Jagellonian or a federalist notion of the Polish state in which the various ethnic groups of the region would enter into a federation with the Polish state. See: Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 5, 82 and 158. Leon Wasilewski wrote about the minorities issue in the Piłsudski-ite *Nakazy Chwili (Imperatives of the Moment)*. See: Leon Wasilewski, "Polska odrodzona a mniejszości narodowej", *Nakazy Chwili* Nr. 4 (29 May 1926), p. 1. See also the optimistic statement made to the Jewish minorities by Premier Kazimierz Bartel in July of 1927: "Exposé Premiera Kazimierza Bartela z 19.07.1926 r.", in *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce. Wybór tekstów źródłowych 1918-1939* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny w Polsce, 1993), pp. 60-61. Bartel called for "harmony" between Poland's minorities and the Polish majority, and stated that organizing principles of citizenship according to language and religion was "contrary to the Polish spirit." See p. 60.

⁹⁷ TKM, File 4, Protokół Zebrania, 22 May 1926.

⁹⁸ TKM, File 4, Zebranie Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego, 12 June 1926.

between the ages of seven and fourteen.⁹⁹ Realizing educational goals was another matter, however. Many Society members had devoted their careers to the education field. This was the case with Jan Pohoski, for example, who argued that in addition to school reform and to laws handed down by the state, private societies had to take an active role in education and had to intervene to foster the right kind of citizenship.¹⁰⁰ Pohoski, moreover, was married to Dr. Hanna Pohoska, a professor at the University of Warsaw in the field of education and the author of key position papers on Sanacja education policies.¹⁰¹ Samotyhowa had herself worked as a teacher, was involved in the Polish Teachers' Union, and openly believed that teachers were uniquely placed to lead a "moral rebirth". Samotyhowa believed that schools needed to be organized in such a way so that they would harness the creative energy of students and would battle "spiritual inactivity, stagnation..."¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Educational opportunities remained very unevenly regionally distributed, however, and education opportunities differed for girls and boys. On education in the Second Republic, see: Józef Miąso, "Kształcenie dziewcząt w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej", in *Kobieta i edukacja na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX w.*, volume II, part II eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1992), pp. 76-7; Jerzy Halbersztadt, "Kobiety w murach Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego", in *Kobieta i kultura*, tom IV, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: DiG, 1996), p. 109; Wynot, *Warsaw Between the World Wars*, ch. 7, pp. 234-247; and Francis Bauer Czarnomski, *The Polish Handbook of 1925: Guide to the Country and Resources of the Republic of Poland* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, Ltd., 1925), ch. IV.

¹⁰⁰ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 3, 13-e Zebranie Zarządu, 6 April 1927. For an early positive evaluation of what Piłsudski's coup and the Sanacja portended for education in Poland, see: Władysława Weychert-Szymanowska, "Postulaty oświaty publicznej wobec przewrotu majowego", *Robotnik* Nr. 152 (4 June 1926), p. 1.

¹⁰¹ Hanna Pohoska, *Wychowanie obywatelsko-państwowe* (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych, 1931). This text consisted of a series of lectures Pohoska gave between 1929 to 1931 to teachers and school directors. For an overview of Pohoska's views on the ideal citizen, see her article, "Praca obywatelska", *Dla Przyszłości* Nr. 10/11 (October-November 1931), pp. 1-3. Pohoska also wrote under the pseudonyms *Szczęсна*, *Ewa Białynia*, *Ewa Stawisz*, and *Jerzy Nałęcz*. Pohoska was the daughter of Kazimierz Rzepecki and Iza Moszczeńska. She was a member of the Women's Union for Citizenship Work from 1934, and served on its executive from 1936 to the outbreak of the war. See Pohoska's entry, written by Stanisław Konarski, in the *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, tom 27, pp. 228-229.

¹⁰² Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 31 July 1926. Jadwiga Joteyko (1866-1928), who signed the founding statute of the Society, was also a teacher. See: Katarzyna Sierakowska, "Przegląd piśmiennictwa poświęconego dziejom kobiet w Polsce międzywojennej", in *Równe prawa i nierówne szanse*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: DiG, 2000), p. 13.

As proponents of education reform, the Society added its support to the general Sanacja approaches to education. Janusz Jędrzejewicz had been involved briefly with the Society during its earliest phases, and he had been instrumental in shaping Sanacja-era school reforms.¹⁰³ Sanacja pedagogical doctrines emphasized the importance of political or state education (“*wychowanie państwowe*”) and active citizenship.¹⁰⁴ These approaches to education were well reflected in Sanacja journals like *The Way (Droga)*, *Pion (Pendulum)*, *Zrąb (Frame)*,¹⁰⁵ *Families and Children (Rodziny i Dziecka)*, even *The Epoch (Epoka)* and *The Polish Gazette (Gazeta Polska)*.¹⁰⁶

For her part, Samotyhowa was sometimes overwhelmed by the difficulty of educating a new citizen-person, and her own personal journals and diaries are filled with pessimistic assessments of Poland’s future. She focused in particular on the cultural and intellectual distance between the people of the Polish countryside, and “Poland. – The Poland that should be, new, strong, independent, free...”¹⁰⁷ In addition, Samotyhowa, and the Society generally, was concerned about the fact that the emerging proletarian class, with newly minted rights and responsibilities, formed a significant component of

¹⁰³ On Jędrzejewicz and school reform, see: Micewski, *W cieniu Marszałka*, pp. 372-376; and Jędrzejewicz, *W służbie idei*, pp. 113-164. The Society for Moral Rebirth is never mentioned in Jędrzejewicz’s text.

¹⁰⁴ On the differences between the Sanacja’s and the National Democrats’ views on education, especially in terms of the relative positions of the “state” and the “nation” in approaches to education, see: Michał Śliwa, “Kobiety wśród twórców myśli społeczno-politycznej w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XX wieku”, in *Kobieta i kultura*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: DiG, 1996), pp. 234-236. On Sanacja education, see also: Kulesza, *Koncepcje ideowo-polityczne*, pp. 207-212; and Faryś, *Piłsudski i Piłsudczycy*, pp. 101-102.

¹⁰⁵ *Frame (Zrąb)* was formed in the spring of 1929 as a journal for educators. Janusz Jędrzejewicz was involved with establishing and editing this journal, and from 1931 to 1936, Póhaska served as editor. Sławomir Czerwiński was very involved with and supportive of the effort. See: *Zrąb*, “Wstęp”, in Sławomir Czerwiński, *O nowy ideał wychowawczy* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Zrąb, 1932). 3,000 copies of this collection of Czerwiński’s text were published. *Frame* contains key Sanacja ideas about and approaches to education.

¹⁰⁶ One could add *Imperatives of the Moment (Nakazy Chwili)* to this list. See, for example: Jan Belcikowski, “W sprawach poszczególnych rewolucji moralnej”, *Nakazy Chwili* Nr. 4 (29 May 1926), p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Samotyhowa, “Myśli, uwagi, obserwacje”, entry dated 21 August 1927, p. 60.

the population of the state, and yet was ill-equipped to contribute usefully to the development of the state. The Society thus intended to focus its education efforts on the proletarian stratum.¹⁰⁸ Samotyhowa looked ahead to the day when this class would come into its own and would be ready to devote themselves to the nation.¹⁰⁹ For the time being, the Second Republic found itself in what Samotyhowa described as a transitional period, defined by the “clash of two worlds, two epochs”.¹¹⁰

Like the Piłsudski-ites generally, Samotyhowa and the Society for Moral Rebirth believed that all Poles were not equally ready to take on the responsibilities of citizenship. The nation would be led towards rebirth by the Piłsudski-ite-Sanacja elite. The very structure of the Society reflected this typical Polish gentry vision of society, in which the intellectuals formed the moral and political leaders of the nation.¹¹¹ As Samotyhowa stated at the inaugural conference of the Commission for Moral Rebirth in April of 1926, it was imperative to turn for assistance to “artists, literati, theatre directors, as representatives of the world of ideas...”.¹¹² The Society planned explicitly to orchestrate its contribution to the national Sanacja project “from above”.

The Society’s one concrete effort in the area of education reform remained almost entirely in the planning stages. This intention was for Society members to travel out to provincial areas, where people from “the world of work”¹¹³ resided in great numbers. Members would travel to the provinces in a sort of missionary capacity to “educate” and

¹⁰⁸ This last statement about helping the proletarian masses help themselves comes from: TKM, File 4, Zebranie Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego, 12 June 1926.

¹⁰⁹ Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 13 April 1926.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, entry dated 3 November 1923.

¹¹¹ Nałęcz, “Droga”, pp. 596-597; Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy*, p. 150; Borkowski, “Piłsudczykowska koncepcja państwa”, p. 115; and Śliwa, *Polska myśl polityczna*, pp. 102-103.

¹¹² TKM, File 4, Protokół 1-ego Posiedzenia Komisji, powołanej przez zebranie w Bibliotece Publicznej, 29 April 1926.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

to defeat moral decay with word and action.¹¹⁴ By exposing Poland's youth to ethical models of work and citizenship, and by enlightening them about the centrality of the May coup to Poland's moral rebirth, the processes of decay could be nipped in the bud, the Society reasoned.¹¹⁵ Samotyhowa referred sarcastically to the Marian sodalities which were growing rapidly in popularity in the provinces, sapping the energy of people who might otherwise have given themselves over to the independence fight. She believed that the enthusiasm that people put into this kind of activism could be better used.¹¹⁶ The Society's members, all part of the intellectual and cultural elite of the nation, reached to what were, for them, very comfortable and established forms for intervention into the life of the lower classes.

The Society's other ostensibly significant attempt to establish real contact with people outside of its group came in the form of a plan to carry out a survey of Polish youth. Through this survey, the Society hoped to acquaint its members with what young people wanted and value: this would, in turn, help the Society to establish future meaningful contact with youth. The group targeted youth in the seventh and eighth grades, and planned to ask them questions about school courses, their family situations, their levels of and views on happiness, their preferred extra-curricular activities, and their ideal role models. The idea was to forgo abstract theorizing when approaching youth, and to provide them instead with actual practical suggestions about how to live ethically and responsibly. Though the survey questions were completed in 1928, there is no evidence to suggest that the survey was ever carried out.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ PAN-Warsaw. TKM. File 4. Instrukcja dla Członków T.O.M. Wyjeżdżających na Prowincję. June 1926.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Samotyhowa. *Moja książka*. entry dated 31 July 1926.

¹¹⁷ PAN-Warsaw. TKM. File 2. Projekt Ankiety. n.d.. The youth survey project is also mentioned during the following meetings: 6 April 1927 (File 13) and 11 May 1927 (File 15). A report of the Society's activities dated 14 December 1927 to 1 December 1928 (File 2, Sprawozdanie z Działalności Zarządu

The Society for Moral Rebirth also expressed vehement support for ideas of religious tolerance. Emphasizing as it did general "human" moral principles, the Society was committed to non-sectarianism and rejected overt and exclusionary displays of nationalism or religious chauvinism, such as those expressed and valued by the National Democrats.¹¹⁸ As such, the fight for secular education became an important cause to the Society for Moral Rebirth.¹¹⁹ The Society formally opposed a decree that came from the Sanacja government's Ministry of Religious Affairs, dated 9 December 1926, which essentially confirmed the 1925 Concordat between the Polish state and the Vatican. The Concordat of 1925 required that religion be taught in public schools at the elementary and the secondary levels, and further, it accorded Catholicism a special status.¹²⁰ The Society objected to the fact that the decree gave state sanction to religious authorities in the schools, that it privileged Catholicism and created a "Catholic mood" in the schools, and that, consequently, it limited interest in secular approaches to questions of ethics and morality. These secular approaches were, after all, at the core of the group's mandate. Moreover, the Society objected to the fact that the decree took from students the ability

T.O.M. im. E.A.), states that the survey was completed in 1928 and was ready to be sent out. Another survey prepared by the Society aimed to shed light on generational conflict. The Society compiled statements made by youth about their family relationships and about their general views on family forms. The results of the survey were published in: *Contemporary Woman (Kobieta Współczesna)*, *Polish Newspaper (Gazeta Polska)*, *Link (Więź)*, and *Morning Courier (Kurier Poranny)*. See also: PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 9. Letter from the Society to the editors of *Contemporary Woman (Kobieta Współczesna)*, *Polish Gazette (Gazeta Polska)*, *Link (Więź)*, and *Morning Courier (Kurier Poranny)*, dated Warsaw, 1 June 1931. The letter carries the designation "Lp. 114/31-a".

¹¹⁸ Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 13 April 1926.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ On the Concordat, see: Jerzy Wisłocki, *Konkordat polski z 1925 roku. Zagadnienia prawno-polityczne* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, 1977); and Zygmunt Zieliński, "O Konkordacie polskim z 1925 roku", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 87: 2 (1980): 471-481. Zieliński's article is a review essay focused on Wisłocki's *Konkordat Polski*. See also: Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism*, pp. 36-38. Interesting perspectives on Catholicism during this period are also offered in: Konrad Sadkowski, "From Ethnic Borderland to Catholic Fatherland: The Church, Christian Orthodox, and State Administration in the Chełm Region, 1918-1939", *Slavic Review* 57: 4 (Winter 1998): 813-839.

to choose when and how they would participate in spiritual events: and it “opened the door to a further and general clericalization of society and culture...”¹²¹

The Society wrote a formal protest to the government decree and Samotyhowa presented it to the membership at a meeting held on 23 March 1927. Samotyhowa stated plainly that the Ministry decree, “has its roots in the imprudent ratification of the Concordat by the Sejm, an action which gives Poland up to spiritual dependence on the Vatican.”¹²² The Society thus called for a revision of the Concordat by the Sejm, and they also called for an annulment by the government of the decree.¹²³ The last line of what appears to be the penultimate copy of the protest stated that the group believed the decree to constitute “an unfortunate mistake made by the government of the moral Sanacja...”¹²⁴

Significantly, this explicit criticism of the Sanacja government was removed from the final copy. It was agreed that direct attacks on the government would also hurt Piłsudski, and might consequently adversely affect the greater agenda, an agenda that was noble and good and deserved to be protected. The reference was replaced with a simple criticism of the Concordat ratified between Poland and the Vatican.¹²⁵ In defense of Piłsudski, the Society suggested that the decree had been originally formulated by Władysław Grabski, and moreover, that it was Premier Kazimierz Bartel’s name, and not Piłsudski’s, which appeared on the decree, making Bartel the most culpable party. In making this public statement, the Society was also cautious of the image that it portrayed

¹²¹ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 3, Definitywny Tekst Protestu. The protest was written on a loose-leaf sheet of paper and was placed between between the pages of the 22 February 1927 entry in the Society’s Book of Minutes. The definitive text of the protest statement is recopied in the minutes of the 22 February 1927 meeting. See: PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 3, 10-e Zebranie Zarządu, 22 February 1927.

¹²² Though Samotyhowa read the protest at a March meeting, it had also been presented to the Executive at an earlier meeting held on 22 February, and was ratified by the Executive at that time. See: TKM, File 3, Definitywny Tekst Protestu, and 10-e Zebranie Zarządu, 22 February 1927.

¹²³ TKM, File 3, Definitywny Tekst Protestu.

¹²⁴ TKM, File 3, 10-e Zebranie Zarządu, 22 February 1927.

of itself. Just as official Society pronouncements were careful to veil any socialist commitment which they may have felt, so here they were careful not to offend Catholics. The Society chose to downplay a bald appeal for separation between church and state, as it is feared that such a statement would make it easier for opponents to call the Society for Moral Rebirth a "Masonic" Society.¹²⁶ Issues like the place of Catholicism in the reborn Poland generated intense debate and vitriolic reaction on all sides.

In addition to these matters of religious freedom and education with which the Society occupied itself in the first few years following its formation, a great deal of its energy was devoted to simply debating what the Society's priorities were and what name the group should bear. The various suggestions for the name change offer interesting glimpses into what the members themselves thought about their Society's purpose and public presence. The first suggestion of changing the group's name appeared not long after the group's formation: that is, during a meeting held on 22 October 1926. Some members argued that the Society for Moral Rebirth was a "vulgar" name, that it was pretentious and mocked by others, and that it could too easily be misused. Helena Sujkowska (1873-1944),¹²⁷ a leading force in the campaign to have the name changed, suggested that "The Democratic Society" might be a preferable name. At a meeting a week later, this suggestion was deemed inappropriate on account of its overly "political character". Other suggestions which were ultimately rejected included: the "Society of

¹²⁵ Pease, "Poland and the Holy See", p. 525.

¹²⁶ The concern was expressed in: PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 3, 11-e Zebranie Zarządu, 10 March 1927.

¹²⁷ Sujkowska had been involved with establishing the Women's League in 1913. See: Ludwik Hass, "Aktywność wyborcza kobiet w pierwszym dziesięcioleciu Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej", in *Kobieta i świat polityki w niepodległej Polsce 1918-1939*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996), p. 70. Sujkowska's Piłsudski-ite activism during the war is also mentioned in: Waclaw Lipiński, "Kobieta polska w walce o Niepodległość", *Niepodległość: Czasopismo Poświęcone Dziejom Polskich Walk Wyzwoleńczych w Dobie Popowstaniowej I* (October 1929 - March 1930), p. 191.

Social Work in the name of Edward Abramowski",¹²⁸ the "Society of Social Service",¹²⁹ and the "Society of Ethical Work".¹³⁰ All were dismissed on the grounds that they were no better than the current name. A new name was not adopted until the general meeting held at the end of 1928, when the Executive provided the general membership with a choice of two names: The Ethical Society in the name of Edward Abramowski, or The Edward Abramowski Society. The first name was chosen by five members, rejected by four. One member abstained from the vote.¹³¹

"A title and projects but no concrete results"

We have seen in the previous sections how the Society for Moral Rebirth conceptualized Sanacja-era activism. We have seen, too, that though its goals were fantastic and its rhetoric hopeful, the group did not actually accomplish much. It lacked reasonable and realistic goals, attracted too few people to its cause, and failed to go the length with the few concrete projects that it did propose. In this next section we explore how the Society came to terms with its own limitations, and how it attempted to change in order to make itself more successful and useful.

Part and parcel of the discussion about changing the Society's name was a parallel debate about whether the Society was altogether superfluous. This suggestion had in fact existed right from the very inception of the Society for Moral Rebirth. Dr. Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka (1867-1936), for one, advocated that there was simply no need for the Society. Budzińska-Tylicka was a long-time socialist activist and was

¹²⁸ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 3, 29-e Zebranie Zarządu, 5 March 1928.

¹²⁹ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 3, Meeting of the Executive of TKM, 23 October 1928.

¹³⁰ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 4, Protokół Walnego Zebrania Tow. Odr. Mor. im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 18 December 1928.

¹³¹ Ibid.

prominent in various women's groups and causes.¹³² Budzińska-Tylicka was of the opinion that the Polish Society for Freedom (*Polska Organizacja Wolności* - POW) already addressed many of the issues in which the Society for Moral Rebirth was interested; Budzińska-Tylicka believed people could best work "for the defense of the victory of democracy" through the Society for Freedom.¹³³ This group was organized in 1922 in Warsaw as a kind of continuation of the war-time and underground Polish Military Organization. It was comprised of Piłsudski-ites, and generally, by people committed to "working for the state" in a "modern spirit".¹³⁴ The Freedom Society had also greeted the coup with enthusiasm.¹³⁵ In her view that the Society for Moral Rebirth was simply redundant. Budzińska-Tylicka was not alone. In the autumn of 1926, two members of the Society for Moral Rebirth, Jadwiga Baranowska and Stanisław Małkowski, proposed that the group should disband and simply become a section of the Freedom Society. The Society for Moral Rebirth, they reasoned, might be insufficiently large, powerful and influential to fulfill the goal of rebirth that the Sanacja has set before Poland.¹³⁶

¹³² At the turn-of-the-century period, Budzińska-Tylicka wrote for such women's papers like *The Helm* (*Sier*) and *Women's Voice* (*Głos Kobiet*), and from 1912, she belonged to the Women's League for War Preparedness. In 1919, she was the co-founder of The Political Club of Progressive Women. In the Second Republic, she was a key advocate of birth control, and was involved in establishing Poland's first planned parenthood clinic on Warsaw's Leszno Street. She was also involved with the Polish Committee for the Fight Against the Trade in Women and Children. For a brief discussion of Dr. Budzińska-Tylicka, see: Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, *Nie po kwiatach los je prowadził*, pp. 297-298.

¹³³ TKM, File 4, Protokół Zebrania, 22 May 1926.

¹³⁴ *Komunikat Informacyjno-Polityczny*. Wydawnictwo Okręgu Warszawskiego Polskiej Organizacji Wolności, Nr. 4 (15 October 1922). A copy of this document can be found in the BN-DZS, File IB 1922 Warsaw.

¹³⁵ The Freedom Society's glowing assessment of the May coup and its hope that the coup would spark concerted collective effort on behalf of the nation is reflected in one of the group's posters, dated 18 May 1926. See: BN-DZS, File IB 1926 Warsaw.

¹³⁶ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 3, 5-e Zebranie Zarządu, 29 October 1926. Samotyhowa herself joined a new group called The League for the Elimination of Dishonesty early in 1927, and there was some talk about forging a working relationship between it and the Society for Moral Rebirth. See: TKM, File 3, 12-e Zebranie Zarządu, 23 March 1927; and File 3, 13-e Zebranie Zarządu, 6 April 1927.

As committed members of the Society for Moral Rebirth were prepared to admit, the point was a valid one. At the same time, and as member Radomski indicated, a brand new organization, such as the Society for Moral Rebirth was, carried the advantage of not being too closely associated with a pre-existing and specific political or social program. Society member Kudelska added her voice to the others who favoured working through a new and small group, like the Society for Moral Rebirth, that was somewhat removed from the centres of power. Kudelska argued that the goals of the moral revolution were so fantastic that a variety of societies, even small ones, needed to be brought in on the project.¹³⁷ Similarly, members rejected the suggestion proposed in an anonymous letter that the Society for Moral Rebirth, hampered as it was by a lack of clear and practical goal, should simply disband and join the already established Legionnaires Union (*Związek Legionistów*).¹³⁸

The fact was that it was only really a small coterie of individuals who believed that there was a need for the Society for Moral Rebirth to exist. No more than a handful of members were present at any given meeting, the staple participants being Aniela Samotyhowa and Helena Sujkowska, and less frequently Jadwiga Baranowska, Halina Loretova and Jan Pohoski.¹³⁹ But despite the small number of members, the Society Executive met quite often. For example, in the period stretching from 30 June to 14 December 1927, a total of twenty-five meetings was held, which means that the members

¹³⁷ TKM, File 4, Protokół Zebrania, 22 May 1926.

¹³⁸ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 2, unsigned letter dated Warsaw, 3 June 1926. On the Legionnaires, see: Piotr Wróbel, "Kombatanci kontra politycy. Narodziny i początki działania Związku Legionistów Polskich, 1918-1925", *Przegląd Historyczny* 76: 1 (1985): 77-111; and Jan Konefał, "Lubelski oddział Związku Legionistów Polskich (1922-1926)", *Roczniki Humanistyczne* XLVI: 2 (1998): 187-205.

¹³⁹ Samotyhowa often also served as Secretary. Loretova was a member of the Political Club of Progressive Women (*Klub Polityczny Kobiet Postępowych*). See: n.a., "Obecny zarząd Klubu Politycznego Kobiet Postępowych", *Kobieta Współczesna* Nr. 23 (8 June 1930).

met at least once a week.¹⁴⁰ During these meetings, participants bemoaned constantly the fact that the group had not risen to greater popularity. Member Pohoski described the problem that the group faced in plain language in a meeting held on 27 January 1928: "A title and projects but no concrete results".¹⁴¹

Members were aware of the Society's shortcomings all too well. One woman, a disappointed and lapsed member of the Society, wrote to the organization in 1929, outlined her commitment to the ideals of the moral Sanacja, and offered a number of suggestions she hoped would help the Society Executive "do" something concrete and useful. One of these suggestions included the opening of a counseling and advice centre to which honest people could turn to report dishonest and immoral behaviour. She also hoped that the group would run lectures of a more general interest: that is, on the subject of working effectively in societies and functioning more productively in places of employment.¹⁴² The woman, who described herself as a pedagogue, left the Society in 1930 because, as she stated, "I had nothing to do there." She continued: "Without the

¹⁴⁰ TKM, File 6, Protokół z Walnego Zebrania T-wa Kultury Etycznej im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 17 June 1932.

¹⁴¹ Ten people were present at this meeting. The results of the Executive elections of 27 January 1928 were as follows: President: Janusz Pierzchalski; Administration: Marja Chmieleńska, Zofia Jakimowiczowa, Halina Loretowa, Jan Pohoski, Nela Samotyhowa, Stanisława Siwikowa, Helena Sujkowska, and Bronisław Siwik. The Revision Commission was comprised of: Wanda Dziewonska, Lucyna Konopacka, and Natalja Rapacka. See: TKM, File 4, Protokół Walnego Zebrania T-wa Odrodzenia Moralnego im. Edw. Abramowskiego, 27 January 1928. Pierzchalski acted as the secretary in 1927, but resigned from that position some time during the year. See: TKM, File 2, Sprawozdanie z Działalności Zarządu T.O.M. im. E.A., 14 December 1927 to 1 December 1928. The following individuals entered the Society's Executive as a result of the elections held 18 December 1928: Stanisław Twardo, Zofia Jakimowiczowa, Faustyna Sosińska, Helena Leleszowna, Jan Pohoski, Helena Sujkowska, Nela Samotyhowa, Marja Chmieleńska, Stanisława Siwikowa, and Halina Loretowa. The records do not indicate which position each individual took. See: TKM, File 4, Protokół Walnego Zebrania Tow. Odr. Mor. im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 18 December 1928.

¹⁴² PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 7, Letter addressed to "Dear Madam", from Marja Jagminowa, dated Warsaw 7 June 1929.

rebirth of the members themselves, without a deep and heartfelt understanding of the needs of our existence, there can be no further interest [in the group].”¹⁴³

The same criticisms of the Society – as being too small and too ineffective and ultimately useless – were made in 1926 as were made in 1930. Nevertheless, in an attempt to understand why their membership numbers had become so disappointing, the Society devised a plan to contact inactive members and ask them why they had stopped attending meetings.¹⁴⁴ An interesting response came in early 1930 from Jadwiga Jahołkowska (1863-1931), a prominent women’s activist associated with peasant politics. Though Jahołkowska informed the group that she herself had stopped participating because of a lack of time, she nevertheless took the opportunity to offer her opinion on why the Society was as ineffective as it was. She stated that the Society for Moral Rebirth, though it evolved from the best of intentions, may have been too quick and imprudent when it established itself and outlined its goals. The “moral rebirth of the Polish nation”, she suggested, may well have been too bold and large a mission. She further argued that people needed a framework within which to work in a Society, and they needed concrete and manageable goals.¹⁴⁵ While the Society emphasized activism and wholesale involvement in a project, it failed to provide smaller, tangible and realizable goals to which individual members could devote their time.

¹⁴³ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 8, Letter addressed to “Dear Madam”, from Maria Jagminowa, dated Warsaw 20 January 1930. The letter carries the reference number Lp.8/30. This letter is hand-written.

¹⁴⁴ The lack of financial resources available to the Society undoubtedly also contributed to the group’s desire to raise membership numbers. Society members were required to pay dues, but there were simply not many members, and it was often difficult to collect the dues. See: TKM, File 6, Protokół z Walnego Zebrania T-wa Kultury Etycznej im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 17 June 1932. See also the assorted financial statements in File 11.

¹⁴⁵ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 8, Letter to the Society for Moral Rebirth from Jadwiga Jahołkowska, dated 20 January 1930, Warsaw. The letter carries the reference number Lp.9/30. On Jahołkowska, see: Dionizja Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, “Jadwiga Jahołkowska – postępową działaczką Ludowego Ruchu Kobiet”, *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* 20: 1 (1976): 61-78. This article contains many references to contemporary sources about Jahołkowska. Mention of Jahołkowska’s death was made at a 1932 general meeting of the Society. See: Protokół z Walnego Zebrania, 17 June 1932.

In contemplating the group's apparent unpopularity, and in digesting the varied criticisms and failures of the Society, the Executive decided in March of 1930 to develop a new declaration statement which would better reflect both the group's priorities and those of the culture around them. "A Declaration of the Ideas of the Society for Ethical Culture" was read and accepted unanimously by all the Society members in February of 1930.¹⁴⁶ The statement began not with a reference to the May coup as a symbol for the rebirth of Poland, as the 1926 declaration statement had, but with the following:

After a three-year existence, we want to outline our physiognomy and tasks for the new today. We believe that the psychological, moral and intellectual fabric of the nation determines its essential vitality...¹⁴⁷

The statement identified the group's main interest as "ethics", defined broadly as the relationship between individuals, between an individual and society, and between the nation and humanity. Ethics, according to the Society, was the basis of "everything else". The declaration statement continued: "Today, in the midst of being overwhelmed by the world of material culture, the dawn of a new ethics is beginning..."¹⁴⁸ "Despite the slavery of capitalism, clericalism, chauvinism and party narrowness", the Society stated, "the never-dying voice of a free person, seeking truth, is being drawn out." The group understood itself to be a pioneer builder of the nation, a tireless opponent of spiritual laziness, dishonesty and hypocrisy. The Society was working, accordingly, to raise the ethical level in "private and social life" and to spread ideas about love and tolerance. Their work was being carried out in a context of Poland's larger internal

¹⁴⁶ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 5, Protokół Walnego Zebrania T.O.M. im. E.A., 11 February 1930. Nine individuals, all members of the Society executive, signed the new declaration statement. They were: Marja Chmieleńska, Helena Leleszówna, Halina Loretowa, Jan Pohoski, Nela Samotyhowa, Stanisława Siwikowa, Helena Sujkowska, Janina Świdorska, and Jan Twardo. For a list of these names, see the statement affirming members' acceptance of the new declaration statement in File 8, dated 18 March 1930.

¹⁴⁷ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 8, Deklaracja Ideowa Towarzystwa Kultury Etycznej, 1930.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

struggle: "...a struggle of basic forces... occurring under the guise of politics..."¹⁴⁹

Echoing an earlier criticisms of contemporary politics, the new declaration statement suggested that politics had become too vast a term, that it tried to encompass too much, and that it thus had become only an empty and meaningless word, a mask behind which people and trends could hide.

The Society for Moral Rebirth ended its new declaration statement with the plea that "knowledge about the value of all imponderabilia penetrate as deeply as possible into our society."¹⁵⁰ By using the word imponderabilia, the group reached, subtly, quietly, though assuredly, to Piłsudski and to the Sanacja and to the goal of moral rebirth as expressed by and associated with the Piłsudski camp. On the one hand, the Society realized that the goal of moral rebirth was a fantastically monumental one, and that perhaps the language of moral rebirth had been undermined in the years since the Sanacja had come to power. On the other, they were unwilling to forgo this goal entirely, and offered a subtle but sure reference to Piłsudski.¹⁵¹ By 1930, four years after its formation, the Society replaced appeals for moral rebirth with arguably less dramatic references to "raising" the ethical level of Polish society. "Ethical" became the preferred word over "moral". Article 3 of the group's constitution, for example, was changed from, "The Society for Moral Rebirth strives to maintain constant service to the matter of the rebirth of Poland in all areas of social life", to, "The Society for Ethical Culture strives to raise the ethical culture of all areas of Polish social life."¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ See, for example, TKM, File 4, Protokół Walnego Zebrania T-wa Odrodzenia Moralnego im. Edw. Abramowskiego, 27 January 1928.

¹⁵² PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 5, Protokół Nadzwyczajnego Walnego Zebrania T.O.M., 3 March 1930. For an excerpt from this protocol, see: TKM, File 1, Wyciąg z Protokołu Walnego Zebrania T.O.M., 3 March 1930.

Aware of the need to project a more positive image of itself and to attract greater numbers, the Executive undertook in early 1930 to market itself more effectively. The idea of publishing a magazine was talked about, but not unexpectedly, the project never got underway.¹⁵³ The Executive also decided to issue a public statement in which it appealed for information about other individuals or groups who were working towards similarly grand and noble ideals. The Society hoped to introduce these groups to the wider public, and to thereby popularize the ideals of the Sanacja itself.¹⁵⁴

The Society's small burst of energy and its shift in focus did not yield many positive results. Though the Brześć affair, the imprisonment by the Sanacja government of political opposition members, did not explode until late 1930, the political Sanacja had already begun to lose some credibility and popularity. The economic situation deteriorated markedly at this time, and the Piłsudski camp failed to make good on its promise of making life in the Second Republic "better". Overt and direct associations with the May coup and with the increasingly authoritarian Sanacja government were seen as potentially causing more harm than good.

Despite all of its efforts to increase its popularity and to boost membership numbers, membership remained low. A membership list from 1930 shows a total of 33 members. There were no honorary or partial members, as the whole premise of the Society was based on the idea of work and active participation in nourishing the moral revolution.¹⁵⁵ The Society had tried to persuade influential intellectuals to join their

¹⁵³ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 5, Protokół Walnego Zebrania T.O.M. im. E.A., 11 February 1930.

¹⁵⁴ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 8, n.t., 1930. This statement carries the reference number Lp 57-a/30.

¹⁵⁵ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 13, Listy Członków, 1930. Members' addresses in Warsaw are also available in this file. See also: File 4, Protokół. Zebranie Organizacyjne Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego 30 June 1926.

group, but to no avail. Maria Dąbrowska came to only one meeting.¹⁵⁶ Helena Ceysingerowna, a prominent activist best known for her publicism and for her work in the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, never joined, and nor did the writer Paweł Hulka-Laskowski, despite attempts by the Society to pique the interest of these people.¹⁵⁷ By 1930, the arguably best-known personalities involved in the Society for Moral Rebirth, Walery Sławek and Janusz Jędrzejewicz, and even Dr. Budzińska-Tylicka, were long gone.¹⁵⁸ The BBWR undoubtedly took most of Sławek's time, as it must have Jędrzejewicz's, and neither could have felt compelled to devote precious energy to such a small and ineffective group. It remains surprising that they were ever associated, in however limited a capacity, with the Society for Moral Rebirth. Member Marian Godecki, a teacher by profession, took up the post of Head of Continuing Education with the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1928, and was also very active in adult education and in efforts to overcome illiteracy, leaving little time for commitments to the Society.¹⁵⁹ Jerzy Radomski, who participated only in a couple of early Society meetings in the spring of 1926, became very active as a civil servant, first in Warsaw, and from 1928, in the municipal government of Radom.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ TKM, File 13, Listy Członków, 1930. Maria Dąbrowska came to a Society meeting once, when her book, *Dom kobiet (The House of Women)*, was the subject of discussion for the evening. See: File 2, Sprawozdanie z Działalności Kultury Etycznej im. E.A., 3 March 1930 to 13 February 1931.

¹⁵⁷ TKM, File 13, Listy Członków, 1930. See: TKM, File 2, Sprawozdanie z Działalności Kultury Etycznej im. E.A., 3 March 1930 to 13 February 1931.

¹⁵⁸ The following notable personalities were present at a meeting on 14 December 1927: Jędrzejewicz, Anusz, Godecki, Pohoski and Sławek. See: TKM, File 2, Zebranie 14 December 1927. At an 18 December 1928 meeting, the only men present were: Twardo, Pierzchański, Pohoski, Z. Kisielewski and L. Hryniewiecki. See: TKM, File 4, Protokół Walnego Zebrania Tow. Odr. Mor. im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 18 December 1928. See also: TKM, File 13, Listy Członków, 1930. From March 1930 to 13 February 1931, TKM's Executive met a total of 27 times. See: TKM, File 2, Sprawozdanie z Działalności Kultury Etycznej im. E.A., 3 March 1930 to 13 February 1931.

¹⁵⁹ On Marian Godecki, see his entry in the *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, tom 8, p. 169.

¹⁶⁰ Radomski, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, p. 737.

Much of the intelligentsia, as Society member Kruszevska concluded, "is busy, it doesn't have time."¹⁶¹ Another member suggested that Poland was simply too infatuated with material comforts and concerns to care much about such matters as morals and ethics.¹⁶² If a larger segment of the intelligentsia were not interested, and if the masses were turned off by what Kruszevska referred to as the group's "aristocratism",¹⁶³ then the Society was left with no constituency to whom it could appeal.

A Women's Army

Interestingly enough, the membership of the Society was always predominantly female. Of the 33 members listed in a typical registry, in 1930, only seven were men, meaning that women constituted close to 80 % of the membership. Another list from the same year indicates a total of 38 members, while yet another gives a total of 30.¹⁶⁴ In both of these cases, seven male participants are indicated. The male membership remained constant: Antoni Anusz, Stefan Boguszevski,¹⁶⁵ Marian Godecki, Ludwik Hryniewiecki, Eugeniusz Moszczyński, Janusz Pierzchalski, and Jan Pohoski. These men were committed Piłsudski-ites, leftists of varying degree, and politically engaged and committed members of the intelligentsia.

¹⁶¹ TKM, File 6, Protokół z Walnego Zebrania T-wa Kultury Etycznej im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 17 June 1932.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ TKM, File 13, Listy Członków, 1930.

¹⁶⁵ Boguszevski was also a signatory to the statute of the Union of Polish Legionnaires (Związek Legionistów Polskich). See: AAN, Związek Legionistów Polskich (ZLN), File 145, *Okólnik ZLP*, Nr. 1 (May 1928), Warsaw, p. 10. Boguszevski was also part of PSL-Liberation, and by 1931, started working with the Communists. He had a difficult relationship with, as he called it, "the fascistic BB", though he remained in its ranks until 1935. See: Pobóg-Malinowski, *Najnowsza historia polityczna*, pp. 752-753. Boguszevski was married to Helena Boguszevska, who was a social activist and publicist. She was also involved with the interwar campaigns for women's rights. She was also involved with the League for the Reform of Mores. See: n.a., "Liga Obrony Obyczajów", *Wiadomości Kobiety* Nr. 16 (16 April 1933), p. 2.

The Society never openly described itself as a women's organization, and never indicated that it would have preferred to attract female members, and yet its membership was undeniably primarily female. One could ascribe this to the fact that women, especially Samotyhowa, had established themselves in leadership positions from the very inception of the group and continued to attract other women to the cause. But this may have also worked to tarnish the reputation of the group and to cast it as "merely" a women's group.

The Society for Moral Rebirth was to a large and real extent the preserve of two women: Aniela Samotyhowa and Helena Sujkowska, who rotated themselves through the executive positions for the length of the group's existence. Both women were committed "women's activists". Samotyhowa was herself involved with Poland's largest and most influential pro-Sanacja women's group, the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, and Sujkowska had been active in the Women's Democratic Election Committee, out of which the Women's Union evolved, as we shall see in the next chapter.¹⁶⁶ It is also important to note that the Commission for Moral Rebirth, the initial organization from which the Society for Moral Rebirth evolved, had contemplated working with the women's section of the Polish Socialist Party. This suggests that at least some of the members believed themselves to be participating in a women's organization. This makes Walery Sławek's presence at the inaugural meeting of the Commission for Moral Rebirth all the more curious.¹⁶⁷

The Society's selection of lecture and discussion material further suggests the degree to which the group was dominated by and catered to women. From their interest in child development and childhood education, to women's employment, women's place in

¹⁶⁶ AAN, Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy [1926], File 92.

¹⁶⁷ TKM, File 4, Protokół. Zebranie Organizacyjne Komitetu Odrodzenia Moralnego 30 June 1926.

the modern world, divorce, unwed motherhood, the legalization of abortion,¹⁶⁸ temperance work,¹⁶⁹ and the Women's Morality Police,¹⁷⁰ the group's choices reflect an agenda with a decidedly feminized appeal. The Society's links to the popular middle-class women's magazine, *Contemporary Women*, underscored this, too.¹⁷¹ Samotyhowa herself may have exerted a dominating influence when it came to choosing subjects for Society discussion session and lecture evenings, and thus, when it came to shaping the mood, focus, and ultimately the fortunes of the group. Samotyhowa's personal life choices exemplified those of a small and peculiar branch of the left-wing, liberal-minded intelligentsia of the day that experimented with many of the culturally radical ideas of the age. For example, though she used the surname "Samotyhowa" by 1914, she did not formally and legally become the wife of Erazm Samotyha¹⁷² until 6 April 1926.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Divorce is discussed 1 March 1929. Unwed mothers and abortion are the subject of discussion on 9 December 1929. See: File 2, n.t. This document contains brief summaries of the various topics that were discussed at Society meetings in 1929 and 1930.

¹⁶⁹ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 5, Protokół Posiedzenia T.K.E., 28 April 1930. For a discussion of the pernicious effects of alcoholism on society and on democracy, see: University of Warsaw Library Archives (hereafter A-BUW), File 1467, Twórczość publicystyczna Stanisława Posnera. Speech entitled "Alcoholism" ("*Alkoholizm*") given in Pruszków on 1 June 1928, p. 16. Socialist women also devoted much attention to the problem of alcoholism. See, for example, PPS, *Kobiety stanicie w szeregu* (Warsaw: *Robotnik*, 1928), pp. 12-13. This pamphlet sold for 5 groszy.

¹⁷⁰ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 6, Sprawozdanie z Zebrania Zarządu T.K.E., 24 April 1931.

¹⁷¹ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 5, Protokół Zebrania Tow. Kult. Etycznej, 14 April 1930. This protocol contains the notes about a lecture evening for women co-sponsored by *Contemporary Women* (*Kobieta Współczesna*).

¹⁷² Aniela and Erazm had known each other since the early part of the century. Their archived correspondence begins in 1908. The letters of Erazm to Aniela are located in the Manuscript Division of the National Library, Krasieński Palace. See: BN-PK, File II.11.016, Listy Erazma Samotyhy do żony, Anieli z Miłkowskich/Jelowickiej, tom 4 (1908-56). The majority of the letters date from the period 1908-12. There is very little from the interwar period. For the letters of Aniela to Erazm, see: BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File II.11.045, Listy Anieli Samotyhowej do Erazma Samotyhy, tom IV (letters from 1912-56). The majority of the letters are from 1912. There are no letters in the period between 1912 and 1919. There are two letters from 1919, a few from 1925, and then several from 1928. Like Samotyhowa, Erazm was a teacher. Erazm was also a Mason, a member of the Great National Order of the Scottish Rite (*Wielkiej Łoży Narodowej Rytu Szkockiego*). See: Leon Chajm, *Wolnomularstwo w II Rzeczpospolitej* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1975), p. 272.

¹⁷³ Papiery Samotyhowej, File IV.11.003, Praca na tle biograficznym Neli/Anieli z Miłkowskich Samotyhowej. For Samotyhowa's extremely interesting account of her wedding to Erazm, see: Samotyhowa, *Moja książka*, entry dated 7 April 1926.

Moreover, as is evident from their correspondence, Erazm and Aniela spent quite a bit of time apart, as each pursued their own independent careers.¹⁷⁴

Samotyhowa supported divorce in the case of unhappy marriages,¹⁷⁵ approved of birth control, and rejected the cultural convention that women should be virgins until they marry.¹⁷⁶ She also followed international literature on these topics, and monitored the evolution of the Second Republic marriage law debates with great interest.¹⁷⁷

Samotyhowa believed that by changing society's approaches to these so-called moral issues, other social, cultural, and political problems could be better addressed. As a result, the moral rebirth with which the Society was preoccupied, and which the moral revolution was about (at least according to some), could come about more quickly.¹⁷⁸

Only once a society could learn to speak openly and honestly about marriage and gender roles, Samotyhowa stated openly, could life become truly free and healthy. She criticized

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, the letters dated 19 August 1919, and 21 August 1925, in: BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File II.11.045, tom IV (letters from 1912-56). Erazm left Samotyhowa in mid-1928 in search of a "higher truth". See: Papiery Samotyhowej, File III.11.045, tom IV, letter dated 18 August 1928. See also the letters dated 18 August 1928; 18 August 1928; and 9 December 1928. For letters written in 1933, see especially those dated: 3 August, 4 August and 7 August.

¹⁷⁵ Samotyhowa, "Myśli, uwagi, obserwacje", tom II (1927-1930), entry dated 1 October 1930.

¹⁷⁶ Samotyhowa kept a booklet entitled, "About love, marriage, family and personal freedom" ("O miłości, małżeństwie, rodzinie i wolności osobistej") in which she explored her ideas about sex and love and relationships. Between the pages of this booklet (c. p. 100) is a clipping from a newspaper article dated 19 September 1930. It shows a photograph of a well-suited man holding a baby bassonette, with the caption: "American daddy: After an exhausting day [at the office] he still has to... nurse the kids." See: BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File III.11.004, Aniela Samotyhowa, "O miłości, małżeństwie, rodzinie i wolności osobistej", August 1930 to November 1930. See also: BN-PK, Papiery Samotyhowej, File III.11.004, Aniela Samotyhowa, "II.1931 r. 1932 r. 1933 r. 1934 r.", entry dated 16 March 1931, pp. 133-134.

¹⁷⁷ In mid-1931, Samotyhowa purchased Bertrand Russell's *Marriage and Morality*, a book which was wildly popular among the radical Polish intellectuals of the day, especially among the *Literary News* group of writers and readers. Russell's book triggered an avalanche of writing from Samotyhowa, and it clearly animated her thinking on all manner of moral questions. The Society made plans in early 1932 to discuss Russell and to relate his views to the new marriage project being written in Poland at that time. See: TKM, File 6, Protokół T.K.E., 29 January 1932. For press reviews of Russell's work, see: Irena Krzywicka, "Szkoła moralności rozumnej", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 32 (2 August 1931), p. 3; and Wanda Melcer-Sztekkerowa, "Cnota szczęśliwa", *Epoka* Nr. 5 (30 October 1932), pp. 9-10. The Society discussed the new marriage laws at a meeting in early 1932. See: TKM, File 6, Protokół T.K.E., 19 February 1932. Also on Russell, see: Z.P., "Bertrand Russell o rozwodach", *Kobieta Współczesna* Nr. 8 (23 February 1930), pp. 14-15.

the Church and hitherto dominant codes of morality and falsity in marriage as attempts to control and dictate rather than truly educate. She objected to what she believed were parochial moral codes dominant in Poland, and argued that these codes required that all ideas inconsistent with Church doctrine be quickly and neatly pushed into a dark corner, never to be seriously considered or discussed.¹⁷⁹ Though these moral topics did not become main subjects within the Society for Moral Rebirth, the fact that one of the Society's main activists was devoted so passionately to them cannot go unnoticed.

The Last Days

One can point to many factors to explain the apparent failure of the Society for Moral Rebirth, and some of these have been addressed above. One final issue – the nail in the Society's coffin, so to speak – was its position on Brześć. Samotyhowa, and other members, too, had consistently cautioned that the group's open political affiliations could be inappropriately exploited by political opponents, ultimately causing more harm than good. This warning was indeed realized with Brześć.¹⁸⁰ The view on Brześć which prevailed in the Society was well expressed by member Marja Chmieleńska, who stated that Brześć was a moral rather than a political matter, and that it therefore absolutely had to be condemned.¹⁸¹

At the end of 1930, the Society wrote a formal letter of protest against Brześć, and published it in *Morning Courier (Kurier Poranny)*, *The Polish Newspaper (Gazeta Polska)*, *Dawn (Świt)*, *The Worker (Robotnik)*, *Polish Courier (Kurier Polski)*, and

¹⁷⁸ Samotyhowa, "II. 1931 r. 1932 r. 1933 r. 1934 r.", entry dated 7 June 1931, pp. 141-142.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. Samotyhowa only referred to "the Church" in this general way. Samotyhowa herself was raised (officially) in the Evangelical-Augsbergian faith.

¹⁸⁰ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 5, Protokół Zebrania Zarządu T.O.M., 13 January 1930. Antoni Anusz defended Brześć. See: Werschler, *Z dziejów Obozu Belwederskiego*, p. 282, fn. 75.

¹⁸¹ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 5, Protokół T.K.E., 19 December 1930. See also: File 5, Protokół Zebrania T.K.E., 2 June 1930.

Contemporary Woman (Kobieta Współczesna). The letter constituted a protest and a defense of all people regardless of social, religious and political views, and regardless of nationality.¹⁸² In addition, the Society had earlier approached the women of the BBWR's parliamentary club and asked them for clarification of "matters that are poisoning the moral atmosphere in the country." That the Society went to the Women's Club of the BBWR further supports the suggestion that by this time - late 1930 - the Society was dominated by women and considered itself to be, at least in part and to a certain extent, a women's organization.

What some perceived as the Society's slow and lukewarm reaction to Brześć, however, cost it much support. In a letter to the Society for Moral Rebirth dated 28 November 1931, Stanisław Małkowski (1889-1962) spoke for himself and on behalf of his wife when he asked that they be removed from the Society membership registers. Małkowski had been a Society member since the group's inception in 1926. His criticism of the group was simple: it should have spoken out sooner and more categorically against Brześć, Poland's latest and most difficult moral trial. There could exist no goals, he argued, for which moral laws could be broken justifiably. A Society which had as its goal the moral rebirth of the nation should have known this, Małkowski reasoned, and he reminded the Society that the group had arisen under the banner of the "moral Sanacja". The Society was duty-bound to fulfill its role as the conscience of the ruling coalition and to speak out to the society before which it stood and preached moral rebirth. With the latest developments at Brześć, the Sanacja government had shown itself to be a promoter "not of moral rebirth, but rather, of moral disintegration", Małkowski stated, and the

¹⁸² PAN-Warsaw. TKM, File 8, Letter dated 22 December 1930. The letter is published in the 23 December 1930 issue of *The Morning Courier (Kurier Poranny)*. The letter carries the reference number Lp.81/30.

Society had shown itself to be blind to what was really happening.¹⁸³ Małkowski thus regarded the continued existence of the Society for Moral Rebirth as harmful to Polish social morality, and as an insult to Edward Abramowski, whom he had considered a close friend. Małkowski further reminded the Society that it was his idea to add “in the name of Edward Abramowski” to the group’s title in October of 1926.¹⁸⁴ He argued that the Society had an obligation to Poland, to Edward Abramowski, and to “the one time beautiful legend of Piłsudski”.¹⁸⁵

One of the last general meetings of the Society for Moral Rebirth took place on 13 February 1931. An Executive was elected at this time, and it went on to hold seventeen meetings until the group’s formal liquidation on 17 June 1932.¹⁸⁶ During that last year, the Society focused much of its attention on organizing various lectures and discussion evenings. The Society also protested the closing of public libraries, and issued formal statements opposing anti-Semitic “excesses” in the universities. The formal liquidation was rather anti-climactic, as the various arguments in favour and against liquidation were familiar to everyone and had been made continually almost since the Society’s inception. Eight members voted for liquidation, and one against. Members

¹⁸³ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 9, Letter from Stanisław Małkowski to the Society, dated Warsaw, 28 November 1931. The letter carries the reference number “Lp.136/31”. Małkowski’s business card is in File 7, Korespondencja, 1928. On Małkowski, see also: Dąborska, *Dzienniki 1914-1932*, p. 378.

¹⁸⁴ Małkowski was identified as a “guest” at the Executive meeting of 22 October 1926. See: TKM File 3, 4-e Zebranie Zarządu, 22 October 1926. Małkowski also attended the next executive meeting, held on 29 October, and it is at that time that he proposed adding “in the name of Abramowski” to the Society’s name. See: TKM, File 3, 5-e Zebranie Zarządu, 29 October 1926.

¹⁸⁵ PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 9, Letter from Małkowski, 28 November 1931.

¹⁸⁶ The Commissariat of Warsaw was notified of the liquidation by a letter dated 3 March 1933. The letter was signed by M. Gryziewiczówna, secretary, and H. Sujkowska, president. See: PAN-Warsaw, TKM, File 12, letter dated Warsaw, 3 March 1933. The members present at this last meeting were: Kruszevska, Leleszówna, Loretova, Samotyhowa, Sosińska, Sujkowska, Tuszówna, Wojski, and Gryziewiczowa. See: TKM, File 6, Protokół z Walnego Zebrania T-wa Kultury Etycznej im. Edwarda Abramowskiego, 17 June 1932.

resolved to collect the remaining dues, to pay a debt of 226 zloty, and to donate the remainder.¹⁸⁷

After the disbanding of the Society for Moral Rebirth, Samotyhowa continued her own social involvement. By 1930, she had already begun working in the Art section of the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, which published a brochure that she wrote, entitled, "About the need for culture and beauty in contemporary Polish life".¹⁸⁸ Like her approach to the Society for Moral Rebirth, her approach to art was shaped by Abramowski's views of the social value of art, and she hoped that one day, when Poland was a mature society, art would allow people to engage in deep contemplation and to look for the essence of matters.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps it was precisely this kind of impracticality, so evident in the rhetoric of the Society for Moral Rebirth, which ultimately contributed to the failure of Samotyhowa's effort at moral reform in a primarily agricultural state with severe economic and social problems.¹⁹⁰

Conclusion:

As Samotyhowa was fond of saying, people in independent Poland had retreated into their "cloisters" and had eschewed public responsibility. As a result, the Second Republic was characterized by political instability and parliamentary ineffectiveness, fierce social tension and economic chaos. No group of citizens had been carrying out

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Papiery Samotyhowej. File IV.11.003. Praca na tle biograficznym Neli/Anieli/ z Miłkowskich Samotyhowej. p. 61.

¹⁸⁹ Samotyhowa, *Edward Abramowski*, pp. 28-31.

¹⁹⁰ From 1937, Samotyhowa worked with the Women's National Council (*Rada Narodowa Polek*), an umbrella organization that also included the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, the Women's Social Self-Help Organization, the Army Family, the Polish Women's Circle, the Women's League, among others. Samotyhowa remained a committed supporter of the Sanacja camp, in all its manifestations. Samotyhowa's name is also included in a list of names of people who contributed to the production of *Gontyna*. See: *Gontyna* Nr. 1 (June 1937). *Gontyna* was published in Warsaw, was edited by Zofia Makowska, and was published by Józef Jankowski. It carried the sub-title: *Z Pracy Kobiet. Miesięcznik*

their responsibilities particularly well. The subtext of the May coup, and the potency of its promise, rested on this collective recognition of an untapped potential and of a collective desire to effect change. The Moral Sanacja was in part about expanding existing definitions of citizenship and transforming fundamentally political, cultural and moral life. Notions of citizenship and national virtue, of forms of private and public activism, were catapulted to the forefront of public debate by the May coup and the ensuing period of Sanacja. The Sanacja had offered an opportunity to assess how well men and women both had been performing their duties as citizens, and it also offered the promise of a much-needed solution.

In the conception of the Society for Moral Rebirth, the Sanacja constituted a call to men and to women to participate more actively in the nation, to reject a parcelization of interests, and to embrace a holistic approach to society and politics and culture. Yet it was never clear exactly how the Society for Moral Rebirth planned to tackle the imponderables, or indeed, how exactly it defined these. Indeed, the lack of definition and direction characterized the group. In terms of achieving specific and concrete goals, the group undeniably failed.

But what the Society for Moral Rebirth did manage to do successfully – and the reason why it is a relevant and important group to study – was to proclaim the need to reinvent and expand “Polish politics” in such a way so that politics would incorporate and speak to more than what was traditionally regarded as “political”. Politics, in the group’s definition, existed as a tremendously broad concept that by necessity and definition included a sense of moral purpose and potential. In stressing moral reform and raw emotion, instinct and intuition over reason, the Society embraced morality as a

ilustrowany społeczno-literacki, poświęcony zagadnieniom życia społecznego i kulturalnego oraz działalności kobiet.

constituent part of politics. In so doing, it reflected a neo-romanticist approach to independence, and it further popularized a discourse that the Sanacja had made more widely available about the pressing need for moral health and reform. The Sanacja had had the effect of expanding the discursive public sphere in interwar Poland by proclaiming, loudly and clearly, that all citizens were vital participants in the process of rebirth and that this was a worthy, noble and honourable goal.

Chapter Four: The Sanacja and Women's Activism

Hela, my dear, what we have again lived through!...What will come of all of this? No one knows. The dance of the straw man, or rather, the night of the Valkyries, full of apparitions and monstrosities.¹

It is thus that Zofia Moraczewska, a prominent women's activist and politician, began an anxious letter to her sister, Helena Kozicka, dated 16 May 1926. Moraczewska wrote her sister that she had been unable to sleep during the last four days, and she tried to impress upon her the momentous nature of what had happened in Poland's capital city. She called upon the inanimate straw man (*chochoł*) from Stanisław Wyspiański's great turn-of-the-century drama, *The Wedding (Wesele)*, using it as a metaphor for the slumbering, stagnant and desperate Polish nation, a nation about to be awakened and reborn by Joseph Piłsudski's coup d'état and the period of Sanacja, or "healing", that it inaugurated.²

Moraczewska regarded Piłsudski's 1926 coup as a nation-wide call to action, as an attempt to rescue newly independent Poland from what she called a slow-brewing "civil war".³ The Second Republic, as was so clear to everyone, had not had an auspicious start: political life was in chaos, the economic situation left much to be desired, and perhaps most distressingly, the nation's "moral life" had reached a crisis point. Moraczewska feared that modern-day Poles threatened to repeat all the "mistakes and sins, faults and wars of our fathers", a result of which the Polish-Lithuanian

¹ BN-PK, Listy Zofii Moraczewskiej do Heleny Kozickiej, File 52, tom VI, Korespondencja 1926-1928, Letter from Moraczewska to Kozicka, dated 16 May 1926, p. 27. The correspondence between the sisters was devoted and frequent, and covers such issues as politics, cultural affairs, and the daily grind of managing a household. Helena Dunin-Kozicka was not married to Stanisław Kozicki, the prominent Endek politician. The Moraczewski collection is split between the Archive for Recent Documents (AAN) and the National Library's Manuscript Collection at the Krasinski Palace (BN-PK), both in Warsaw. The Moraczewski archives at the National Library were in the process of being re-organized as research for this dissertation was taking place. File numbers may, therefore, have changed.

² The straw cover or "chochoł" metaphor was used frequently during this period. See: n.a., "Chochoł i jo-jo", *Gazeta Warszawska* Nr. 7 (7 January 1933), p. 3; and see also Chapter 1, p. 67, fn. 55.

³ Letter from Moraczewska to Kozicka, 25 May 1926, p. 32.

Commonwealth had fallen in the late eighteenth century.⁴ Though in a second letter to her sister dated 25 May 1926 Moraczewska expressed some trepidation at the way in which the Polish Sejm “had lost the battle with the Commander”, she was nevertheless prepared to trust in Piłsudski and to wait for a plan to be revealed.⁵ Moraczewska focused on the positive potential of the coup, of the promise it contained to “begin a new life” in Poland.⁶ She embraced the motto “the good of the Republic - the highest law” and welcomed the period of cleansing begun in 1926.⁷

In particular, Moraczewska understood the coup as offering an effective rallying-point around which to organize women for service to the state.⁸ For some women, newly equipped with full political rights, as guaranteed in the Polish Constitution of 1921, the May coup functioned as an inspiration, focus and opportunity, and catapulted them into deeper public activism on behalf of the nation. They understood the Sanacja's language of morality, healing, and the public good as speaking particularly clearly to them, as women. They believed that women were especially capable of “extracting selfishness, egoism, laziness and recklessness from the Polish soul, of build[ing] national pride, and reviv[ing] and inflam[ing] a desire for collective work.” Women would play a central role in organizing the forces that would erect the edifice of a better Poland.⁹

Chapter Four begins with a brief review of the life trajectory of Zofia Moraczewska. Moraczewska's own experiences and choices serve as a useful

⁴ AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 71/III-9, Zofia Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, c. 1943-1945, p. 28.

⁵ Letter from Moraczewska to Kozicka, 3 June 1926, p. 39.

⁶ AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 71/III-6, mf. 1855/6, Zofia Moraczewska, *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet i jego praca w r. 1928 i Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet. Rozdział II: Założenie Związku Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*.

⁷ Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 29. See also: BN-PK, Zbiór Moraczewskich, File 36, Zarząd Główny, ZPOK / Z.M., *Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet* (Warsaw: ZPOK, Dział Prasowy, 1932), p. 101 for an elaboration of a similar point. “ZPOK” is the short-form for the Women's Union for Citizenship Work (*Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*), and appears often in the papers of Moraczewska and of the organization generally.

⁸ Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 29.

⁹ *Ibid.* Underlined emphasis in original.

springboard for a more general discussion of the trends and ideas which marked women's activism in the Second Republic. As such, this introductory section establishes an important background for understanding the specific features of the women's activism inspired by and committed to Piłsudski and the Sanacja. Moreover, it represents the first attempt to outline Sanacja-era women's activism in the English language.

We then explore the details of the formation and the tenure of two Sanacja-era women's organizations in which Moraczewska played a key role. The first of these is the Women's Democratic Election Committee (*Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet*), established in Warsaw in 1927 to agitate for the Piłsudski electoral ticket in the 1928 elections. This organization tells us much about how a certain group of women, with Moraczewska at the centre, understood the coup and its promises to the nation. The second group is the Women's Union for Citizenship Work (*Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*). The Women's Union was a large and all-national women's group that was established in Warsaw in 1928 and which declared its unequivocal support for Piłsudski, the May coup and the Piłsudski-ite political grouping, the Non-Partisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (the BBWR). The Women's Union was the culmination and the most forceful illustration of women's Sanacja-era activism. The women grouped therein (again with Moraczewska at the centre) advocated a broad definition of the May revolution and popularized the idea that women, as a group, constituted the untapped resource of the Polish nation. In their estimation, the Sanacja heralded an era in which women would begin making the transition from potential citizens or half-citizens into full and active ones; Poland as a whole would benefit.

Zofia Moraczewska and the History of Women in Poland

Like many of her generation, born in the decade after the failed January Uprising against the Russians in 1863/64, Zofia Gostowska Moraczewska (1873-1958) was motivated in her social and political activism by a burning desire for Polish

independence. In the earliest days, Moraczewska had been a key organizer of the small women's section of the Rifleman's Association (*Związek Strzelecki*), the paramilitary group which Piłsudski had established in Galicia in 1912. Later, with the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, Moraczewska set about mobilizing women to participate actively in the fight for Polish independence. She was also instrumental in establishing the Women's League (*Liga Kobiet*) of Galicia and Cieszyn Silesia in 1915. The League mobilized women for the war effort, where they worked as nurses and as couriers or in any other way that proved appropriate and necessary.¹⁰ At the end of 1918, the Women's League of Galicia and Cieszyn Silesia shortened its name simply to The Women's League, and it became the first significant women's organization in independent Poland.¹¹

Moraczewska and the women with whom she worked formed part of a small social and cultural (though not necessarily economic) elite in the Second Republic. Many had been involved with the Polish Socialist Party in the pre-war period.¹² Most existed in especially close proximity to the centres of power in Poland. Moraczewska's husband, for example, was Jędrzej Moraczewski (1870-1944), Prime Minister of Poland from late

¹⁰ During the war, the Women's League was a branch of the Main National Committee (*Naczelny Komitet Narodowy / NKN*). The NKN and the Women's League ran into conflict with one another: Moraczewska and the League opposed Polish participation in the Austro-German side of the war, whereas the NKN supported it. See: Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 26. See also: AAN, Zespół Ligi Kobiet Polskich, Files 30 and 63. Also on this period, see: Robert M. Ponichtera, "Feminists, Nationalists, and Soldiers: Women in the Fight for Polish Independence", *The International History Review* XIX: 1 (February 1997): 16-31.

¹¹ The archival records pertaining to the Women's League are extremely rich, and have so far not been used in any significant way; many of the records have in fact never even been looked at before. The bulk of the group's papers are at the AAN. Moraczewska's own history of the League was written in the autumn of 1939 and the winter of 1940 in Sulejówek, and is entitled, *Liga Kobiet z epoki Legionów Polskich i P.O.W. Józefa Piłsudskiego walczących o odrodzenie niepodległego państwa polskiego od 1/8 1914 do 1/11 1918*. See: AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, mf. 1855/6. Some other papers pertaining to the Women's League are also located at: BN-PK, mf. 50126, Fragment Archiwum Naczelnego Zarządu Ligi Kobiet Polskich 1917-1918; and A-BUW, File 1744, Papiery Ignacego Peszke. The publication of the Women's League was called *At the Outpost (Na Posterunku: Tygodnik Kobiety Poświęcony Sprawom Społecznym, Ekonomicznym, Pedagogicznym i Etycznym)*. The first edition came out on 24 June 1917, and it ran until May of 1919. The literary editor of *At the Outpost* was Dr. Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, and one issue cost 20 haler. Copies are available in the Women's League Papers at the AAN, File 14.

¹² On women and left politics, see: Jerzy Myśliński, "Kobiety w polskich ugrupowaniach lewicowych 1918-1939", in *Równe prawa i nierówne szanse: kobiety w Polsce międzywojennej*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2000), pp. 61-76.

1918 to early 1919, and a prominent politician for the duration of the Second Republic.¹³ Moreover, the Moraczewski family lived in an old villa in Sulejówek from 1920, and as such, Zofia and Jędrzej were neighbours to Piłsudski and had access to this important figure in a way that others did not. The women that will be discussed here were not, therefore, typical of the vast majority of Polish women, and their experiences and views cannot be understood to be representative of “women generally”.

Soon after independence, Moraczewska exercised women’s newly won rights to full political participation and won a seat in Poland’s first parliament, where she served from 1919 to 1922, as a representative of the Polish Socialist Party from the Kraków region.¹⁴ Moraczewska quickly became disillusioned with formal politics, however, particularly with having to vote along party lines and against her own conscience. She also recalled in her memoirs what she perceived to have been an unarticulated but nevertheless fierce and pervasive sexism in the Sejm. She expressed grave disappointment that in an independent and free Poland – a Poland for which she and other women had worked tirelessly and for which they had sacrificed a great deal – cultural barriers to the female sex’s full participation in public life remained in force. In Moraczewska’s retelling of the formative events of her life, one instance in particular, though seemingly minor, resonated with a potency Moraczewska could not forget. She recalled a parliamentary debate during which she politely reminded her fellow Sejm members that Poland’s population was comprised primarily of workers and peasants, and that this basic reality could not be overlooked when considering solutions to Poland’s economic and social problems. The dismissive and crude response which the eminent

¹³ For an introduction to Moraczewski’s biography, see: Janusz Gołota, “Jędrzej Moraczewski w latach 1919-1926”, *Dzieje Najnowsze* XXV: 2 (1993): 35-51; Janusz Gołota, “Ewolucja ideowo-polityczna Jędrzeja Moraczewskiego 1920-1939”, *Dzieje Najnowsze* XXVII: 3 (1995): 13-29; and Wiesław Bieńkowski, “Jędrzej Moraczewski”, in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, tom 21, pp. 684-689.

socialist parliamentarian, Mieczysław Niedziałkowski (1893-1940), gave to Moraczewska was, she believed, typical of the disrespect male parliamentarians showed to women in politics and of the unarticulated sexism in the Sejm: "I didn't know that Comrade is such a *chłopomanka* (peasant-lover)", Niedziałkowski stated. He was greeted by great applause in the Sejm.¹⁵

Wearied and frustrated by this kind of an attitude, and also because she wanted more time for her family, Moraczewska limited her public and formal political activity from 1922 until 1927. She did not run in the 1922 elections, though nine other women were elected to the Sejm at this time, and three women were elected to the Senate.¹⁶ Moraczewska remained active only in the Political Club of Progressive Women (*Klub Polityczny Kobiet Postępowych*), which had been formed in Warsaw by a number of influential and socially active women of the intelligentsia in the spring of 1919. The Political Club of Progressive Women, which maintained branches throughout Poland, had as its goal the nurturing of a strong and capable "woman-citizen", and its mandate included working to protect, guarantee and extend women's rights in all areas of life. Behind this was also the grand desire to "introduce ethics into political and social life."¹⁷ Moraczewska underlined in her memoirs that she derived untold satisfaction working with and for women in a setting where women were respected and appreciated.¹⁸ Her

¹⁴ Moraczewska's commitment to socialism was typical of her generation and of many of those who had supported Piłsudski during the Great War. See: Adam Próchnik, *Kobieta w Polskim Ruchu Socjalistycznym* (Warsaw: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Wiedza, 1949).

¹⁵ Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 27.

¹⁶ Pietrzak, "Sytuacja prawna kobiet", p. 36.

¹⁷ The Political Club of Progressive Women was formed in May of 1919 at the liquidation meeting of the Central Political Committee for the Equality of Women, an organization which had come into existence only a year and a half earlier in an attempt to secure women's constitutional equality. The Political Club's first President was Dr. Justyna Budzińska-Tylicka. Other members included: Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, Władysława Weychert-Szymanowska, and Zofia Praussowa. For more on the Political Club of Progressive Women, see: BN-PK, Papiery Teodory Męczkowskiej, File II. 10.302, Papiery Teodory Męczkowskiej, *50 lat pracy w organizacjach kobiecych w Warszawie. Wspomnienia osobiste*, pp. 134-146, esp. p. 138.

¹⁸ Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 27.

enthusiasm for committed social activism was sparked again with Piłsudski's 1926 coup and the call for a nation-wide Sanacja.

Despite the existence of a wealth of archival material on Moraczewska, and despite her impressive record of social and political activism, Moraczewska has not been the subject of a biography in either Polish or English. Nor have her copious notes and letters been used to shape or even to augment our understandings of an important era of modern Polish history. At best, she is merely mentioned in a few of the general histories of the interwar Second Republic.¹⁹ This omission of Moraczewska's story from the larger narrative of Polish history is in large part a reflection of the undeveloped interest in the history of women in Poland (and the history of women in eastern Europe generally) for all periods.

In the post-World War Two Polish People's Republic, histories of women were confined largely to women's involvement in socialist politics, as the Communists tried to establish clear links between the new social order of the People's Republic and selected aspects of the pre-war period.²⁰ A great deal of Polish women's activism in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century did in fact come out of or was associated with the socialist movement, as is reflected in Moraczewska's own history.²¹ It has only been in the last decade or so, with the fall of Communism, that historians have taken a

¹⁹ For brief references to Moraczewska's activism in the pre-independence period, see: Dionizja Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, *Nie po kwiatach los je prowadził: kobiety polskie w ruchu rewolucyjnym* (Warsaw: Iskry, 1987), *passim*. See also the short biography of Moraczewska by Wiesław Bieńkowski in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, tom 21, pp. 677-679. A single and notable exception to the lacuna in the historiography is: Andrzej Chojnowski, "Moralność i polityka. Kobiecte Lobby w Bezpartyjnym Bloku Współpracy z Rządem", in *Kobieta i świat polityki w niepodległej Polsce 1918-1939*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996), pp. 161-176.

²⁰ See, for example, Próchnik, *Kobieta w Polskim Ruchu Socjalistycznym*, *passim*.

²¹ Histories of women in Poland have also focused on the peasant class. See: Dionizja Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, *Z dziejów kobiety wiejskiej szkice historyczne, 1861-1945* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1961). This book was published at the request of the Main Commission of the United People's Movement to mark the fiftieth anniversary of International Women's Day. Despite its clear ideological purpose and Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa's stated intention to exclude all women whose ideas were "ideologically foreign" to socialist ideals, the work nevertheless stands as a useful repository of information about specific persons, individuals and organizations.

more serious interest in widening the scope of studies about the history of women in Poland.²² The multi-volume collection edited by Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (1992 to the present) on the history of women in Poland during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries forms an impressive and extremely important step towards recreating histories of women in the Polish lands.²³ The Żarnowski and Szwarc collection conforms to a typical first stage in writing the history of women: it introduces a rich cast of actors, uncovers and presents assorted aspects of their experiences, and quite often celebrates women's achievements. Each of the Żarnowska and Szwarc volumes contains an English-language table of contents as well as an English summary of the original Polish-language introduction.²⁴ In addition to these brief summaries, an extremely uneven 1992

²² For post-Communist histories of women, see: Bogusława Czajeczka, *Z domu w szeroki świat'. Droga kobiet do niezależności w zaborze Austriackim w latach 1890-1914* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Naukowych Universitas, 1990). Czajeczka's work includes a number of useful references to other works, many from the interwar period itself, which treat the genesis and growth of the Galician-based women's movement. Her text also includes many references to periodical literature from the period. See also: Zofia Chyra-Rolicz, "Kościół katolicki a ruch kobiecy przed 1939 rokiem", in *Społeczno-kulturalna działalność Kościoła Katolickiego w Polsce XIX i XX wieku*, eds. Regina Renz and Marta Meducka (Kielce: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1994), pp. 149-160 for bibliographic references. A good article about the models of patriotism expected of Polish women during the partition period is: Jedynak, "Dom i kobieta w kulturze niewoli", pp. 70-105.

²³ The titles in the Żarnowska and Szwarc series are: *Kobieta i edukacja* (1992), *Kobieta i świat polityki* (1996), *Kobieta i kultura* (1996), and *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego: wiek XIX i XX* (1997). Many of the articles in the Żarnowska and Szwarc volumes rely on a rich selection of periodical literature written by or directed at women in the interwar period. Eleven new women's periodicals were formed during the World War One period, and five "women's sections" were added to the regular press at this time. Some of these new women's journals include: *Na Posterunku* (1916-19), *Na Przełomie* (1916), *Głos Polski* (1918), *Świt*, later *Przedświt* (1915-16), and *Legunka* (1918). For details about the women's press of the war-time and the interwar periods, see the introductory section in: Zofia Sokół, *Prasa kobieca w Polsce w latach 1945-1995* (Rzeszów: Higher Educational School, 1998). The women's press flourished in the Second Republic: 312 new titles for women emerged at this time, with the majority based in Warsaw

²⁴ Though the quality of the articles in the Żarnowska and Szwarc volumes is uneven, as a whole the project suggests many fruitful avenues for further research and will undoubtedly serve as the bases for many future studies. The research in the collections has been condensed, summarized and polished for a new collection, *Równe prawa i nierówne szanse* (2000), which contains the most up-to-date work on the history of women in interwar Poland. It also offers an extensive bibliography. See especially the bibliographic essay by Katarzyna Sierakowska, "Przegląd piśmiennictwa poświęconego dziejom kobiet w Polsce międzywojennej", in *Równe prawa i nierówne szanse: kobiety w Polsce międzywojennej*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2000), pp. 9-21. See also: Elżbieta Pakszys, "The State of Research on Polish Women in the Last Two Decades", *Journal of Women's History* 3: 3 (Winter 1992): 118-125. Interest in the history of women in Poland has been grounded primarily within the historical profession, but it has also arisen from the fields of political science and sociology, where researchers have been engaged in probing the experiences of post-Communist and transitional economies. See: Walczewska, *Damy, rycerze i feministki*.

collection entitled *Women in Polish Society*, and a few assorted articles, there are no other English-language explorations into the history of women in the Polish lands.²⁵

This chapter, then, represents a much-needed beginning.²⁶

Toward the Ideal Citizen: The Sanacja-Era Mother-Pole

As one scholar has suggested, women of the partition period were bestowed with an “honourary citizenship”: only once the state had ceased to exist, only when citizenship became legally and functionally meaningless and the most burdensome, did women qualify for it. It was during this nineteenth-century period that the nationally committed, chaste, modest and Polish-Catholic woman became the model for all women in partitioned Poland to emulate; it was during this period that “all” women became a nameless *Matka-Polka* (Mother-Pole, or Mother-Polish Woman).²⁷ Just as the Virgin Mary had watched over the Polish nation and protected it (as she had apparently proven during the Polish war against the Swedes in the mid- seventeenth century, and as she again showed during the Battle of Warsaw in August 1920), so Polish women, Mary’s symbolic successors on Earth, were called upon to fulfill their obligations to the nation. As historian Bianka Pietrow-Ennker states, Mother-Pole was “entrusted with the task of caring for the smallest unit of the nation, the family, and seeing that it had Christian values instilled in it.”²⁸

²⁵ *Women in Polish Society* (1992) is an extremely uneven work, both in terms of the quality of the research and the writing, and serves merely to provide glimpses of possibility. Its area of concentration, moreover, is on the nineteenth-century partition period. The other exception is a recent article by Robert Ponichtera on women’s activism in partitioned Poland to 1921: Ponichtera, “Feminists, Nationalists, and Soldiers”, pp. 16-31.

²⁶ The footnotes in this chapter include many detailed references to sources and potential topics for future research. The records of the Ministry of Public Health, for example, suggest many particularly useful avenues for further research. Possible topics include: venereal disease, prostitution, the white slave trade and the train station missions, eugenics, the women’s police, birth control, and abortion. The Ministry of Public Health papers are located at the Archive of Recent Documents. For a (very pro-Communist) history of the Ministry, see: BN-PK, Papiery Edwarda Chwalewika, File III.10.502, “Pro Memoria”, 1948.

²⁷ Walczewska, *Damy, rycerze i feministiki*, pp. 44 and 46.

²⁸ Bianka Pietrow-Ennker, “Women in Polish Society”, in Jaworski and Pietrow-Ennker, eds., *Women in Polish Society*, p. 1. Literary critic Maria Janion has shown that Polish women’s devoted commitment to

Nineteenth-century patterns of commitment and expectations of activism did not simply fade away once a new political reality developed. Chapter One introduced the notion that women in independent Poland were burdened with a model of citizenship and femininity which was based on a “terrible perfection”.²⁹ Women of the Second Republic were warned not to assume that formal independence meant they could adopt a disinterested attitude toward the nation or that they could embrace what some referred to as a frivolous dance hall culture. Criticisms of post-independence women’s choices and expressions, as we have seen, were made by a number of prominent cultural and political commentators of the period.

Instead, with independence came a new kind of responsibility for women.³⁰ The socialist Senator, lawyer and activist, Stanisław Posner (1868-1930), issued an appeal to women that was typical of the time. Posner wrote in the voice of a mother speaking to her son, who was going off to the front. The mother wrote: “Even though I am your mother, I am also a citizen of this state. I love our fatherland. Your responsibility is at the same time my responsibility.”³¹ Posner appealed to women’s duty to support their men, who were, in turn, morally obliged to fight for Poland. But he also appealed to women specifically as citizens, and this identification of women as citizens – as different but equal to men – was made from the earliest days of independence. It was this notion

the nation and their selfless embrace of their nationalist mission is reflected in the Polish romanticist oeuvre, which portrays women as devoted servants of the nationalist cause, fighting alongside men for the dignity and honour of Poland. See: Maria Janion, *Kobieta i duch inności* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sic!, 1996), p. 97.

²⁹ See: Chapter 1, p. 55.

³⁰ See, for example, Aleksander Szczęsny, “Naród i rodzina”, *Bluszcz* Nr. 14 (6 April 1918), pp. 105-106; Dr. Władysław Chodecki, “Małżeństwo i wojna”, *Bluszcz* Nrs. 33-34 (17/24 August 1918), p. 242; Kazimiera Neronowiczowa, “Nowe prawa- Nowe obowiązki”, *Bluszcz* Nr. 52 (28 December 1918), p. 391; and Dr. E.R. “Cel pracy kobiecej”, *Bluszcz* Nr. 1 (15 October 1921), p. 2.

³¹ A-BUW, Manuscript 1468, File 9, tom I: Twórczość publicystyczna, artykuły i odczyty Stanisława Posnera, “Bohaterki” (Warsaw: 1920). Posner wrote for *The Worker (Robotnik)* under the pseudonyms *Henry Bezmaski* (Henry Without-a-Mask) and *Prosper*. For another example of this kind of an appeal, see: BN-PK, Ossolineum Manuscripts, File 13491/III, mf. 52665, *Odezwy, zarządzenia, komunikaty polityczne, pisma ulotne różnych organizacji politycznych z lat 1914-1929*, p. 317.

of “different but equal” which women like Moraczewska embraced in the post-independence period.

There was little question at the war’s end that women should and would become fully enfranchised citizens. Teodora Męczkowska was an early advocate of women’s suffrage and was instrumental in establishing the Central Political Committee for the Equality of Women (*Centralny Komitet Polityczny Równouprawnienia Kobiet Polskich*) in January of 1918. This group had approached the Lublin Government, which seized power briefly after the end of the Great War, with a demand for women’s full political equality.³² On 28 November 1918, Piłsudski issued a proclamation of support for women’s political equality. Women’s full enfranchisement was later enshrined in the March Constitution of 1921, which granted suffrage to men and women over the age of 21 for the Sejm, and over the age of 30 for the Senate. It guaranteed the equality of all citizens of the Republic, regardless of sex, religion, ethnicity or class.³³ Women’s suffrage came to the Polish context with relative ease, as many argued that women had, after all, proven their national commitment time and again during the partitions.

Women’s activism in the earliest years of the Second Republic was focused on making women into better citizens, into the kinds of citizens that a newly independent Poland, plagued as it was by a whole host of serious problems, needed. One important women’s group of the early independence period was the *Electoral Committee of Progressive Women (Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet Postępowych)*. This group, which included some women from the above-mentioned Political Committee for the Equality of Women, hoped to attract to its ranks all those women who were “nourished by the spirit

³² The other women who were a part of this Committee included: Dr. J. Budzińska-Tylicka (President), M. Iwaszkiewiczowa, and M. Chmieleńska. Męczkowska served as the Vice-President. The Committee was disbanded on 13 April 1919, as the members felt their goals had been reached. See: Męczkowska, *50 lat pracy w organizacjach kobiecych*, pp. 129-134.

³³ On the meaning of suffrage rights in the Polish context, see: Walczewska, *Damy, rycerze i feministki*, pp. 53 and 60-64. Articles 12, 13 and 96 of the March 1921 Constitution guaranteed women’s political

of citizenship” and who wished to devote their time to social and political work.³⁴ One author in the group’s journal, *Woman in the Sejm (Kobieta w Sejmie)* wrote boldly: “Let us stop being some kind of national parasite, white Negroes of foreign imperialists...”. This author further affirmed that the women of Poland, grouped in this organization, stood behind Piłsudski and his efforts to build the Poland of tomorrow.³⁵ Another author embraced the potential for further activism that independence promised: “Woman-mother, woman-wife – has become, finally, woman-citizen!”³⁶

This was the environment in which Moraczewska had been nourished and out of which, as we shall see, the pro-Sanacja women’s activism of the later 1920s grew. After the struggles of the partition era, the Great War and the border wars, a new vista presented itself. Between 1921 and the next great caesura in the state – the May coup – the Mother-Pole trope continued to function and encouraged women to make good on the dreams and promises of independence, to concentrate on developing economic and cultural strength and shaking off the partition era.³⁷ But women’s groups by and large lacked a single pressing issue around which to mobilize.

A new opportunity for women emerged in May of 1926 when Piłsudski launched his successful coup and announced the need for moral rebirth. The Sanacja-era Mother-Pole was born. This was a decidedly modern Mother-Pole: like Moraczewska, she was a

rights. These rights were renewed in 1928 and 1931. See: Chyra-Rolicz, “Kościół Katolicki a ruch kobiecy przed 1939 rokiem”, p. 154.

³⁴ See: Editors, n.t., *Kobieta w Sejmie* Nr. 1 (10 January 1919). The group’s Declaration Statement, drawn up in December of 1918, is reprinted in this issue, on pp. 1-2. The paper was edited by Wacława Kiślańska and was published by Marja Chmieleńska. Contributors included Jadwiga Jahołowska, X.G., and Władysława Weychert-Szymanowska. The group had clear socialist sympathies.

³⁵ n.a., “Sami—”, *Kobieta w Sejmie* Nr. 1 (10 January 1919), p. 3.

³⁶ X.G., “O kobiecie-obywatelce”, *Kobieta w Sejmie* Nr. 3 (25 January 1919), p. 2.

³⁷ For an excellent overview of women’s activism during the first decade of independence, see: Ludwik Hass, “Aktywność wyborcza kobiet w pierwszym dziesięcioleciu Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej”, in *Kobieta i świat polityki w niepodległej Polsce 1918-1939*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996), pp. 70-99. A very good introduction to the political rights of women in the Second Republic is offered in: Michał Śliwa, “Kobiety w parlamencie Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej”, in *Kobieta i świat polityki w niepodległej Polsce 1918-1939*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1996), pp. 53-69.

woman of the intelligentsia, politically engaged, nationally committed, devoted to Poland and to Piłsudski, and ready to seize the moment and work for the rebirth of the nation. She believed that women had a duty to leave the private sphere and to participate actively in building the better tomorrow. The call for Sanacja resonated so powerfully with women like Moraczewska precisely because it used long-standing tropes and ideas, nursed during the long period of partitions, about what a nationally conscious and committed Polish woman should do for her nation. The Sanacja had proclaimed itself to be about harnessing all the moral forces of the nation to work for a better and brighter tomorrow. The new Mother-Pole was suited ideally to this task.

Right from the inception of the Second Republic, the argument was made that women's contribution to the nation were so valuable precisely because women were different from men and possessed a special capacity to inject morality into politics. As one writer in the influential and popular middle-class women's magazine *Ivy* (*Bluszcz*) stated, women brought an "ethical element to political struggles."³⁸ Owing to the fact that women were believed to be "naturally" more moral, their participation in the public life of the nation, it was argued, would exert a valuable influence on the entire society and would benefit the nation as a whole. This argument forms the cornerstone of what

³⁸ The 20 July 1918 and 23 November 1918 issues of *Ivy* deal extensively with women's political rights. *Ivy* was established in 1865 under the editorship of Maria Ilnicka. The symbolism which the ivy plant offered was especially powerful in the days following the failed January Uprising of 1863/64. Just like the hope for Polish independence, the ivy plant was perennially green and alive, and always able to recover easily from destruction. The journal *Ivy* was conceived of as a link between women in all three partitioned areas. See: Sokół, *Prasa kobieca*, p. 34. After the Great War, *Ivy* was reformed by the National Organization of Polish Women. See: Katarzyna Sierakowska, "Matka i dziecko w życiu codziennym rodziny inteligenckiej w Polsce międzywojennej – wzorce stare i nowe", in *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego: Wiek XIX i XX*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz (Warsaw: DiG, 1997), p. 106. For an interesting 20-page report, written by an unnamed author, about the "Bluszcz" publishing house (the largest publishing house for women in Poland), see: Archives of the Capital City and the Voivodship of Warsaw (*Archiwum Miasta Stołecznego i Województwa Warszawy*, hereafter AMSiWW), Towarzystwo Wydawnicze Bluszcz, 1936. The report is a critical look at the various magazines that the Bluszcz publishing house put out, including *Ivy* (*Bluszcz*), *Woman in the World and at Home* (*Kobieta w Świecie i Domu*), *Practical Lady* (*Praktyczna Pani*), *I Will Do It* (*Ja to Zrobię*) and *Child and Mother* (*Dziecko i Matka*). The most striking aspect of this report is the author's hostility to single women and to the suggestion that their "interests" should be protected.

historians of the west European and the North American contexts have called the first round of women's feminist activism: a "maternal feminism".³⁹ With Piłsudski's May 1926 coup and the call to put the public house in order, women in Poland were handed an opportunity to realize the basic tenets of a maternal feminism. Women like Moraczewska advocated the idea that women's influence and her experiences in the private domain could prove especially useful in affecting a so-called moral revolution of the wider society.

One risks imprudence in pronouncing women, as an undifferentiated group, as having possessed a special relationship to or view of the Sanacja just because they were women. One may nevertheless propose cautiously and with qualification that the potential represented by the Sanacja and that the discourses generated by it, resonated in a particularly forceful way with women who began from the assumption that, as women, morality was their preserve. Finally, after years of a brutally difficult process of adjustment to independence, a moral revolution had been proclaimed. Women embraced this notion and gave their own meaning to the term moral revolution. They manipulated the imprecise language and the flexible and malleable goals of the coup – the imponderables to which Piłsudski had referred – and transformed them to complement their own goal of creating citizen-minded women. The Sanacja served as a catalyst that catapulted some women into intense forms of public activism.

³⁹ The western literature which understands this social activism in these terms is rich. See, for example, Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*, passim. For a general discussion of the western women's rights movement before and after the Great War, see: Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, passim.

The Women's Democratic Election Committee (*Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet*), 1927-1928

Moraczewska's first concrete effort in the post-coup period to serve, as she called it, the "ideology of Marshal Piłsudski"⁴⁰ and to give meaning to the Sanacja occurred in the form of the Women's Democratic Election Committee. This organization was established in 1927 to rally support for the pro-Sanacja ticket in the 1928 elections, the first post-coup elections. In 1927 Moraczewska had come out of her own period of semi-retirement as it were, and was elected Chair of the Women's League in February of 1927.⁴¹ Shortly thereafter, Moraczewska, as part of the Women's League, began organizing the Election Committee, which was formally created as an independent organization on 16 December 1927 on Warsaw's Chmielna Street. Moraczewska was the Committee's President.⁴²

At this time, Moraczewska, along with her husband Jędrzej, left the Polish Socialist Party, which had recently come out against Piłsudski and the May coup and felt itself to have been betrayed by Piłsudski.⁴³ Though Moraczewska was prepared to state openly how regrettable it was that blood had been shed in May of 1926, she nevertheless emphasized that she and many like her believed it to have been necessary to shake Poland from its slumber, and she declared her unqualified support for Piłsudski and for the Sanacja cause. Through the Women's Democratic Election Committee, Moraczewska would show just how much she believed in Piłsudski and the Sanacja cause.

⁴⁰ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 131, "Regulamin Demokratycznego Komitetu Wyborczego Kobiet Polskich", p. 35.

⁴¹ AAN, Zespół Ligi Kobiet Polskich, File 27, Protokół, 8 December 1927, Warsaw.

⁴² BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 131, *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet*, "Deklaracja Ideowa", p. 32, and see also p. 35/6c.

⁴³ Jędrzej was expelled from the PPS in September of 1927 for refusing to resign from Piłsudski's cabinet. At that time, Jędrzejewicz was the Minister of Public Works. The PPS's attitude towards Piłsudski became increasingly harsh from the spring of 1927. In October of 1928, 10 out of 63 PPS Sejm deputies split from the main PPS party and formed the PPS-Revolutionary Fraction, which supported the BBWR.

One year after the coup, Moraczewska expressed pleasure in the fact that a spirit of reform, inaugurated in May 1926, continued to exist, but she also lamented the fact that many reform initiatives were coming from “the top”. Moraczewska echoed Maria Dąbrowska’s sentiments when she stated that Piłsudski could not be expected to “do everything” for Poland. She offered the following estimation of Poland:

In our collective psyche there lies a need for some ‘Deus ex machina’ that must work and decide for us. We are capable only of rejoicing or of despairing, or of swinging from one extreme to the other. There exists no trace of either enduring will or perseverance in our collective action.⁴⁴

Moraczewska hoped that, with an enthusiasm for work born of the Sanacja, she could change this sad estimation. By 1927, it remained unclear for what exactly – other than a focus on citizen activism, the primacy of the state, and a commitment to changing the Constitution to reflect a stronger Executive – the Sanacja stood. For Moraczewska, it was clear that the time had come to put out a call for a collective effort that would build a new cultural and political climate. It was time for the citizenry to seize the initiative and make the most of the opportunity which Piłsudski had presented them. It was time for women in particular to seize, at long last, the rights which independence had granted them and to use them for the good of Poland. Moraczewska believed that the political Sanacja had created an ideal opportunity for women to enter fully into the political process, and indeed, to shape it.⁴⁵

The signatories of the inaugural declaration statement of the Women’s Democratic Election Committee were all prominent and well-established activists in the Second Republic. They included the following women: Moraczewska as President, Sylwia Bujak Boguska, Dr. Zofja Daszyńska-Golińska, Dr. Bronisława Dłuska, Hanna

Moraczewski supported this break-away party. See: Rothschild, *Piłsudski’s Coup d’état*, pp. 255-256 and 268.

⁴⁴ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 36, “Przemówienie Z. Moraczewskiej na zjeździe delegatek Komitetu Wyborczego Kobiety, który powołał do życia ZPOK”, Warsaw, 25 March 1927, p. 30.

Hubicka, Halina Chełmicka-Jaroszewiczowa, [Konarzewska], Teodora Męczkowska, Henryka Pawlewska, Leonja Sas-Kulczycka, Natalja Steinowa, Irena Szydłowska, Eugenja Waśniewska, Dora Wisznicka, and Dr. Kazimiera Żuławska.⁴⁶

The Election Committee was comprised of two main sections: the Presidium and the General Committee. The Presidium included sixteen elected delegates of those women's organizations who, as a group, had declared their collective wish to join the Women's Democratic Election Committee. The General Committee was comprised of individual members from those organizations which had declared their full support for the Election Committee; the numbers in the General Committee were unlimited. The Committee was funded by voluntary contributions of members, as well as by various fund-raising efforts.⁴⁷ Very quickly, the Election Committee grew to become a large and influential women's organization, and it served as the immediate precursor to the Women's Union for Citizenship Work.

The Election Committee was clear about the fact that it was "not a political party, or a union of parties".⁴⁸ Rather, the Committee was organized to support Piłsudski's recently formed supra-party organization, the Non-Party Bloc for Cooperation with the Government, the BBWR, and its candidates to the Sejm and the Senate in the March 1928 elections.⁴⁹ The BBWR was comprised of a broad assortment of politicians from all possible political perspectives, including many conservatives, and it represented powerful economic interests.⁵⁰ The idea of the BBWR was, quite simply, that pro-Piłsudski

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 31.

⁴⁶ Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet, "Deklaracja Ideowa", p. 32. For biographical information on each of these women, see: Wawrzykowska-Wierciochowa, *Nie po kwiatach*, passim. Most of these women had some history of involvement in the pre-war socialist movement.

⁴⁷ These sixteen persons were: the chairwoman, four vice-chairwomen, four secretaries, one treasurer, three clerks of the propaganda division, and three clerks of the technical division. See: "Regulamin Demokratycznego Komitetu Wyborczego Kobiet Polskich", p. 35.

⁴⁸ Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet, "Deklaracja Ideowa", p. 32.

⁴⁹ Ibid. On the elections, see: Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, ch. 17.

⁵⁰ On the BBWR, see: Jerzy Halbersztadt, "Józef Piłsudski i jego współpracownicy wobec wyborów parlamentarnych w latach 1926-1928: Z badań nad genezą BBWR", *Dzieje Najnowsze* XVI: I (1984): 3-34.

members of other parties would withdraw from those parties and join instead a single and potentially powerful grouping. By bringing together all those who were committed to “fixing Poland”, the BBWR promised to offer a way out of the parliamentary dead-lock which had defined politics in the Second Republic and against which the coup had been waged.

The 1928 elections were also widely regarded as an extremely important public verdict on Piłsudski’s actions, as an attempt to lend an air of legality to a coup that was, of course, technically irreconcilable with the principles of democratic government. The 1928 elections were thus planned according to the rules of the election Act of July, 1922.⁵¹ Sanacja rhetoric billed the 1928 elections as an opportunity for Poland to “save itself” and for the state to “strengthen” itself by providing Piłsudski and his associates with a mandate to continue healing Poland. Sanacja propaganda depicted the elections as an opportunity to deal a final blow to the ways of the previous corrupt and volatile Parliaments and to megalomaniacal parliamentarians, as well as a chance to inaugurate an era of concerted state-building.⁵²

The BBWR’s creator and President, Walery Sławek, himself explained that the BBWR and the upcoming elections presented the hope of reversing the “national moral

Historian Andrzej Chojnowski argues that the BBWR fulfilled various contradictory functions; it both was and was not a political party. See: Chojnowski, *Piłsudczycy u władzy*, pp. 245-252. The Declaration Statement of the BBWR is reprinted in *ibid.*, pp. 253-255. The BBWR’s Declaration is also reprinted as: “Deklaracja Bezpartyjnego Bloku Współpracy z Rządem Marszałka Piłsudskiego”, in: Rudnicki and Wróbel, eds., *Druga Rzeczpospolita*, pp. 198-201. For a brief English-language look into the founding of the BBWR, see: Joseph Rothschild, “A Chapter in Polish Politics of the 1920s”, in *Studies in Polish Civilization*, ed. Damian S. Wandycz (NY: The Institute of East Central Europe, Columbia University, and the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, 1966), pp. 99-116. For a discussion of the relationship between Piłsudski and the conservatives (who entered the BBWR), see: Barbara Poznańska, “Klasy posiadające – burżuazja i ziemiaństwo – wobec przewrotu majowego 1926 r. i jego konsekwencji politycznych i społecznych”, *Dzieje Najnowsze* 10: 2 (1978): 65-75. The key moment of rapprochement between Piłsudski and the conservatives (including aristocrats, agrarian magnates and industrialists) occurred on 25 October 1926 at Nieśwież, the Radziwiłł family estate. Many took this meeting as a definitive statement by Piłsudski that his aim was to maintain the economic and social status quo. Nieśwież has also been understood as an attempt by Piłsudski to co-opt a part of the right away from the National Democrats. See: Rothschild, *Piłsudski’s Coup d’etat*, p. 236. On the September 1927 meeting between the conservatives and the Piłsudski camp at Dzików, see: *ibid.*, pp. 265-266.

insanity" that had come to define life in the Second Republic. The "war-time cataclysms" and the general havoc that the previous decades had exerted on the Polish people needed to be counteracted and democracy built. The BBWR was to be an organization which, by its very structure and purpose, would help to restore health to the Polish organism.⁵³ Only by returning a resounding vote for the Piłsudski-ite political grouping, the Sanacja camp preached, would these goals be achieved.

In pursuing these ideals, women played an important role. The purpose of the Women's Democratic Election Committee was to help realize these goals, and its specific strategy was to rally support for Piłsudski's ticket in the elections.⁵⁴ Election Committee women would themselves also run for positions in the new government. Moraczewska explained:

The Fatherland needs us again.... There is something in the air that is functioning like a wake-up call – and like a wake-up call – it awakens.. And so we are ready, happy, capable of work, full of enthusiasm and will....⁵⁵

The first postulate of the group's founding statement declared the organization's commitment to "the good of the state, as a whole". Poland was conceptualized as an organic entity that required protection at all costs, and which necessarily took precedence over sectarian interests of any nature. The second postulate established a clear commitment to a "true democracy" that guaranteed to everyone equal rights and responsibilities. The third postulate called for the revision of the constitution of 1921, which, it was well known, the Piłsudski-ites were eager to do.⁵⁶ The first step towards

⁵¹ Groth, "Proportional Representation", p. 111.

⁵² Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet, "Deklaracja Ideowa", p. 32.

⁵³ AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 71/I-81, mf. 2314/9, "Z założeń programowych B.B.[W.R.]. Wyjątki z mowy Płk. Sławka na posiedzeniu Klubu B.B.", 23 June 1928.

⁵⁴ Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet, "Deklaracja Ideowa", p. 32.

⁵⁵ AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 71/III-6, mf. 1855/6, Zofia Moraczewska, *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet i jego praca w r. 1928 i Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet. Rozdział I: Demokratyczny Komitet i jego praca w r. 1928.*

⁵⁶ Articles in the press were filled with analyses of constitutional reform. See, for example: Kazimierz Dagnan, "Majowe przewroty w Polsce. Podobieństwa i różnice", *Nowa Sprawa Robotnicza* Nr. 4 (20 June

reforming the March 1921 Constitution was taken by the post-coup camp on 2 August 1926 and was called the August Amendment. The main change which the amendment introduced was an increase to the powers of the President.⁵⁷ The Piłsudski-ites believed, and the Election Committee echoed the belief, that the very process of working on a revised constitutional document would go some distance towards educating the public in state matters and would bring people towards a much-lauded political and social maturity.⁵⁸

The fourth postulate outlined in the Election Committee's declaration statement affirmed a commitment to the "healing of parliamentary life" and an end to political corruption: "...only people incapable of compromising their honour, both in public life and in private life, can stand on guard for the honour and good of the state."⁵⁹ To that end, the Propaganda Division of the Election Committee took for itself the task of "ideological agitation". The Propaganda Division organized educational courses and lectures, and established what they called a "flying women's battalion" to travel around Poland and agitate for the BBWR candidates in the election and to encourage the development of active and useful citizenship. This strategy was organized and carried out at a variety of levels across Poland, in large and small urban centres, in rural regions and in urban neighbourhoods. The intention was to cover as many electoral districts and to reach as many voters as possible.⁶⁰

1926), pp. 2-3. This article is especially interesting for presenting a rich comparison between the contemporary period and the eve of the partitions in the late eighteenth century.

⁵⁷ Specifically, the August Amendment allowed the President to dissolve the Legislature upon the recommendation of the Cabinet, and to use a suspensive veto over legislation. See: Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 223-226; and AAN, Zespół Bezpartyjnego Bloku Współpracy z Rządem (hereafter BBWR), File 24, Poster of the BBWR addressed to "Poles", dated 22 February 1929, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet, "Deklaracja Ideowa", p. 32. Once the permanent constitution was passed in 1935, the Women's Union collected all the articles which pertained to women and published them as: Grażyna Szmurłowa, Halina Siemieńska and Halina Alchimowicz, *Kobieta w prawie publicznym i prywatnym. Zbiór przepisów obowiązujących w Polsce* (Warsaw: ZPOK, Wydział Spraw Kobietych, Sekcja Prawna, 1937).

⁵⁹ Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet, "Deklaracja Ideowa", p. 32.

⁶⁰ "Regulamin Demokratycznego Komitetu Wyborczego Kobiet Polskich", p. 35.

These four postulates could have applied to a wide variety of pro-Piłsudski groups, and certainly members of the Society for Moral Rebirth would have been in general agreement with the ideas outlined by the Women's Democratic Election Committee. The Election Committee was markedly different from other pro-Sanacja groups, however, and not just because it was comprised of women. The Election Committee stood apart for popularizing the notion that women were absolutely vital to the process of Sanacja and reform in Poland.

Moraczewska was a vocal advocate of the need for women's activism, not just in service to justice and equality, but in pursuit of a better nation. She pointed to the great strides that women's groups had made in, as she stated, "cleaning the moral atmosphere, healing the wounds inflicted by postwar circumstances, battling... egoism, greed, corruption, theft, darkness, filth and poverty of every variety..."⁶¹ Women, Moraczewska reasoned, were key to creating a better future; they were an instrumental – and yet neglected – part of the solution to the nation's ills.

The Election Committee existed to popularize what women could do (and have done) for the nation, especially during a time when "moral revolution" was in the air. Women would themselves have to be educated for a more devoted commitment to the nation. To that end, in addition to the above-mentioned postulates, the Election Committee called simply and decisively for:

The education of a new woman, conscious of her responsibilities and her rights of citizenship ... Only a woman – a citizen of the state with full rights – will raise good citizens of the state."⁶²

Women, the Committee believed, wanted to contribute to building Poland, and they had important skills to offer. Moreover, Poland could not afford to neglect women, for after all, as the Committee openly stated, women raised children. It was vitally important,

⁶¹ "Przemówienie Z. Moraczewskiej na zjeździe delegatek Komitetu Wyborczego Kobietych", 25 March 1927, p. 31.

therefore, to target women explicitly for full inclusion into the political life of the nation.⁶³

The Committee approached their goals pragmatically. Absolutely crucial to making good female citizens, the Committee argued, was the removal of all vestiges of legal and cultural discrimination against women.⁶⁴ The Committee's declaration statement pledged categorical support for women's equality, as outlined in sections 12, 96 and 102 of the constitution. The statement also advocated guarantees for women's fully equal legal status, equal pay for equal work, the protection of women's jobs, the establishment of a minimum wage for women, protection for mothers and children, better access to education for women, support for temperance, and a commitment to battling prostitution and all diseases which "degenerate the race".⁶⁵ They also called for work for the unemployed, affordable housing, a price decrease for all essential items, an end to inflation, provisions for the care of the elderly and of invalids, free schooling, uniformity in the school system, and lastly, a commitment to physical education.⁶⁶ In addition to going out into the community to advocate these causes, the Committee's Sejm members planned to advocate these goals within Parliament.

This combination of interests – inserting themselves into the centre of the formal political process, working with the BBWR and supporting the official Sanacja political agenda on the one hand, and on the other, emphasizing rather traditional concerns about women's health and welfare and subscribing to the idea that systemic discrimination against women exists – suggests an interesting conceptualization of the relationship between politics, morality, and culture. The official Sanacja had never made any of these

⁶² BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 127, n.a., "Deklaracja", n.d.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ For a good analysis of women's legal status in the Republic, see: Pietrzak, "Sytuacja prawna kobiet", pp. 33-52. Pietrzak includes a good discussion of the laws in partitioned Poland as well.

issues a priority, and never pretended to care specifically or especially about women's issues. Nevertheless, Moraczewska and the women with whom she worked linked these emphases to the wider Sanacja project and argued convincingly that the Sanacja most certainly did include these kinds of questions; it just needed women to persuade them that this was so.

Moraczewska described this initiative that she and other women were expressing through the Election Committee as a deepening of the spirit of reform that had taken root since May 1926 and as an effort to mobilize "all the wholesome forces of Polish society" that would affect the much talked-about "rebirth" of the nation.⁶⁷ The Women's Committee manipulated the malleable language and direction of the Sanacja and the idea of moral reform; in the process, they raised the stakes on the Sanacja. If the Sanacja were really a movement about moral reform, about creating a new kind of committed citizen, then women and the issues which mattered to them could not be left out. Women carved out a space for themselves within the larger Sanacja project and they argued unapologetically that the Sanacja needed them.⁶⁸

The March 1928 Elections

The approach which Election Committee branches took in selling themselves and the Sanacja cause to voters reveals a great deal about how the group conceived of itself, as a women's group and as a nationalist organization, and about the wider political climate in Poland. The Committee's election posters placed the language of the Sanacja front and centre. References to a general and pervasive improvement in "moral feeling"

⁶⁵ Moraczewska, *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet i jego praca w r. 1928 i Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet. Rozdział I: Demokratyczny Komitet i jego praca w r. 1928*. See also: *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet*, "Deklaracja Ideowa", p. 32.

⁶⁶ *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet*, "Deklaracja Ideowa", p. 32.

⁶⁷ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 127, n.a., "Deklaracja", n.d.; and *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet*, "Deklaracja Ideowa", p. 32. The first declaration statement is an earlier draft of the final version.

across the country since May of 1926 were made proudly as the Committee linked their own existence to Piłsudski's Sanacja.⁶⁹ The next parliament, a poster from the Zakopane Committee in southern Poland stated, would either make Poland healthy again, or it would "push it once again into the abyss of poverty, hatred and civil war..." Women had a responsibility to keep Poland from falling into this abyss. This Zakopane poster also reminded voters that Poland found itself ahead of many west European countries for providing women with suffrage rights and full constitutional equality, and for encouraging them to get actively involved in the political process.⁷⁰

By and large, the Election Committee played it safe and made rather traditional appeals to women as wives and mothers – and Christian wives and mothers at that. This strategy was consistent with what the organization's members themselves believed. These were not women who wanted to fundamentally transform relations between the sexes, or who wanted to be "liberated from womanhood". These were women who espoused a maternal feminist justification for their public activism. They saw in the Sanacja an opportunity to advance their own claims and goals while simultaneously working towards the good of Poland.

One election poster created by the Bydgoszcz branch of the Election Committee detailed the group's support for Piłsudski's idea of "fixing the Republic", and then moved quickly to state that women's concerns around maternity, child care and employment rights formed a basic component of this nation-wide agenda. They tempered the potentially radical quality of these assertions and reiterated the group's commitment to

⁶⁸ "Przemówienie Z. Moraczewskiej na zjeździe delegatek Komitetu Wyborczego Kobietych", 25 March 1927, p. 31. .

⁶⁹ See, for example, BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 136, "Odezwy Wyborcze Demokratycznego Komitetu Wyborczego Kobiet Polskich", 1928, p. 23. More posters from the 1928 elections are found in: AAN, Zespół Bezpartyjnego Bloku Współpracy z Rządem, File 33, mf. 31084.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

“the principles of ethical Christianity in private and in public life...”⁷¹ Another poster, from the Lublin Committee, called motherhood “women’s most sublime calling”, and argued that, as such, motherhood deserved to be protected by the government.⁷² A poster from Płock reminded citizens how important their votes were for the nation: “the strength of the fatherland rests on the family and the family rests on the woman.”⁷³ Yet another poster, one that was the result of a joint effort by various provincial Election Committee groups, simply encouraged women to come out from “the shadows of private life” and to realize how much Poland needed them to work devotedly and publicly for the nation.⁷⁴

As an avidly pro-Sanacja group, the Women’s Election Committee was forced, ironically, to invoke the Sanacja cautiously and to work assiduously at subverting the negative stereotypes which dogged the Sanacja camp generally. The most resonant stereotype was of the Sanacja and all its supporters as a pernicious group of godless Bolsheviks, Jews and Masons.⁷⁵ One opposition election poster laid out the sides in the issue rather clearly: “Who wants to join the Masons in the battle with the Catholic religion? Who wants civil marriages, divorces, baptisms without a priest?”⁷⁶

These criticisms of the post-May grouping were made by the nationalist-right generally. The nationalist-right was represented in the 1928 elections by the Catholic National bloc; the bloc would formally adopt the name the National Party (*Stronnictwo*

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 3. See also p. 40 for a poster from Warsaw which raises similar points.

⁷² Ibid., p. 24.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 37. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁴ See, for example, a poster published by the Women’s League and addressed to “Female Polish Citizens”. The poster is dated [1927]. See AAN, Zespół Ligi Kobiet Polskich, File 29.

⁷⁵ For a critique of Catholic political parties which manipulated Catholicism to serve their political ends, see: Adam Krzyżanowski, *Dlaczego kandyduję z listy Nr. 1, Bezpartyjnego Bloku Współpracy z Rządem?* (Kraków: BBWR, n.d.), esp. pp. 8-9 and 30. For a discussion of the attitudes of the Catholic Church in the Lublin region towards the 1928 elections, see: Konrad Sadkowski, “Church, Nation and State in Poland: Catholicism and National identity Formation in the Lublin Region, 1918-1939”, Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Michigan, 1995, pp. 171-190. Sadkowski notes that some priests of the Lublin region targeted women voters specifically in the 1928 elections. See pp. 180-181.

⁷⁶ AAN, Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, File 199, “Wybory do Sejmu, 1928”.

Narodowe, SN) after the 1928 elections.⁷⁷ Women from within the nationalist-right were active in these elections as well. While the Sanacja inspired a kind of women's activism which pledged allegiance to the notion of a moral revolution and a nation-wide cleansing, as has been argued here, it also sparked a reaction against the Sanacja. Some women from the nationalist-right camp believed that, "as women", they possessed a moral responsibility to combat the Sanacja and to reclaim the Matka-Polka trope for a narrow Catholicism. This was the case, for example, with the National Organization of Women (*Narodowa Organizacja Kobiet*), which was founded in 1919 under the auspices of the National Democrats. It was a political, social and cultural group for women who believed that Polish national life needed to be built on Catholic principles and ideals of citizenship. With the advent of the Sanacja period and the emergence of a powerful pro-Sanacja women's activism, the National Organization of Women was compelled to incorporate a far more politically conscious component into its mandate.⁷⁸

In order to protect their families and their conception of what was valuable in their nation, the National Organization of Women argued that the responsibility lay with women to raise the idea of citizen activism to new heights and to express new levels of

⁷⁷ The Catholic National bloc was comprised of the People's National Union, the Christian Nationalists, and some Christian Democrats. See: Groth, "Polish Elections", p. 654; and Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, pp. 241-242.

⁷⁸ The group's statute, dated Warsaw, 1931, was signed by the following women: Józefa Szebeko, Zofia Cichocka, M.G. Sobańska, Aniela Zdanowska, and Stefanja Olszowska. For a statement of what the National Organization of Women did and how it was organized, see: AAN, Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, File 291, *Narodowa Organizacja Kobiet* [1922]. The Organization had 43,000 members in 200 branches across Poland in 1926. See also: "Zjazd Narodowej Organizacji Kobiet", *Poufny Komunikat Informacyjny* Nr. 17 (Warsaw, 19 February 1929), in Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, *Komunikaty Informacyjne Komisariatu Rządu na m. st. Warszawę III: 1 (29 stycznia 1929 – 28 marca 1929)* (Warsaw: Centralne Archiwum Ministerstwa Wewnętrznych, 1993), pp. 176-177. See also: J.O., "Polski organizacje kobiece", *Ster* Nr. 11 (17 July 1926), p. 10. The National Organization of Women is mentioned in: Chyra-Rolicz, "Kościół Katolicki a ruch kobiecy przed 1939 rokiem", p. 157. For another example of this idea that Catholic-right-wing women had a duty to combat the Sanacja, see: Uczestnicy Djecejalnego Kongresu Eucharystycznego w Łodzi, "Rezolucje Djecejalnego Kongresu Eucharystycznego w Łodzi", *Rycerz Niepokalanej* Nr. 9 (September 1928), p. 259. A very good introduction to the National Organization of Women and to right-wing women's activism generally is provided in: Jakubowska, "Kobiety w świecie polityki Narodowej Demokracji", pp. 145-160. Catholic Action was another important anti-Sanacja force in the 1930s. See: n.a., "Kobieta w Akcji Katolickiej", *Szkola Czynu*, Nr. 4 (Poznań: Akcja Katolicka,

commitment and enthusiasm to the national cause.⁷⁹ As one regional representative of the group stated, it was largely in women's hands "whether Poland will be strong, powerful and Catholic."⁸⁰ Women had a responsibility to mould a new Catholic-Polish woman and to battle what another author stated was a mood that, since 1926, had allowed eastern influences, Jews and Masons to penetrate the pure Polish national organism.⁸¹

During the 1928 election campaign, the Chełm branch of the National Organization of Women reminded Catholic Polish women of their obligations to the nation and of the need to prevent "the belittling of church and fatherland". From their perspective, every vote for the BBWR ticket constituted a vote against Polish history and against the Polish future.⁸² Another opposition poster put out by the Catholic-National Bloc addressed itself specifically to Polish women and reminded them that it was a grievous sin to vote against the Catholic parties. The poster raised the issue of civil marriages and divorces: "A Civil marriage means an uncertain tomorrow for a wife, bad luck for a mother, misery for the child, and the break-up of the family."⁸³ A vote for the

1933). For an English-language analysis of Catholic Action, see: Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism*, pp. 38-39.

⁷⁹ BN-DŹS, Narodowa Organizacja Kobiet, Warsaw, File I O, Okólnik Nr. 14, Zarząd Główny, December 1929. These statements are taken from a speech given to the organization by Bishop Szlagowski and by the President of the group, Józefa Szebeko. The group's commitment to Christian ethics as the basis for private and public life, and as the BBWR as being contrary to these interests, are confirmed in a speech made by President Szebeko in May of 1935. See: BN-DŹS, File I O, N.O.K., Okólnik Nr. 19, p. 8.

⁸⁰ Tamta., "Kobieta w życiu narodu", *Hasło Polski* Nr. 1 (20 December 1936), p. 2. The paper was established with the sub-title *Czasopismo Poświęcone Sprawom Kobięcym* in Bielsko in 1934. It was published by the regional branch of the National Organization of Women and was edited by Zofia Zajączkowska.

⁸¹ S.W., "O wychowanie religijne i narodowe", *Hasło Polki* Nr. 9 (25 October 1937), p. 1. Another anti-Sanacja women's group was the Union of Rural Women's Sodality in Poland (*Związek Sodalicji Pań Wiejskich w Polsce*). This group emphasized repeatedly in their paper, *Mary's Manor (Dwór Marji)*, the extent to which Catholic belief was being threatened in contemporary Poland. See, for example: Ewa Hallerówna, "Uwagi", *Dwór Marji* Nr. 2 (May 1926), p. 10. *Dwór Marji* was published in Kraków as a quarterly, and was intended for internal consumption only. Just under 600 copies of the journal were published in each quarter. See: "Sprawozdanie Sekretariatu Związku Sodalicji Marjańskich Pań Wiejskich w Polsce za czas 23 May 1928 - 30 May 1930", *Dwór Marji* Nr. 4 (4 August 1930), pp. 3-4.

⁸² AAN, Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, File 205, Narodowa Organizacja Kobiet, Chełm, Election poster addressed to "Sisters-Poles", 1928.

⁸³ AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 103, Odezwy Wyborcze, 1928. Poster addressed to "Polish Women". The Catholic-Nationalist Bloc was list number 24. For an interesting appeal to voters by the Christian Democratic camp, see: n.a., "Obywatele! Rodacy!", *Przyszłość* Nr. 6 (5 February 1928), p. 1;

Number One ticket - for the BBWR - would amount to a vote for all of these disagreeable trends, the implication was. The political Sanacja, the BBWR, Piłsudski, and the women's groups which supported the Sanacja, were linked rhetorically to immorality and national decay.

Pro-Sanacja women's groups were eager to confront these allegations head-on and to convince voters that such accusations were simply false. An election poster in Katowice created by the Silesian Women's Democratic Election Committee made it clear that they, too, stood for a Christian Poland by addressing itself specifically to, "Woman-Mother of a Christian family; responsible for the future of the Polish nation and for maintaining clean moral goals...".⁸⁴ An Election Committee poster in Kalisz addressed "[Female] Poles who believe in God and are religious!" The Committee affirmed that the BBWR was full of "decent and practicing Catholics" committed to a moral path in life and made it clear that the Election Committee women objected to the assumption that "if you're not with us, you're against us." The poster went on to remind its audience that Piłsudski had orchestrated the Miracle of the Vistula, and that his anti-Bolshevism was beyond reproach. Join the movement, they stated, for "Decency, Clean Hands, and Intellect."⁸⁵ Another poster issued by the Democratic Election Committee stated that it was an outright lie that the Number One ticket (the BBWR) was "an enemy of the Catholic Church". Furthermore, this poster made reference to Piłsudski's "pogrom against the Bolsheviks" in 1920 to underscore the Piłsudski camp's commitment to anti-Bolshevism. In using the word pogrom, the appeal conveyed subtly an intolerance of Jews and affirmed a commitment to a Catholic Poland.⁸⁶ It was a lie, a poster from

and n.a., "Dążenia Polskiego Bloku Katolickiego", *Przyszłość* Nr. 8 (19 February 1928), pp. 1-2. *The Future (Przyszłość)* was published in Biała-Bielsko.

⁸⁴ Odezwy Wyborcze Demokratycznego Komitetu Wyborczego Kobiet Polskich, 1928, p. 10.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸⁶ AAN, Zespół Bezpartyjnego Bloku Współpracy z Rządem, File 33, mf.31084, Poster addressed to "Catholic Polish Women!", 1928.

Kielce stated, that the BBWR was full of godless Masons, for even the Pope had blessed Piłsudski.⁸⁷ The Lublin branch of the Democratic Election Committee went so far as to suggest that to denounce Piłsudski was not altogether different from bucking the authority of the Pope and the Polish Bishops, with whom Piłsudski had established good relations.⁸⁸

The Election Committee was critical of over-zealous and exclusionary Catholicism which contended that only explicitly Catholic groups were properly and sufficiently pious and moral and properly committed to Poland. The Election Committee itself was careful to maintain cordial relations with the Catholic Church and to depict itself as properly Catholic. The Catholic Church hierarchy, after all, continued to give its support to the Sanacja camp for the 1928 elections.⁸⁹ At the same time, the Election Committee tried to popularize the idea that Catholics (especially those associated with the National Democrats) did not have a monopoly on morality, and that women could in fact be good Poles, Catholics, wives and mothers and still support the Sanacja rather than the explicitly and narrowly Catholic parties.

What was remarkable about the Election Committee as a whole was that it advocated an expansive, complex and modern definition of citizenship. Within the confines of a femininity determined by notions of immutable gender difference and women's innate moral superiority, the Committee women advocated a comparatively progressive model of citizenship for women that demanded (and not just encouraged) public political activism. Women could only become complete if they embraced active

⁸⁷ *Odezwy Wyborcze Demokratycznego Komitetu Wyborczego Kobiet Polskich*, 1928. An Election Committee poster from Warsaw, contained in the same collection, also makes reference to the fact that Piłsudski has been blessed by the Pope. See also: BN-DŹS, File IA6c1, n.a., "W Imo prawdy", *Biuletyn Okręgowego Komitetu Wybor. BBWR Marszałka Piłsudskiego*, Nr. 2 (14 February 1928): 1 for a statement about how completely the Pope trusted that Piłsudski was committed to a Catholic Poland.

⁸⁸ AAN, Zespół Bezpartyjnego Bloku Współpracy z Rządem, File 33, mf.31084, Poster untitled, produced by the Democratic Election Committee of Lublin, February 1928.

⁸⁹ Chyra-Rolicz, "Kościół Katolicki a ruch kobiecy przed 1939 rokiem", p. 155; and Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, p. 250.

citizenship. As much as the Election Committees wanted the BBWR to win the 1928 elections, they also wanted to use the elections to push women into becoming involved in the affairs of the state in a way that they had not been before. Both the pro-Sanacja and the anti-Sanacja sides agreed that women were naturally equipped with special talents which, in the new political era that had begun with the proclamation of a moral revolution, they were morally obliged to use. Just how to use this moral potential however, was precisely the subject of bitter contest.

This is not to argue that the Sanacja offered women a whole new world of possibilities, that it "liberated" women, or that the new Mother-Pole trope fundamentally challenged societal conceptions of what roles a woman should adopt. At best, the Sanacja provided women, as women, with an opportunity to claim a limited space and to garner experience in otherwise restrictive political discourses and processes. In elevating questions of morality and ethics to positions of national importance, the Sanacja provided women with an opportunity to claim a voice in an important national forum and to thereby exact an influence over it.

At its most restrictive, the Sanacja entrenched ideas about the inherent moral superiority of women and both reaffirmed and popularized the notion that Polish women had an obligation, first and foremost, to serve their nation by fulfilling obligations to husbands and children and by functioning as moral beacons. Indeed, this call for a Sanacja resonated so powerfully with some women precisely because it called on Polish tradition and relied on a language of duty, faith and the greater good that was reminiscent of a vocabulary used during the nineteenth-century partition period. For their part, the women who were actually involved in propagating a Sanacja vision did not wish to overturn what were the most fundamental biologically and culturally prescribed roles for women as mothers and indeed, as women. They did believe, however, that women should not suffer exclusion from full political participation and from realizing their potential as

citizens simply because they were women. Just the opposite was in fact true: they believed that because women were bestowed with a higher and more refined moral sense, Poland could not afford to exclude them from political life.

Despite the efforts of the Election Committee women, the BBWR plus the pro-government blocs failed to achieve the landslide that had been hoped for in the 1928 elections, winning instead only about 25% of the national vote. The results of the election were, therefore, somewhat inconclusive.⁹⁰ The election nevertheless did function as a partial justification of the coup and of the BBWR as the political incarnation of the Sanacja vision; some version and semblance of parliamentary democracy functioned.⁹¹ Three women from the Election Committee entered into the ranks of the ruling political group, the BBWR. Maria Jaworska (1885-1957), a high-school teacher from Lwów and an active member of the Polish Teacher's Union (*Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego*), entered the Sejm.⁹² Eugenia Waśniewska from the pro-Piłsudski Party of Work (*Partia Pracy*) also entered the Sejm. Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, a historian and long-time socialist and women's activist, was elected to the Senate.⁹³ Zofia Praussowa was re-elected to the Sejm at this time as well, though on the Number Two ticket (the Polish Socialist Party), rather than on the BBWR ticket.⁹⁴

In total in the Second Republic, women held 41 Sejm mandates (32 women held these 41 mandates), and 20 Senate mandates (held by 18 women). The highest rate of

⁹⁰ The pro-Sanacja electoral lists won 122 seats in the Sejm, and 46 in the Senate, out of a total of 444 and 111 respectively. The parties of the left won just under 25% of the votes for the Sejm, and almost 22% for the Senate. The elections were a significant defeat for the parties of the Right. The participation rate in the election was 78%. See: Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, pp. 317 and 320; Chojnowski, *Piłsudczycy u władzy*, pp. 44-63; Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, pp. 247-249; and Tomicki, *II Rzeczpospolita*, pp. 170-172. For a discussion of the corruption in the electoral campaign and process, see: Groth, „Polish Elections”, p. 653, esp. fn. 1.

⁹¹ Chojnowski, *Piłsudczycy u władzy*, p. 73.

⁹² For a brief biography of Jaworska, see the entry by Michalina Grekowicz-Hausnerowa in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, tom 11, pp. 103-104. Jaworska headed the Sejm's Education Commission from 1930 to 1935. See also: Śliwa, „Kobiety w parlamencie”, p. 56.

⁹³ Męczkowska, *50 lat pracy w organizacjach kobiecych*, pp. 146-7.

⁹⁴ Praussowa was first elected to the Sejm in 1922. See: *Ibid.*, p. 146.

women's participation in the government came in the post-May period. It is also interesting to note that 74.2% of the women in the Sejm and 100% of the female Senators were born before 1890, and almost all came from intelligentsia families or from the landed gentry. 61.3% of the Sejm women and 50% of the Senate women possessed a higher education, often obtained abroad.⁹⁵

The Women's Union for Citizenship Work (*Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*)

1928-1933

The date of the disbanding of the Women's Democratic Election Committee – 25 March 1928 – was also the date of the inaugural meeting of the Women's Union for Citizenship Work.⁹⁶ The founding members of the Women's Union included: Zofia Moraczewska, Maria Jaworska, Halina Jaroszewiczowa, Wanda Drzewiecka, and Dr. Bronisława Dhuska, all of whom boasted impressive records of nationalist involvement. Moraczewska was the group's first President, serving from 1928 until 1932.⁹⁷ By 1930, The Women's Union had between 30,000 and 40,000 members working in branch organizations across the Second Republic, from Wilno to Poznań.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Śliwa, "Kobiety w parlamencie", pp. 54-56. As a point of interest, Śliwa notes that every fourth male parliamentarian had no education whatsoever, or had only finished a few years of elementary school. See p. 56.

⁹⁶ Moraczewska, *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet i jego praca w r. 1928 i Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet. Rozdział I: Demokratyczny Komitet i jego praca w r. 1928.*

⁹⁷ Moraczewska, *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet i jego praca w r. 1928 i Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet. Rozdział II: Założenie Związku Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet.*

⁹⁸ Moraczewska herself claimed the group had over 40,000 members. See: BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 36, "Przemówienie wygłaszane przez radjo w Warszawie", 6 November 1930, p. 88. Chojnowski provides different figures, drawn from Moraczewska's memoirs: 31,000 members grouped in 360 branches in 1930, and 90,000 members grouped in 900 branches in 1935. See: Chojnowski, "Moralność i polityka", p. 167. An article in an important women's magazine of the day states that in June 1930, the Union had 33,554 members working in 360 branches. See: P., "Dwa lata Związku Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet", *Kobieta Współczesna* Nr. 25 (22 June 1930), p. 13. It is important to note that many members participated only occasionally in Union activities, and that the bulk of the work was done by a small and elite group of very committed women, like Moraczewska. A figure of 52,000 members is provided in 1928 in: M. Dobrowolska, "Dziesięciolecie ZPOK", *Praktyczna Pani* Nr. 15 (9 April 1938), pp. 4-5. Regional branches of the Women's Union organized "rural circles". The Women's Union-Kraków, for instance, was associated with 23 rural circles in 1932. See: BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 94, Letter from Zofia Jurowa to the ZPOK Secretariat of Rural Affairs, Warsaw, dated 25 January 1932. The district of Biała, for instance, had three circles: Kozy, Straconka, and Lipnik.

While the Women's Democratic Election Committee had been established as a temporary organization to support a specific effort, the mandate and goals of the Women's Union for Citizenship Work were expressly long-term, less precise and more ambitious. The Union aimed to prevent, as Moraczewska stated, "the fall of moral culture" in Poland.⁹⁹ For the Women's Union, Piłsudski's coup and the ensuing Sanacja functioned as an ideal focal point, "a single banner", around which women from all classes and from all regions of Poland would be mobilized and made to work productively for the nation.¹⁰⁰ The time for national reflection on the quality of independence, for an assessment of the healing and reform process launched by Piłsudski in 1926, and for making plans for the future, had arrived. Union women embraced the general mood of reform and national reflection that the Sanacja had popularized and they used it to launch a wholesale exploration of the quality of female citizenship. The Union was committed to creating a new type of woman-citizen, "cognizant of the full weight of her rights and responsibilities".¹⁰¹

At the same time, the Women's Union cast its activism in a language of broad national commitment and concern for the collective. The emphasis on the collectivity was central to the organization's – and to the Sanacja's – definition of useful and active citizenship.¹⁰² Only by embracing an inclusive and broad definition of citizenship and by

On the Wołynia branch of the Women's Union, established in 1928, see: BN-PK Moraczewskich, File 144, [M. Wołoszynkowska, et al.], "10 lat pracy w Związku Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet w Wołyniu, 1928-1938", pp. 2-6.

⁹⁹ AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 71/III-6, mf. 1855/6, Zofia Moraczewska, *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet i jego praca w r. 1928 i Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet. Rozdział III: Rozwój Związku.*

¹⁰⁰ Moraczewska, *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet i jego praca w r. 1928 i Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet. Rozdział II: Założenie Związku Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet.*

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² BN-DŻS, File ID 1933. "Sprawozdanie Z.P.O.K., Poznańskie Zrzeszenie Wojewódzkie, z działalności za czas 15 I 1931 to 1 V 1933" (Poznań, May 1933), p. 7.

linking it to the needs of the state would Poland develop a healthy and productive “moral culture”.¹⁰³

The Women’s Union was not the only women’s organization mobilized into existence by the Sanacja and not the only group which declared commitment to Piłsudski and to a moral revolution. The Union of Polish Legion Women (*Związek Legionistek Polskich*), for example, was formed in Warsaw in 1929 to bring together all those pro-Sanacja women’s groups from across Poland which were interested in fostering “collective action, in the spirit of free-thinking, on the moral and economic rebirth of the nation”.¹⁰⁴ The Organization for Preparing Women for the Defense of the Country (*Organizacja Przynsposobienia Kobiet do Obrony Kraju*) was another pro-Sanacja women’s group which advocated the idea that women were “warriors” fighting for the defense and dignity of their nation.¹⁰⁵ These groups had much in common with the

¹⁰³ Moraczewska, *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet i jego praca w r. 1928 i Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet. Rozdział II: Założenie Związku Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet.*

¹⁰⁴ The group also provided material and moral aid to its members, tended to the graves of deceased Legion women and provided for invalid members, and collected and popularized materials pertaining to women’s participation in the struggles for Polish freedom. See: AAN, Zespół Związku Legionistek Polskich (hereafter ZLP), File 1, “Statut ZLP”, Warsaw, 1929, pp. 3- 10. The founding members were: Aleksandra Zagórska, Ludwika Wystouch-Zawadzka, and Józefa Pawłowska. Other women whose names appear in the group’s papers include: Stanisława Paleolog, Helena Ceysingerówna and Maria Podhowska. An April 1929 protocol states that the group had 38 members. See: AAN, ZLP, File 2, *Protokół Zjazdu Organizacyjnego Związku Legionistek Polskich*, 6-7 April 1929, Warsaw, pp. 1-5. The number of members comes from p. 2. By 1932, the ZLP had six branches in Poland (Warsaw, Wilno, Lwów, Kraków, Łódź, and a sixth circle which grouped together women scattered over assorted provincial areas), for a total of about 600 members. See: AAN, ZLP, File 9, *Sprawozdanie z Działalności Zw. Leg. Polskich I VII 1931 – 30 VI 1932*, p. 2; and AAN, ZLP, File 13, n.t., n.d., p. 143. The Legion Women joined the Intra-Associational Committee for Women’s Issues (*Komitet Międzystowarzyszeniowy do Spraw Kobietych*), an umbrella organization established to coordinate the activities of pro-Sanacja women’s organizations, in 1933. It included the Women’s Union for Citizenship Work and the Organization of Women with Higher Education, among others. This umbrella group hoped to be able to provide Sanacja women with a united, stronger and more effective voice in the government and to popularize the issues which women felt needed more attention. See: AAN, ZLP, File 61, dated 2 December 1933, p. 3, and letter dated 11 December 1933. The first protocol of the new group is dated 15 March 1935, and is found on pp. 19-21.

¹⁰⁵ This group established the journal *For the Future (Dla Przyszłości: Wydawnictwo Komitetu Społecznego Przynsposobienia Kobiet do Obrony Kraju)* in Warsaw in 1927. In its earliest days it was edited by Helena Ceysingerówna and Jadwiga Prażmowska. *For the Future* was re-established in 1929 as a journal for women wanting to becoming “good citizens”. It declared itself an avid supporter of Piłsudski. See, for example, Z.P. [Zofia Popławska], “Z książki *Codzienna praca Marji Dąbrowskiej*”, *Dla Przyszłości* Nr. 6-7 (July-August 1930), p. 16. See also: Halina Piwońska, “Nowy rok”, *Dla Przyszłości* Nr 1 (January 1933), p. 2. A useful and interesting overview of ten years of the group’s activity is provided in:

Women's Democratic Election Committee and the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, and many women were members of all groups simultaneously. As such, the Women's Union formed part of a wave of social organization that began in the post-coup period. Moraczewska and the women with whom she worked very much saw themselves as part of a wider trend in society, and Moraczewska herself admitted that the Women's Union, at one level, could be compared to larger, better known and far more influential groups born of the coup.

The Union for the Repair of the Republic (*Związek Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej*, commonly referred to as Reform, *Naprawa*), for example, was one such group better known group. Reform had been established in June of 1926 by a younger and more liberal group within the pro-Piłsudski intelligentsia.¹⁰⁶ Reformers were weary of parliamentary government, had lost faith in the efficacy of political parties, and believed that extra-parliamentary organizations were as important (if not more so) than parliamentary ones.¹⁰⁷ The Women's Union's embrace of the May challenge pinpointed

Editors, "Dziesięciolecie 'Dla Przyszłości'", *Dla Przyszłości* Nr. 2 (February 1939), pp. 22-25. Women who, over the years, were associated with the journal include: Zofia Popławska, Hanna Pohoska, Stefania Kudelska, Wanda Gertzówna, Janina Dymecka, Zofia Franio, Stefanja Hajkowiczowa, Wanda Szajnokowa, Stanisława Kossuthówna, Wanda Kupczyńska and Halina Piwońska, among others. Gertzówna had fought in Polish units attached to the Austro-Hungarian army during WWI. See: Ponichtera, "Feminists, Nationalists and Soldiers", p. 16.

¹⁰⁶ Formally, the groups which came together to form the Reform were: the Rifleman's Association (*Związek Strzelecki*), The Union of Silesian Insurgents (*Związek Powstańców Śląskich*), and the Central Union of Settlers (*Centralny Związek Osadników*); the Patriotic Union (*Związek Patriotyczny*) was the instigator of the group. See: n.a., "Jak naprawimy Rzeczypospolitą?", *Kurier Poranny* Nr. 152 (3 June 1926), p. 2. Other individuals involved in Reform included: K. Wszyński, S. Janikowski, M. Grażyński and W. Przedpełski. On Reform, see: Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski, *Najnowsza historia Polski*, pp.684-685; Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'état*, p. 263; Janusz Rakowski, "Zetowcy i Piłsudczycy", *Zeszyty Historyczne* 54 (1980): 3-39; and Ludwik Hass, "Związek Patriotyczny 1918-1926: Z dziejów infrastruktury życia politycznego Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej" *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 85: 4 (1978): 913-942. For a discussion of whether Reform was on the Left or the Right of the Sanacja, see: Micewski, *W cieniu Marszałka*, pp. 248 and 268-286. Micewski understands Reform to have been part of the left-wing of Sanacja. For a memoir of Reform, see: Tadeusz Katelbach, *Spowiedź pokolenia* (Lippstadt: Jutro Pracy, 1948).

¹⁰⁷ Members of Reform joined with the Party of Work (*Partia Pracy*) (which had evolved from PSL-Liberation), to form the Union of Labour in Town and Village (*Zjednoczenie Pracy Wsi i Miast*) in June of 1928. The Union of Labour in turn formed a core block within the BBWR until 1930. On the Union of Labour, see: AAN, Zespół Zjednoczenia Pracy Wsi i Miast (hereafter ZPWIM), File 1, Rezolucje Zarządu Głównego ZPWIM, 1 October 1929, pp. 19-20; and Statut ZPWIM, 1930. See also:

many of the same problems that Reform raised. But the Women's Union also focused on certain other telling issues and offered its own unique conceptualizations of what the Sanacja should entail. And yet historians have only recently "discovered" the Women's Union, and the group has thus far been the subject of only one article, in Polish.¹⁰⁸

The fact that the Women's Union was designed specifically by and for women places it within a special category of Sanacja-era activism. The fact that it coupled strictly political questions with what we can call "women's issues" further gives it a distinctive character. The Women's Union invited and encouraged women's active participation in shaping the terms of the moral rebirth which everyone agreed was absolutely vital to the Second Republic's long-term health. Women were absolutely central to the elaboration of a new national vision, and the task of the Union was,

Nałęcz, *Sen o władzy*, pp. 261-262. For a discussion of Reform's views on minority questions, especially the Ukrainian question, see: Teofil Piotrowicz, "Myśl polityczna Związku Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej wobec kwestii Ukraińskiej (1926-1930)", *Przegląd Historyczny* LXX: 2 (1979): 285-300. Also on Reform, see: AAN, Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, File 39, Poster addressed to "Obywateli!", Lublin, dated 1 July 1926, p. 2B. For Reform's Declaration statement, see: AAN, Akta Organizacji Młodzieżowych, File 23, "Deklaracja Programowa Rady Naczelnej Związku Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej", 6 January 1927, pp. 1-8. The Declaration is also printed as: "Deklaracja Programowa Rady Naczelnej Związku Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej", *Przełom* (22 January 1927): 1-2. *Turning Point (Przełom)* was the journal of Reform, and was edited by Jerzy Szurig. On *Turning Point*, see: Jan Borkowski, "Naprawiacze w latach 1926-1935. Związek Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej i Zjednoczenie Pracy Wsi i Miast", *Dzieje Najnowsze* XVII: 2 (1985): 48-49. See also the journal *Sowing (Siejba: Tygodnik Społeczny Oświaty i Gospodarczy)*, which was the organ of the Lwów branch of Reform. It was established in November of 1927, at which time it was edited by Dr. Józef Pytel and Franciszek Pawliszak. The journal's support for Piłsudski and the ideals of the May coup, especially as they could be used to affect a "rebirth of the countryside", is outlined in: Józef Pytel, "Nasze hasła – nasze cele", *Siejba* Nr. 1 (27 November 1927), pp. 3-4. See also: Witold Giełżyński, "Związek Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej", *Ster* Nr. 6 (5 February 1927), p. 6. For a discussion of Reform's ties to syndicalism and to the ideas of Stanisław Brzozowski and Edward Abramowski, see: Roszkowski, "Syndykalizm polski 1918-1929", pp. 207-209. Syndicalism, as promoted by Reform, described the idea that workers, grouped in trade unions independent of political parties, needed to participate directly in economic planning; the aim was to create a non-capitalist "society of producers". The specifics of Reform's syndicalist program are discussed in: Laura Ann Crago, "Nationalism, Religion, Citizenship and Work in the Development of the Polish Working Class and the Polish Trade Union Movement, 1815-1929. A Comparative Study of Russian Poland's Textile Workers and Upper Silesian Miners and Metalworkers", Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, Yale University, 1993, pp. 392-396. Syndicalism is also discussed in Chapter 3, p. 148, fn 28.

¹⁰⁸ Chojnowski, "Moralność is polityka", *passim*.

therefore, "...to prepare women for a future, obligatory service to the state, whose boundaries and organization... women themselves should elaborate."¹⁰⁹

Union women argued that the existing deficiencies in Polish national life were the result of, as one member stated, "the one-sidedness of the male psyche". They steadfastly believed that the differences between the sexes were innate and immutable, and they further argued that, in contrast to men, women were more moral, sensitive, and more prone to attempt compromise.¹¹⁰ The Sanacja had called for a more moral society. Armed with their expertise in the private domain and with a belief that women would introduce higher values into political life, the women understood that they were answering the call to effect a moral revolution. They set out to "rationalize the household economy" on a national scale.¹¹¹

One Union member, Natalia Greniewska, praised the fact that their organization taught women how to "live" for their country:

We women, mothers and educators,... our souls not poisoned by party politics, will bring to political life new values based on non-partisan work for the state. We will introduce our instinct for social work, our love for truth and for knowledge, responsibility and women's intuition ...¹¹²

Across the country, the Women's Union branches affirmed time and again to their members that women's participation in political life would exert positive influences on national life generally.¹¹³ Women, after all, were especially well suited to introducing ethics into contemporary life and to fostering "decency in public and private life, deep

¹⁰⁹ Moraczewska, *Demokratyczny Komitet Wyborczy Kobiet i Jego Praca w r. 1928 i Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet. Rozdział II: Założenie Związku Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet.*

¹¹⁰ BN-DZS, File ID 1933. "Sprawozdanie Z.P.O.K., Poznańskie Zrzeszenie Wojewódzkie, z Działalności za Czas 15 I 1931 to I V 1933", (Poznań, May 1933), p. 6. This booklet is almost two hundred pages in length, and provides rich detail about the daily activities of the Poznań branch of the Women's Union. The Poznań branch of the Union was founded by Janina Jakubowska.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

¹¹² BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 125, Natalia Greniewska, "Kobieta w polityce", 1930, p. 34. See also: pp. 31-33.

¹¹³ "Sprawozdanie Z.P.O.K., Poznańskie Zrzeszenie Wojewódzkie, z Działalności za Czas 15 I 1931 to I V 1933", p. 6.

feelings of honour, and civil courage". Women would also ensure that these traits were passed on to the generations.¹¹⁴

Union women were always quick to argue that women served the Sanacja in a unique and vital way, both because women exhibited a natural higher morality, and because women would draw attention to issues which men simply would not. Moraczewska praised the fact that the Women's Union was an organization created by women and for women. Only women were eligible for membership in the Women's Union, and only women were welcome to attend the various lectures hosted by the group and to write for the group's bi-weekly magazine, *Citizenship Work (Praca Obywatelska)*, which circulated, though in small numbers, from 1928 to 1932.¹¹⁵ Moraczewska believed that women would, quite simply, feel more comfortable in an all-female setting.¹¹⁶

The Union women were, of course, a very specific type and class of women, just as women in the Democratic Election Committee were. Many had in fact entered the Women's Union straight from the Election Committee. These women were part of a small intellectual elite, and the key activists in the Union were connected to powerful men, many of whom were themselves prominent figures in the political Sanacja. Many of them had devoted their lives first to the Polish independence cause in the pre-war period, and later to a political and social activism which, they hoped, would raise the quality of independence.

¹¹⁴ Zarząd Główny, ZPOK / Z.M., *Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*, p. 104.

¹¹⁵ The Women's Union also maintained a section in *The Western Gazette (Gazeta Zachodnia)* in Poznań. It appeared on the first and third Sunday of the month. See: UW Library Archives, Papiery i Listy Mieczysława Rettingera. Letter from the Women's Union / Jakubowska and Chelmicka, to Mieczysław Rettinger, Editor of *Gazeta Zachodnia*, dated 4 March 1929, p. 20. The Union women wrote to complain that the paper had been including non-Union-related issues in a section that was to be exclusively for and about the Women's Union.

¹¹⁶ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 36, "Przemówienie Z. Moraczewskiej na Zjeździe Delegatów Komitetu Wyborczego Kobiety, który powołał do życia ZPOK", Warsaw, 25 March 1927, p. 32. For one man's complaint with respect to this policy, see: AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 71/1-104, mf. 2314/12, pp. 8-9. Letter dated Warsaw 29 November 1933. The letter is a vitriolic tirade against women's rights generally. The name is not legible.

Membership in the Women's Union, moreover, was formally limited to women who were of Polish ethnicity, or to those who were assimilated thoroughly and completely into Polish culture. According to this way of thinking, assimilated Jews were simply Poles, and women of Jewish background, like the well-known social activist Helena Ceysingerówna,¹¹⁷ could and did participate in the group. For her part, Moraczewska favoured the inclusion of (non-assimilated) Jewish women in the Union, and explained that the ideals of the Women's Union, and indeed, of the Sanacja, as she understood it, supported inclusivity:

Our alliance is a citizen organization; it talks about the equality of all citizens in terms of rights and responsibilities, it endeavours to win over to the state all citizens, it desires to awaken and consolidate respect and love for Poland in their hearts.¹¹⁸

In addition, Moraczewska stated, Jewish women's presence in the organization would assist in breaking down the "Chinese wall" that separated women of Roman Catholic faith from women of other faiths.¹¹⁹ At the same time, she understood full well the general reluctance to accept an influx of Jewish women into the organization, in part so as to protect the organization from opponents' attacks.¹²⁰ She was prepared, nevertheless, to let

¹¹⁷ Ceysongerówna is mentioned in this chapter in relation to a variety of different social organizations and women's publications.

¹¹⁸ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 137, Copy of a letter from Zofia Moraczewska addressed to "Dear Madam", dated 19 October 1932, p. 34 a.

¹¹⁹ In the late nineteenth century, positivist writer Eliza Orzeszkowa had used the term "Chinese wall" to describe the distance that separated Poles and Jews. Moraczewska was a devoted fan of Orzeszkowa, especially of *Meir Ezoficz*, which she stated had exerted an incredibly powerful and important influence over her life. She had received the book in 1889 from some friends in Lwów, and was particularly drawn to its message of brotherly love and mutual aid in times of need. Her friends had dedicated the gift to Moraczewska's future service to and work for her beloved nation. See: Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 17.

¹²⁰ Copy of a letter from Zofia Moraczewska addressed to "Dear Madam", dated 19 October 1932, p. 34 a. The foremost secular Jewish women's journal of the period was *Eva: A Weekly Journal (Ewa: Pismo Tygodniowe)*. It was established in Warsaw in 1928, and was edited by Paulina Appenzlakowa. Its audience was urban and middle class. *Eva* was a supporter of Zionism, and often reported on the activities of WIZO, the World Organization of Zionist Women, established in 1920. Its pages are filled with articles about the various social and cultural organizations in which Jewish women participated. Many of the issues which concerned the women associated with *Eva* were the same issues which concerned Union women (prostitution, the Women's Police, and the Train Station Missions, for example). For an especially interesting article about the way in which Jewish women were excluded from the Women's Display at the National Exposition held in Poznań from 16 May to 30 September 1929, see: n.a., "Kobieta żydowska na

the issue remain dormant, and the Women's Union remained a Polish-only women's group. The citizenship which they aimed to raise in the multi-ethnic Second Republic was a decidedly Polish citizenship.

The Women in Action

The ways in which the Women's Union thought of itself and understood its role in Sanacja-era Poland is best reflected in its very structure, in the projects it undertook, and in the questions to which it devoted its resources. The Women's Union for Citizenship Work was organized into sections, which included basic and functional ones like a Finance and a Press division, for example, and a Foreign Affairs and Municipal Affairs division. But it also included sections which spoke to women's unique concerns and abilities, and the bulk of the Union's energy was invested in these: Citizenship Education, Schooling, Women's Issues, Care for Children, Culture and Beauty.¹²¹ The sections overlapped considerably, as each submitted to the overarching goal of making women into active citizens. This goal was perhaps best summarized by the Section for Citizen Education itself:

Our aspiration and our goal is the rebirth of Poland in the spirit... of independence: the harmonious cooperation of a strong government with the Sejm and the Senate, arousing in society high values and citizen virtues.¹²²

Wystawie Powszechnej w Poznaniu", *Ewa* Nr. 5 (3 February 1929), p. 1. For an article which links the success of the Poznań exhibit to the lack of Jewish presence there, see: n.a., "Olbrzymi sukces Powszechnej Wystawy Krajowej w Poznaniu.", *Hasło Podwawelskie* Nr. 1 (29 September 1929), p. 2. For a useful exposition on the ways in which Jewish women understood their roles in the community, see the speech given by H. Szejnbergowa, "Rola kobiety żydowskiej w życiu społecznym i politycznym narodu żydowskiego". This speech is found in BN-DŹS, File IV.2f.1934, Brześć nad Bugiem, pp. 15-16. Another secular Jewish women's magazine based in Warsaw was entitled *New Woman (Kobieta Nowa)*. It which appeared in the autumn of 1932 as the organ of the Association for Jewish Women's Sports' Organizations (*Zrzeszenie Żydowskich Kobięcych Stowarzyszeń Sportowych w Polsce*). It was edited by Mira Jakubowiczowa. The mandate was to raise women's cultural and social awareness, and especially to increase women's knowledge about physical health.

¹²¹ Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 31.

¹²² BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 118, Wydział Wychowania Obywatelskiego, Zarząd Pełny, 22 September 1929, p. 3.

Moraczewska and the women with whom she worked in the Union were always clear that constitutional and political equality were not themselves sufficient conditions for stimulating these higher values and noble citizen virtues. They constituted a necessary start, but no more. Members of the Women's Union argued that women could only become complete and fully active citizens once they were protected in their obligations as mothers and wives and once all vestiges of discrimination – legal, psychological or traditional – against women were removed.¹²³ Accordingly, the Women's Union devoted its energies to various educational initiatives and to performing all varieties of what they termed "social work".¹²⁴ It focused on issues like protecting women in marriage, guaranteeing women access to employment, providing safeguards against poverty and illness in old age, and generally, in giving women the resources they needed to make their own independent decisions.¹²⁵

The Section for Women's Issues was the largest, including as it did six sub-sections, and the most active. It educated women in the law and the structure of government, informed women about their rights as employees, and offered general courses in public speaking. It also extended material aid to women and facilitated their access to education and employment training.¹²⁶ It organized libraries and ran a lecture series on such varied topics as the upbringing of the soldier-citizen, women in Polish history, social activism and the contemporary woman, the life of Marshal Piłsudski, Polish foreign policy, the revision of the constitution, democracy, Poland's eastern borderlands, and the history of the Women's Union itself.¹²⁷

¹²³ Zarząd Główny, ZPOK / Z.M., "Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet", p. 104.

¹²⁴ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 125, Hanna Hubicka, "Ideologia Obozu Marszałka Piłsudskiego", 1930 lecture given to the Women's Union, pp. 50-52.

¹²⁵ Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 30.

¹²⁶ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 118, "Projekt pracy i regulamin Wydziału Uświadczenia Obywatelskiego", n.d. This document contains specific advice on how a woman should deliver a lecture and lead discussion groups, for instance.

¹²⁷ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 118, Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet, *Wychow. Obywatel. "Tematy na odczyty"*, n.d.

The Section for Women's Issues was also responsible for keeping women abreast of the evolving work of the Codification Commission. The Commission had been established in 1919 to unify Polish laws and to write new ones which would apply to the whole state. One of the most controversial of these concerned the right to both civil marriage and divorce, as we will see in the next chapter. In general, the Women's Union supported the right to civil marriage. Many Union women argued that this right was already commonplace in the West, and that there it had not replaced or otherwise diminished religious marriage ceremonies and did not constitute an affront to good mores.¹²⁸ The Women's Union considered carefully the various aspects of the proposed marriage question and commented in very specific ways on how each section of the new law might affect women. Union women's views were summarized in a [1933] report to the Sejm. In this document, the women articulated a commitment to absolute equality between men and "wives and mothers", and launched objections to any sections of the proposal that failed to recognize this equality. Their demands ranged from allowing women to add their own surnames to that of their husbands', removing a women's obligation to obey her husband, eliminating any and all restrictions against married women's employment, creating legislation to guarantee that women would be entitled to their own earnings, and to making mothers and fathers equally responsible for their children.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich File 121, Regina Zyndram-Kościałkowska, Provincial Leader, Women's Union – Białystok, "Opinia", 29 January 1932, p. 45. The Women's Union was condemned in a Pastoral Letter from 1934 for spreading "anti-Catholic" and "anti-family" views. The letter was reprinted in many journals of the period. See, for example, "List pasterski Episkopatu Polski. Kościół potępia sanacyjny komunizm", *Sztafeta: Pismo Narodowo-Radykalne* Nr. 8 (11 March 1934), p. 3. The Bishops asked women to stay away from the Women's Union.

¹²⁹ AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 71/1-91, mf. 2314/10, Collection of various papers pertaining to the women's rights and the Codification Commission. See esp. pp. 27-33. The collection of documents in this file concerning the Codification Commission's proposals form an incredible resource.

Along the same vein, the Union's Section for Moral Care, another large and active division of the Union, worked closely with the Sanitary-Moral Commission.¹³⁰ The Sanitary-Moral Commission was a governmental body comprised of doctors, police and representatives of various social organizations and responsible for recommending state policies on problems that fell under the rubric of "moral problems", and included prostitution, venereal disease and the white slave trade.¹³¹ The Commission was an outgrowth of the Morality Police, which had been established in January of 1919, and which was later transformed into the Sanitary-Moral Department (*Urząd Sanitarno-Obyczajowe*) of the Ministry of Health.¹³² The Section for Moral Care of the Women's Union also lobbied female Sejm members to act on these and other issues which they viewed as being "of interest to women".¹³³

The Women's Union, moreover, was a vocal advocate of the existing Women's Police Force, and worked with it in an advisory capacity. The Union hoped the Women's Police would become a member of the International Alliance of Women Police based in London.¹³⁴ The Women's Police force in Poland was formed on the initiative of the

¹³⁰ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 106, "Uwagi p. I. Szydłowskiej w sprawie Policji Kobiecej", n.d. [c. 1929], p. 22.

¹³¹ The Sanitary-Moral Commission had been very successful with its Train Station Missions, which had been established to fight the so-called white slave trade - the sale of young women into prostitution abroad. A photograph from the mission, dated 1925, Warsaw, is reproduced in: Łoziński, *Życie codzienne*, p. 131.

¹³² A-PAN-Warsaw, Papiery Witolda Chodźka, III-79, File 156, position 41. Witold Chodźko, "Handel Kobietami", 2nd Ed. (Warsaw: PKWHiD, 1938), pp. 16-17.

¹³³ "Uwagi p. I. Szydłowskiej w sprawie Policji kobiecej", p. 22.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* The Women's Police has never been studied in the historical literature, either Polish or English, and yet the archival sources for such a study are tremendously rich. Moreover, every woman's magazine of the period included articles about the Women's Police, and more generally, about prostitution, venereal disease, and the sale of women and children abroad, which the Women's Police was charged with fighting. The Polish Women's Police regarded itself as part of an international movement to establish women's police sections; the Poles communicated extensively with their international counterparts. The archival materials, as a result, are sometimes in English and/or in French. More information on the Women's Police Force is found in: AAN, Zespół Komendy Głównej Policji Państwowej (hereafter KGPP), Files 147 and 149. This latter file includes, for example, a report by Czesław Koral entitled, "Praca policjantek w Poznaniu", 1938, pp. 3-8. Materials pertaining to the Women's Police are also found at: AAN, Zespół Ministerstwa Opieki Społecznej (hereafter MOS), File 236. See also: Wł. Zar., "Policja kobieca", *Kurier Warszawski* Nr. 51 (20 February 1925), pp. 8-9; Helena Ceysingerówna, "Nasze postulaty w sprawie policji kobiecej", *Kobieta Współczesna* Nr. 36 (4 December 1927), pp. 2-3; and Halina Siemieńska, "Policja kobieca", *Kobieta Współczesna* Nr. 14 (3 April 1932), pp. 276-277.

Polish Committee Devoted to the Battle of the Trade in Women and Children and with the approval and assistance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1925. The female recruits were trained for six months in the general procedure of police service, with emphasis placed on dealing with prostitution,¹³⁵ venereal disease, the white slave trade, and general hygiene.¹³⁶ The Lieutenant of the Women's Police was Stanisława Paleolog, and she was also a member of the Union's Section for Women's Issues.¹³⁷ The idea of a Women's Police proved quite popular, such that by 1936, Poland had 148 female police, as compared, for example, to 159 in Germany in 1931 and 294 in Austria in 1932.¹³⁸

In 1929, the Union's Section for Women's Issues proposed the establishment of a Family Planning Clinic that would work to promote, as Moraczewska herself stated, "the defense of the real family, of the human dignity of women and of the social relations threatened by today's order of things."¹³⁹ The proposed Clinic would offer medical services to pregnant women, and would also sell anti-conception devices. Consultation would cost either 2 zloty or 1 zloty, or would be free for women who were unemployed or unable to afford the fee. Anti-conception devices would be sold at what they cost at

¹³⁵ See: AAN, KGPP, File 152, Piotr-Józef Sitkowski, "Wpływ prostytucji na przestępczość w ośrodkach miejskich i rola policji państwowej w walce z tym problemem", Łódź, 20 May 1937, pp. 3-12. For an informative but brief account of the ways in which newly independent Poland organized its Public Health services (including how it approached prostitution, venereal diseases and alcoholism, for example), see: Wynot, *Warsaw Between the World Wars*, pp. 214-234.

¹³⁶ See: A-BUW, File 1467, Twórczość publicystyczna, artykuły i odczyty Stanisława Posnera, n.a., "Le Comité National Polonais pour la Répression de la Traite des Femmes et des Enfants" (Warsaw: 1926). The Polish National Committee was formed by Dr. Chodźko, the Minister of Public Health, in March of 1923, as well as by representatives of the Polish government to the League of Nations. This document contains specific information about the work undertaken by the Train Station Missions.

¹³⁷ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 106, ZPOK, Spraw Kobietych, c. 1929. Siemińska, Paleolog, Pawlewska, Krongoldówna, among others, were part of ZPOK's Women's Issues section.

¹³⁸ AAN, KGPP, File 147, *Referat Belgijskiego Komitetu Narodowego na X Międzynarodowy Kongres Komitetów Zwalczenia Handlu Kobiety i Dzieci w Paryżu*, Paris, n.d. For a break-down, by city, of the number of women involved with the Women's Police, see: AAN, MOS, File 236. Warsaw had a total of 19 women in the Women's Police in 1933, whereas Lwów had 5, Kraków had 4, Łódź had 4 and Poznań had 2. These records also reveal that in the year 1933, Poland had one regular female police officer, in Warsaw.

¹³⁹ Copy of a letter from Zofia Moraczewska addressed to "Dear Madam", dated 19 October 1932, p. 34 b.

hospitals.¹⁴⁰ Abortions, however, would not be provided at the proposed clinic, and Moraczewska was clear that the clinic aimed for the "defense of motherhood", and as such, steadfastly condemned abortion.¹⁴¹ The hope was also to organize a series of informative lectures by notable speakers, as well as a publication. At a November 1933 general meeting of the Women's Union, however, the entire plan was still being debated, and resolutions were again made simply to establish the clinics. The matter was a highly controversial one within the Women's Union.¹⁴²

As the above examples suggest, the Women's Union worked from the assumption that national and social goals were inextricably linked. Making this link, and working from the assumption that so-called private and public spheres were irrevocably intertwined, was a defining characteristic of pro-Sanacja women's activism.¹⁴³ "Each citizen-person", one Union statement affirmed, "carrie[d] within his/her own soul ethical commands which oblige[d] equally in private and in public life...".¹⁴⁴ Similarly, another Women's Union activist also suggested this holistic approach to reform and affirmed that moral rebirth in Poland would only be realized if "decency both in public and private life" were upheld.¹⁴⁵ A person's internal moral strengths formed the foundation of the

¹⁴⁰ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 106, Sekcja Spraw Kobięcych, c. 1929. The projected budget for the establishment of this Family Planning Clinic is provided on page 15. Set-up was expected to cost 1.010 złoty, and monthly expenses were projected at 775 złoty.

¹⁴¹ Copy of a letter from Zofia Moraczewska dated 19 October 1932, p. 34 b. In her memoirs, Teodora Męczkowska states clearly that the Election Committee supported a woman's right to abortion as long as the procedure was carried out within the first three months of pregnancy. See: Męczkowska, *50 lat pracy w organizacjach kobiecych w Warszawie*, p. 158.

¹⁴² In a letter to Union member Helena Staniewska of Kalisz, Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński expressed sympathy for the clinic project and underlined just how formidable the obstacles were to establishing such clinics. See: Letter from Boy-Żeleński to Helena Staniewska, dated 12 March 1934, as reprinted in Boy, *Listy*, p. 411. A fragment of this letter is also quoted in Sterkowicz, *Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński*, p. 236.

¹⁴³ For an expression of this sentiment, see: BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 36, Zarząd Główny, ZPOK – Z.M. - "Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet" (Warsaw: Wydział Prasowy, 1932), p. 104.

¹⁴⁴ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 118, "Program i zasady Organizacji Wydziału Wychowania Obywatelskiego Z.P.O.K.", n.d., p. 5. This document is hand-written, and appears to be a draft copy.

¹⁴⁵ AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 71/III-6, mf. 1855/6, Letter from Zofia Popławska dated 10 November 1930.

state edifice and guaranteed its strength: "The development, strength and future of Poland as a Great Power can be built only on internal strengths developed in the nation."¹⁴⁶

Union women emphasized rather traditional concerns about women's health and welfare and about the need for the state to be responsive to women's concerns. They further argued that grassroots activism by women and on behalf of women would have beneficial results at a national level.¹⁴⁷ They believed completely in the need to support the official Sanacja political agenda, whatever it happened to be, and of working closely with the BBWR.¹⁴⁸ As such, they understood that they would be effective in realizing their goals only when and if their perspectives were represented in the ranks of government; that is, they were great proponents of the need for women to run for elected office. Reflecting on some of these issues, Halina Jaroszewiczowa, the leader of the Union's Section for the Care of Mothers and Children, wrote on behalf of the Union to the Marshal of the Senate, Juljan Szymański, in March of 1930. She outlined the Union's views regarding women's participation in politics. "[A]s a professional worker, mother, [and] educator, bestowed with a remarkable social instinct ... ", Jaroszewiczowa wrote, "a woman is capable, most completely and directly, of grasping the totality of work and of social welfare questions."¹⁴⁹ She added that the issues which the Women's Union for Citizenship Work were raising were of national importance, and that indeed, "mothering" was an integral part of "citizenship work".¹⁵⁰

The Women's Union was but one example of the way in which social organizations could and did take on some of the burden of inculcating citizen values in the people; we see in the Women's Union an ideal blend of formal politics and an

¹⁴⁶ "Program i Zasady Organizacji Wydziału Wychowania Obywatelskiego Z.P.O.K.", p. 5.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 30. See also: BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 125, Hanna Hubicka, "Ideologia Obozu Marszałka Piłsudskiego", 1930 Lecture given to The Women's Union, pp. 50-52.

informal social activism. This combination and approach formed a key goal of the Sanacja project. The Piłsudski-ites in power believed that non-governmental bodies absolutely had to participate actively in shaping the Sanacja and building the state. Women, grouped in the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, effectively broadened the definition of politics to include all kinds of "women's issues". Forming a Women's Police Force and battling prostitution, the Women's Union argued, were an integral part of the larger project of reform which the Sanacja had proclaimed.¹⁵¹ This nexus of interests, far from being fleeting or accidental, was essential, the Women's Union maintained, to realizing a worthwhile and deep healing of the Second Republic.

The Women's Union and the Political Sanacja

The relationship between the Women's Union and the BBWR, however, was not always smooth. Though the Women's Union was allied with the formal political Sanacja in an ideological and moral sense, though its members participated in the BBWR's Parliamentary circle, and though it received some funding from the BBWR, the Union believed itself to be, at the same time, formally separate from the governmental bloc.¹⁵² Moraczewska tried to protect the independence of the Women's Union, and she opposed openly the orthodoxy of the time which stated that all pro-Piłsudski groups had to accede to the final authority of the BBWR.¹⁵³ She objected to the BBWR's attempt to supercede the Union's own executive, to impose its own visions on the organization, and to institute solidarity in voting.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 121, Letter from Zarząd Główny, ZPOK, Warsaw, to the Marshal of the Senate, Professor Julian Szymański, 28 March 1930, p. 15.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Hubicka, "Ideologia Obozu Marszałka Piłsudskiego", pp. 50-52.

¹⁵² BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 48. Zofia Moraczewska, *Historia rozłamu w ZPOK w latach 1933, 1934 i 1935*, p. 10.

¹⁵³ Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 33. See also: Chojnowski, "Moralność i polityka", p. 168.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. On voting in the Sejm, see: Moraczewska, *Historia rozłamu w ZPOK*, pp. 41-56.

Conflict between the BBWR and the Union erupted, for example, over the new marriage law legislation being considered by the Codification Commission mentioned earlier. In a letter to her sister, Moraczewska relayed that the BBWR was reluctant to accept the more liberal proposals recommended by the Commission for fear of alienating their opponents. She stated that the BBWR did not want "to begin a war with the clergy during this difficult time. So what? We are alone? Are we going to submit to fanatical clerical backwardness?"¹⁵⁵ Moraczewska further believed that it was especially difficult for a woman to oppose the majority opinion voiced in the BBWR.¹⁵⁶ She resented the fact that the BBWR regarded the Women's Union as merely a ladies' auxiliary group, and that it often, as she wrote, "pushed to the side, disregarded, combated..." the Union's initiatives.¹⁵⁷

Some women within the Union started to believe that the BBWR was achieving nothing important or impressive, and indeed, that it was standing in the way of good work being done. According to Moraczewska, the BBWR was selling out and was slowly but surely becoming a reactionary rather than a progressive force. Many historians of the Sanacja have argued that in fact the BBWR was at bottom a conservative grouping and that it became so obsessed with maintaining its hegemony that it failed to address adequately the very many social and economic issues which needed attention.¹⁵⁸

Moraczewska argued that Union women were part of the BBWR for the express purpose of articulating a women's view of the Sanacja, of offering a unique and vitally important portion of a greater agenda that had the public good as its goal. Moraczewska

¹⁵⁵ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 7626/IX, Letter of Zofia Moraczewska to H. Kozicka dated 21 December 1932. Conflict between the women's lobby of the BBWR and the BBWR proper also erupted over certain social welfare projects pertaining to work time and vacation. For a brief discussion of these issues, see: Chojnowski, "Moralność i polityka", p. 171.

¹⁵⁶ AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 71/III-9, Zofia Moraczewska, "Moje wspomnienia osobiste o Wielkim Marszałku", Sulejówek, May 1943. For a discussion of conflict that erupted over a proposed pension law, see pp. 14-26.

¹⁵⁷ AAN, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 71 / III-6, mf. 1855 / 6, Rozdział VI: "Stosunek ZPOK do BBWR".

had hoped that the Women's Union, working as the partner of the BBWR, would be part of something grand and important:

We wanted to participate in the moral rebirth of a nation poisoned by the venom of slavery... we wanted Poland to become a Piedmont for the renaissance of universal great ideas...¹⁵⁹

She decried the fact that women were not being given their due in the Sanacja agenda and that "the values present in women's collective will" were not being adequately recognized or appreciated.¹⁶⁰

But perhaps the most serious issue was what Moraczewska regarded as the moral failings of the BBWR and ultimately, its utterly "mistaken politics", best reflected in the Brześć affair of 1930.¹⁶¹ The arrest of political opposition members, their mistreatment and humiliation while imprisoned on specious charges, did more than anything else to make many in Poland, including many of the women in the Union, question their relationship to the BBWR and the ruling camp. Indeed, Brześć had caused a major caesura in the Sanacja camp generally, and cost the Sanacja both political support and moral authority.

Notwithstanding the reservations of some Women's Union members about the direction in which the political Sanacja was moving, and about Brześć specifically, the organization showed a united, pro-BBWR front for the November 1930 elections, the so-called Brześć elections, and campaigned for the BBWR candidates. The Union resurrected the Women's Democratic Election Committee to form the Women's Organizations' Election Committee (*Komitet Wyborczy Organizacji Kobietych*). Through

¹⁵⁸ On the BBWR, see: Chojnowski, *Pilsudczycy u władzy*, passim.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, p. 28. Until Brześć, Moraczewska expressed cautiously her reservations about the political Sanacja. See, for example, BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 52, tom VI, Korespondencja 1926-1928, letter from Moraczewska to Helena Kozicka, dated 12 December 1926, pp. 137-38. See also: Moraczewska, *Demokratyczny Komitet*

this new Election Committee, the women campaigned for the BBWR list generally, but especially on behalf of the women on that list. The Election Committee was comprised of a number of women's groups, including the Women's Union, the Police Family, the Preparation of Women for the Defense of the Country, the Women's League, and the Organization of Women with Higher Education.¹⁶² Some of its main activists included: Halina Jaroszewiczowa, Jadwiga Próchnicka, Jadwiga Maleczewska, Hanna Hubicka, Maria Garczyńska, and of course, Moraczewska.¹⁶³

By imprisoning the opposition just months before the November 1930 elections, punishing any attempts to mount a sustained opposition to the Sanacja, and orchestrating other election "irregularities", the Sanacja camp ensured that the BBWR would in fact win a healthy majority in the 1930 elections.¹⁶⁴ The BBWR won 247 Sejm seats and 76 Senate seats (out of 444 and 111 respectively) in these elections. Many commentators agreed that democracy in Poland became a complete farce in 1930 and that a Sanacja dictatorship, without a doubt, had been established. The pro-Sanacja Women's Union was implicated in the unsavoury aspects of Brześć, especially because nine women from the Women's Union, Moraczewska included, were elected to the Sejm and one to the

Wyborczy Kobiety i Jego Praca w r. 1928 i Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiety. Rozdział I: Demokratyczny Komitet i Jego Praca w r. 1928.

¹⁶² The Polish Organization of Women with Higher Education was established upon the government's request, in March of 1926, as a branch of the International Federation of University Women. See: Editorial Committee [Teodora Męczkowska, E. Grochońska, H. Kasperowiczowa, H. Siemieńska, and Helena Więckowska], *Polskie Stowarzyszenie Kobiety z Wyższym Wykształceniem w latach 1926-1936* (Warsaw: Nakładem Polskiego Stowarzyszenia Kobiety z Wyższym Wykształceniem, 1936). The organization was based in Warsaw, but maintained branches throughout Poland. By the end of the 1920s, it had seven branches and about 600 members across the country; by 1935 it had thirteen branches and 1200 members. The group existed to bring together women with higher education and to provide them with professional advice and assistance. Its intention was also to monitor and facilitate the progress of women's educational opportunities, both in Poland and abroad. The informal journal of the Organization from 1927 was *Contemporary Woman (Kobieta Współczesna)*. See: BN-PK, Papiery Męczkowskiej, Files II.10.302-10.303 and III.10.304. The first issue of *Contemporary Woman* summarized women's roles in public life as the "taming of political struggles" and affecting "a deepening the spiritual culture of the nation". See: n.a., "Kobieta Współczesna", *Kobieta Współczesna* Nr. 1 (3 April 1927), p. 1. Though *Contemporary Woman* did not discuss politics directly, it did establish clearly its support for the Piłsudski camp. See: Wanda Pełczyńska, "W obliczu wyborów", *Kobieta Współczesna* Nr. 46 (16 November 1930), p. 2.

¹⁶³ Chojnowski, "Moralność i polityka", p. 168. For a collection of pro-BBWR election posters for the year 1930, see: AAN, Zespół BBWR, File 34, mf. 31085.

Senate as a result of the so-called Brześć elections of 1930. Together, these elected women formed the Women's Group within the BBWR club.¹⁶⁵

Moraczewska was criticized severely from a variety of corners over her silence when news about the imprisonment of the opposition parliamentary deputies became public. Later, she was criticized for issuing a protest "on behalf of women united in Marshal Piłsudski's camp" and for using a far too gentle voice of protest at too late a stage.¹⁶⁶ She was reproached for offering bland condemnations of the "excesses" in which the Piłsudski camp had engaged, while at the same time maintaining an unwavering faith in Piłsudski and in the idea of Sanacja. In an article entitled, "Naivete, hypocrisy, or simply cynicism?", one women's activist from within socialist circles, Stanisława Woszczyńska, offered a response to Moraczewska's statement. Woszczyńska described herself as a woman who could not reconcile criticism of Brześć with support for the Sanacja, as Moraczewska had attempted to do. Woszczyńska's criticism was published on 13 January 1931 in the socialist *The Worker*, which, as the main voice of the Polish Socialist Party, had maintained a vigorous anti-Sanacja position since shortly after the coup.¹⁶⁷ Woszczyńska took Moraczewska to task for stopping short of launching a full-scale condemnation of the government and of the Sanacja project. Moreover, Woszczyńska made it clear that her article should be taken as a response not only to Moraczewska, but to all women who continued to support Piłsudski through the recent

¹⁶⁴ On election irregularities, see: Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, pp. 320-321.

¹⁶⁵ These women who entered the Sejm were: Maria Bałabanówna, Kazimiera Marczyńska, Halina Jaroszewiczowa, Eugenia Wasniewska, Zofia Berbecka, Maria Jaworska, Janina Kirtiklisowa, along with Moraczewska herself. Hanna Hubicka entered the Senate. See: Chojnowski, "Moralność i polityka", p. 169.

¹⁶⁶ One such harsh criticism of Moraczewska came from Władysława Weychert-Szymanowska. See her "List otwarty do Pani Zofji Moraczewskiej", *Robotnik* (17 January 1931), p. 2. The clipping can also be found in: A-BUW, File 1582, tom I, Zbiór Stanisława Stempowskiego. Wycinki z Prasy.

¹⁶⁷ A collection of press clippings pertaining to Brześć can be found in: A-BUW, File 1582, tom I, Zbiór Stanisława Stempowskiego, Wycinki z prasy. Many of the articles in this collection are from *The Worker* (*Robotnik*). The problem with the collection is that the name of the paper and the date of publication is not always provided.

events. She accused the pro-BBWR women of threatening to demoralize the female [working class] masses, and of ultimately doing more harm than good.¹⁶⁸

Moraczewska later wrote a letter to the BBWR's President Walery Sławek dated 19 March 1932 in which she stated her disapproval - and the disapproval, she told him, of "hundreds like me".¹⁶⁹ She wrote with regret that as an active and committed member of "our camp", she had both the right and the responsibility "to call things by name and not to hide from anybody".¹⁷⁰ She stated: "Mr. President! Everything that is decent, incorruptible and independent is beginning to get away from our camp...". She regretted that "a strong hand" had become a popular term and practice supported by people of "weak ideas and moral value", and she bemoaned the fact that the beautiful and noble rhetoric of national unity "on which we leaned during the first elections to the Sejm in 1928 is melting."¹⁷¹ Moraczewska's complaint did not, however, produce any discernable change in government methods. These methods were justified as having been necessary, regrettably, to pull Poland through a difficult time and to ensure the primacy of the Sanacja camp over the opposition.

As more information came out about Brześć, the whole matter wedged a great divide in the population at large and in the Women's Union as well. Brześć contributed to and compounded the many serious internal problems which had developed within the

¹⁶⁸ Stanisława Woszczyńska, "Naiwność, obtuda czy poprostu czynizm?", *Robotnik* (13 January 1931), p. 1. Woszczyńska's views concern Moraczewska's initial letter of protest published in *The Polish Gazette* (*Gazeta Polska*). See also: "List otwarty do Posłanek B.B.W.R.", *Kobieta Współczesna* Nr. 1 (4 January 1931), p. 14. This letter was signed by: Maria Dąbrowska, Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina, Helena Boguszewska, and Maria Czapska, among other.

¹⁶⁹ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 137. Copy of a letter from Zofia Moraczewska to Walery Sławek, dated Warsaw, 19 March 1932, pp. 77 and 77a. Sławek personally received many letters of protest over Brześć. See, for example: AAN, Zespół BBWR, File 11, letters from Aleksander Karszo-Siedlewski, 15 and 18 August 1930, pp. 59-60 and 63-64. See also Moraczewska's letters to her sister, Helena, dated 28 and 30 January 1931: BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 52, Listy Zofii Moraczewskiej do Heleny Kozickiej, tom IX: 1931. Moraczewska and her sister disagreed over the Brześć issue.

¹⁷⁰ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 137. Copy of a letter from Zofia Moraczewska to Walery Sławek, dated Warsaw, 19 March 1932.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Women's Union. The most prominent of these broke out in the spring of 1931 and involved a cash deficit issue in the Wilno branch of the Union. News of the cash deficit emerged in the fall of 1930, and the affair evolved into a major scandal, and because of the personalities concerned, the BBWR also became involved. The Wilno press, from *The Wilno Daily (Dziennik Wileński)* to the *Wilno Express (Express Wileński)*, was alive with the story of how the local women's Sanacja group was mired in a financial scandal.¹⁷² *The Worker (Robotnik)* talked about a "civil war" in the Women's Union and about the degree to which the affair has created a great deal of "bad blood" that reached into general Sanacja circles.¹⁷³

The details of the case suggest that the founder and President of the Wilno Branch of the Women's Union, Janina Kirtiklisowa, blamed a financial shortfall of over 3,000 złoty on one Hanna Jabłońska, a paid worker at the Union's Wilno office.¹⁷⁴ Feeling unjustly accused of having stolen or mismanaged funds, Jabłońska wrote to the Union's Main Branch in Warsaw and asked them to launch an investigation into the matter, which it did. The Union's investigation showed that Jabłońska was not in a position that required her to be responsible for finances, and that there was no evidence to suggest that Jabłońska had misappropriated the money deliberately. The Warsaw head office concluded instead that Kirtiklisowa, as the President of the Wilno branch of the Women's Union, had ultimately to be held accountable for the book-keeping system and for the shortfall in funds. The Warsaw office pointed to the general disorganization which marked the Wilno branch of the group, and suggested strongly that Kirtiklisowa had inappropriately used her position as a parliamentarian (since the 1930 elections) and wife

¹⁷² A collection of local press clippings about this scandal is located in: AAN, Zespół BBWR, File 107.

¹⁷³ B.S., "Wojna domowa", *Robotnik* Nr. 383 (4 November 1931).

¹⁷⁴ Hanna Jabłońska's side of the story is told in her letter to the Main Branch of the Women's Union, Warsaw, dated 2 May 1931. See: AAN, Zespół BBWR, File 107, pp. 1-2. Jabłońska's letter is one of among five documents which the BBWR assembled as evidence in the case. The documents pertaining to this case cover a couple of hundred pages. The documents in this file are incredibly disorganized.

of an important official to make the Wilno Branch into her own little fiefdom. The Main Branch of the Women's Union thus stripped Kirtiklisowa of her responsibilities, asked her to leave the Union, and elevated one Mrs. Rostkowska to the position of President of the Wilno branch on 6 June 1931. The Union's Main Branch also ordered Kirtiklisowa to repay Jabłońska the money that Jabłońska had been forced to put up as soon as the accusations against her were made.¹⁷⁵

For her part, Kirtiklisowa brought the matter to the attention of the main BBWR, and informed Jabłońska that she would most certainly not repay her the money. She demanded that the BBWR itself undertake a formal investigation into the matter.¹⁷⁶ The Revision Commission of the BBWR, which included Senator Evert, Judge F. Gwizdź and Parliamentarian J. Tyszkiewicz, Mrs. Drzewiecka (Secretary of the Main Branch of the Women's Union) and Senator Hubicka, concluded that there was not enough evidence to make a final and definitive ruling on the matter. They did note, however, that Kirtiklisowa was a valued servant of the Polish state, and that she had had a most difficult job at the Wilno Women's Union. They stated that Jabłońska must be held responsible for the deficit, but added that the deficit may have occurred from simple carelessness rather than malicious intent. They did not believe that Jabłońska should have been responsible for repaying the money, and concluded by proposing that the matter was, at bottom, an unfortunate mistake and that no criminal charges would be laid.¹⁷⁷ Kirtiklisowa was cleared of all wrong-doing. As Andrzej Chojnowski explains in "Morality and Politics: The Women's Lobby in the Non-Partisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government" (1996), Kirtiklisowa was, after all, a Sejm member and the wife of

¹⁷⁵ AAN, Zespół BBWR, File 107, Copy of the Ruling of the Presidium of the Main Branch of The Women's Union, 5 June 1931. The ruling was signed by Zofia Moraczewska, Marja Jaworska and Wanda Drzewiecka.

¹⁷⁶ AAN, Zespół BBWR, File 107, Copy of letter sent by J. Kirtiklisowa to H. Jabłońska, dated 16 June 1931 (Wilno).

a prominent public official.¹⁷⁸ Moraczewska's loyalties were clear: she arranged for the Women's Union Main Branch to repay Jabłońska the majority of the money that she had put up when the affair first broke out.¹⁷⁹

In this fiasco, which was unfolding in the poisonous atmosphere created by Brześć, lay the seeds for Moraczewska's final and profound disappointment with the way in which women were participating in politics. In light of these allegations of corruption and proof of petty personality conflict, Moraczewska could no longer maintain that women were the decidedly "more moral" citizens. Without a belief in the inherent moral superiority of women, the Women's Union for Citizenship Work became little more than a simple lobby group.

As Moraczewska became increasingly critical of the political Sanacja and despondent about the potential of the Women's Union to achieve real change, a struggle that had been brewing in the Union for some time already between Moraczewska and Maria Jaworska exploded.¹⁸⁰ Each woman amassed a coterie of supporters, effectively creating two camps within the Women's Union. The anti-Moraczewska group stated that its objections to Moraczewska and her supporters were "tactical, organizational and

¹⁷⁷ AAN, Zespół BBWR, File 107, Findings of the BBWR's Club Court in the Matter of Parliamentarian J. Kirtiklisowa, 22 September 1931, pp. 104-105.

¹⁷⁸ Chojnowski, "Moralność i polityka", p. 169. Kirtiklisowa gave up her parliamentary seat in late 1931. See also: AAN, Zespół BBWR, File 107, Letter from Kirtiklisowa to Sławek, dated 9 December 1931. Kirtiklisowa was also an editor of *Citizen Woman (Kobieta Obywatelska)*, the Women's Union supplement to *Wilno Courier (Kurier Wileński)*. *Citizen Woman* was edited by Kirtiklisowa and Kazimiera Adamska-Rouba at this time.

¹⁷⁹ AAN, Zespół BBWR, File 107, Letter from Zarząd Główny, signed by Z. Moraczewska, to Jabłońska, dated 12 December 1931.

¹⁸⁰ This power struggle had many causes, but it escalated, in part, over a conflict involving the Education Section of the Women's Union. In December of 1932, Jaworska attacked the Education Section of The Women's Union, and especially its leader, Leokadja Sliwińska. The problems were both personal and professional. It is important to remember that Jaworska was a teacher by education and training, and that she maintained a lively interest in the field of education. She contributed, for example, to *Link (Ogniwo)*, the mouthpiece of the Union of Professional Teachers. On *Link*, see: Jakubiak, *Wychowanie państwowe*, p. 133. Sliwińska resigned from the Education Section, as did some of her supporters, but Sliwińska remained a member of the Main Administration. Moraczewska sided with Sliwińska over Jaworska, and already at this point, "camps" formed. Ceysingerówna and Steinowa sided with the Sliwińska-Moraczewska camp (though Ceysingerówna switched sides by the end of 1933). For more on this conflict, see: Moraczewska, *Historia rozłamu w ZPOK*, p. 12.

political”, and had to do not only with matters concerning the internal running of the Union, but also with the group’s relationship to the government and with a simple personal issue.¹⁸¹ Both camps pledged allegiance to the ideals of the Sanacja and especially to Piłsudski himself. Both were also careful to distance the Marshal from the shortcomings of the government and from the controversial practices being undertaken by the BBWR and in the state.¹⁸²

Moraczewska affirmed that her love for Piłsudski had not weakened, but she did state that the existing political form of the Sanacja project was a perversion of the original intention, and that it therefore jeopardized the future of the state. Moraczewska explained: “I was always concerned about maintaining the purity of the ‘Sanacja’ of society, the health and moral vigour of which the development and future of the state is dependent...”¹⁸³ From what she observed, any claims to purity and moral vigour were empty. She condemned the dogmatism of the BBWR and the undemocratic practices in which it had engaged of late. She stated, rather diplomatically, that the problems arose from contradictory interpretations of Piłsudski’s goals and ideals, of the much-talked-about imponderables. For her part, Jaworska stated that she supported Piłsudski, the Sanacja and the BBWR unreservedly.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ AAN, Zespół BBWR, File 29, Protokół Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet - Kraków, 14 January 1934, pp. 3-5. A copy of this protocol, which outlines the various points of conflict between the two sides, was sent to Sławek on 19 February 1934. Jaworska was present at this meeting. The cover letter addressed to Sławek was signed by Zofia Szydłowska, President of the Kraków Union. File 29 contains other elaborations on the genesis and development of the conflict. The conflict between Moraczewska and Jaworska are also summarized in: Rem., “W Związku Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet”, *Sprawy Kobiety* Nr. 2 (21 October 1934), p. 4. This paper began publishing in Warsaw in October of 1934. Contributors included: Helena Boguszevska, Jan Dąbrowski and Paulina Zbar, among other. The journal was edited by Stefan Gacki.

¹⁸² BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 36, Zofia Moraczewska, “Do członkiń Z-P-O-K.”, 25 April 1934, p. 183.

¹⁸³ Moraczewska, *Historia rozłamu w ZPOK*, p. 36. This statement came from a letter written by Moraczewska to the Women’s Union, dated 15 December 1933. See also pp. 35-40. Emphasis in original.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78; and see also: Moraczewska, “Do członkiń Z-P-O-K.”, p. 183; and Moraczewska, *Historia rozłamu w ZPOK*, p. 24.

A number of women feared that it was not only the Union's association with the Brześć affair that might give women's activism a bad name, but that the personal conflicts between Moraczewska and Jaworska would further contribute to the sense that women could not handle working together.¹⁸⁵ First in her letter of complaint to Sławek, and later in the general discussions which flowed as a result of the Moraczewska-Jaworska conflict, Moraczewska expressed regret that all of these problems had the effect of "lower[ing] the moral level of social life" in Poland.¹⁸⁶ She also expressed fear that public perceptions of women's social and political activism generally had been tarnished in Poland. Moraczewska expressed her concern that people would assume that women "had backed the wrong horse", as it were, and that, in addition, women were unfit for what politics demanded of citizens. If that were true, Moraczewska reasoned, then any arguments which used women's higher morality as a justification for their active participation in the public sphere were empty, to say the least.¹⁸⁷

From 1931, after Brześć and just as the new stage of constitutional reform was launched by the BBWR, Moraczewska again had cause to question her commitment to the BBWR and her faith in what the Sanacja was achieving. While the BBWR organized debates about the proposed constitution, the Women's Union also planned its own information sessions in which women were encouraged to participate; these generated heated discussions and polarized opinions. For her part, Moraczewska expressed her personal reservations about the direction in which the proposals were moving, and she

¹⁸⁵ Parliamentarian, President of the Regional BBWR for the Kielce region (Sosnowiec), and Dr. med. Wiktor Gosiewski wrote a letter to Walery Sławek outlining how the conflicts in The Union's main branch in Warsaw affected adversely the BBWR's abilities to work effectively in this region, and he called for a quick and tidy solution to problems in the Union. See: AAN, *Zespół Walerego Sławka*, File 11, mf. 27899. Letter dated 26 November 1934, p. 30. The National Democratic *Poznań Courier* (*Kurier Poznański*) referred in one of its articles to The Women's Union as "Kwoka", or a bunch of sitting hens, implying that Union women were interfering in matters which they really did not understand. See: n.a., "Historia koncesji na książkę telefoniczną", *Kurier Poznański* Nr. 524 (13 November 1931), p. 2.

¹⁸⁶ Moraczewska, *Historia rozłamu w ZPOK*, p. 77.

¹⁸⁷ Copy of a letter from Zofia Moraczewska to Walery Sławek, dated Warsaw, 19 March 1932. See also:

was clear about objecting to the tenor and spirit of the new document. She feared that the position of the citizen in the state was not elaborated richly or accurately enough, and that in general, the proposals paid too much attention to rights and not enough to responsibilities.¹⁸⁸ Moraczewska slowly but surely became even more convinced of the impossibility of making politics “moral”.

Moraczewska submitted to her conscience and stepped down as President of the Women's Union for Citizenship Work in 1933. She severed her ties with the organization completely within a couple of years.¹⁸⁹ In her role as President of the Women's Union, Moraczewska was replaced by Maria Jaworska, in February of 1934.¹⁹⁰ Jaworska and the new Union had a comparatively problem-free relationship with the BBWR, but even they were occasionally driven to protest certain practices of the Sanacja government. Such was the case in 1934, for example, when the Women's Union wrote to the BBWR to protest the frequent confiscations of opposition papers.¹⁹¹ In general, however, this new Women's Union was steadfastly pro-government and became a sort of trusteeship of the BBWR. Reaching far back to the days when the promise of Sanacja seemed real and achievable, Union member and Senator, Kazimiera Grunterowna, gave the following address upon her ascension to the position of President of the Women's Union in 1936:

We fought and we will never stop fighting for the holy moral values in the life of the nation, for those Imponderabilia in whose name our great leader acted and won.¹⁹²

Listy Zofii Moraczewskiej do Heleny Kozickiej, File 52, tom IX: Korespondencja 1931, Letter from Moraczewska to Kozicka, dated 28 and 30 January 1931.

¹⁸⁸ BN-PK, Moraczewskich, File 114, “Wycinek z Protokółu”, 12 / 9 / 1933”, p. 11. This archival file contains numerous documents pertaining to the constitution. See also: Chojnowski, “Moralność i polityka”, p. 172.

¹⁸⁹ Moraczewska, *Historia rozłamu w ZPOK*, p. 78.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.; and Moraczewska, “Do członkiń Z-P-O-K.”, pp. 180-83.

¹⁹¹ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 121, “Protest”, p. 83.

¹⁹² Moraczewska, *Wspomnienia o moich pracach społecznych*, pp. 33-34.

Conclusion:

The lack of success that the Women's Union experienced in injecting morality into the political process, and in showing that women exacted a higher moral standard, disheartened Moraczewska immensely. Moraczewska was extremely disappointed by the fact that women, through the Women's Democratic Election Committee and then the Women's Union, had not succeeded in making Polish politics "more moral", as she had hoped they would. Her future activism thus centred less on politics proper, and more on what she believed was a purer form of "citizenship education". She and those women who followed her out of the Women's Union went on to form the Women's Social Self-Help Organization (*Samopomoc Społeczna Kobiet*, SSK) in Warsaw in May of 1935.¹⁹³ Over five hundred women were present at the organizational meeting of this new group.¹⁹⁴

It is debatable whether the Self-Help Organization was qualitatively different from the Women's Union, as both had, at bottom, the goal of achieving a higher morality in the public and private life of the nation and of providing a "school of citizenship for Poland's women". Even some of its own members were quick to point this out, and it is fair to say that the creation of Self-Help was in large part the result of the personal conflict between Moraczewska and Jaworska.¹⁹⁵ The mandate of the Women's Self-Help Organization was to serve women from across Poland and to provide them with the resources to create change in their daily lives. The group provided material and financial assistance to women, directed women to resources which they could use to improve their

¹⁹³ The papers of the Women's Self-Help Organization are located in 16 files at the Archive of Recent Documents. Most have never before been looked at, and many of the files are very disorganized. A brief history of the organization can be found in the Inventory. It was written by Wiesław Majewski in 1955.

¹⁹⁴ AAN, Zespół Samopomocy Społecznej Kobiet (hereafter SSK), File 1, "Protokół Zjazdu Organizacyjnego Stow. S-S-K-", Warsaw, 12 May 1935. In another file, it states that 650 women were present at this organizational meeting. See: AAN, SSK, File 13, tom I: Kronika dzienna, Zofia Moraczewska, 2 X 1935 to 27 III 1936, p. 522.

own lives, offered legal advice, helped with child care, and organized lectures.¹⁹⁶ Its journal was called *Our Tomorrow (Nasze Jutro)*.¹⁹⁷

The Self-Help Organization was cautious about forming real ties to governmental bodies, but ultimately did establish an affiliation with the successor to the BBWR, the Camp of National Unity (OZN, or OZON). If the Union's relationship to the BBWR was controversial, the relationship of the Self-Help Organization to the Camp of National Unity was that much more contentious.¹⁹⁸ For her part, Moraczewska continued to maintain faith in the idea of Piłsudski and of the call to fight for the imponderabilia.¹⁹⁹ She continued to hope, of course, that the end result of her work would be a "better" society, and she continued to believe, too, that women's roles in this project were vitally important to its success. But she seemed to realize that the pursuit of these goals would constitute a long and arduous journey, and one which she might not see completed in her own lifetime. The much-talked-about concept of rebirth required a fundamental transformation of people themselves: "The world of women must create new ethical canons, it must base itself ... on a new, strong, and morally reborn person-citizen."²⁰⁰ Like everything else in the Second Republic, these goals were left unfulfilled at the outbreak of the Second World War.

The Women's Union for Citizenship Work had apparently failed in its goal of achieving a purification of Polish life and of bringing a moral revolution to the young Republic. Did it even stand a chance of fulfilling such a grand and utopian agenda? On the surface, the Sanacja was an explosive and captivating idea with great rhetorical potential. But its potential fell flat, and its message reached only a relatively narrow

¹⁹⁵ Member Kałusińska, for example, stated her view that the Self-Help Organization was really no different from The Women's Union. See: AAN, Zespół SSK, File 7, "Protokół", 6 October 1935, p. 19.

¹⁹⁶ BN-PK, Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich, File 36, Credo Ideowe SSK, 4 October 1936.

¹⁹⁷ Copies of *Our Tomorrow (Nasze Jutro)* can be found at AAN, Zespół SSK, File 52. The first issue came out on 12 May 1935, the day on which Piłsudski died, and cost 1 złoty.

¹⁹⁸ Credo Ideowe SSK, 4 October 1936.

sliver of the left-leaning intellectual elite. Indeed, despite the Union's impressive membership numbers, the Union was dominated by a small group of elite women. And these women became mired in the same divisive political wrangling that they had set out to overcome.

For their part, the Piłsudski-ite women were attracted to the Sanacja's emphases on moral healing, to its talk of national strength and community. The Sanacja was a political movement or idea which seemed to value the very traits that women were said to possess. This group of educated and very privileged women attached themselves to the momentum created by the May coup, but ultimately became embroiled in the day-to-day politics of the Sanacja. The association of the Women's Union with the ruling clique was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it was an entrée into a closed and powerful political circle. On the other, it forced the group to juggle a variety of not always compatible objectives. Moraczewska, for one, was acutely aware of these tensions.

¹⁹⁹ AAN, Zespół SSK, File 3, Protokół, 4 October 1936.

²⁰⁰ Moraczewska, *Historia rozłamu w ZPOK*, p. 39. Emphases in original.

Chapter Five:

The Play-Boy in the Sanacja Nation

The last chapter brings full circle this study of the ways in which the Sanacja resonated in the cultural discourses of the Second Republic. The first chapter explored the meaning and the terms of Poland's postwar moral anxiety. During the Sanacja period, some right-nationalist commentators linked easily their disdain for the Sanacja political system with their abhorrence for so-called modern and anti-Polish cultural and moral expressions. The arguments generated at that time reflected competing visions of the nation, and went to the very core of how different constituencies defined the notion of "moral citizenship". This chapter focuses specifically on Tadeusz Boy Țeleński (1874-1941) as the singlemost inflammatory symbol of modernity, immorality, and anti-Polishness – as an absolutely central symbol of the "cultural Sanacja".¹

Țeleński was a very well known, engaging and highly controversial presence on the Polish cultural scene from the turn-of-the-century period through to the Second World War. He first achieved notoriety as a cabaret-writer in turn-of-the-century Kraków, where he was associated with the very successful *The Green Balloon* (*Zielony Balonik*) cabaret.² The Green Balloon attracted to its doors some of the most notable writers and intellectuals of the day, and was widely regarded as a hot-bed of political debate and

¹ The term "cultural Sanacja" appears in: Czesław Lechicki, "Wstęp", in *Prawda o Boyu-Țeleńskim. Głosy krytyczne*, ed. Czesław Lechicki (Warsaw: Dom Książki Polskiej, 1933), p. 5. A reference to Boy leading "a Sanacja of culture and of social relations" was made in: n.a., "Zielony Balonik", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 8 (24 February 1929), p. 123; as well as in: n.a., "Mysł Narodowa na marginesie *Dziewic Konsystorskich*", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Țeleńskim*, p. 181; rpt. from *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 8 (1929).

² On the history of the café, see: Zenon [Pruszyński], *Jama Michalika. Lokal 'Zielonego Balonika'* (Kraków: n.p., 1930); and Harold B. Segel, "'Young Poland', Cracow and the 'Little Green Balloon'", *Polish Review* V: 2 (Spring 1960): 74-97. Journalist Józef Hen includes a chapter on Boy's Green Balloon years in: *Błazen – wielki mąż. Opowieść o Tadeuszu Boyu-Țeleńskim* (Warsaw: Iskry, 1998), ch. VII. For background, see also: David Crowley, "Castles, Cabarets and Cartoons: Claims on Polishness in Kraków Around 1905", in *The City in Central Europe. Culture and Society from 1800 to the Present*, eds. Malcolm Gee, Tim Kirk, and Jill Steward (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 101-122.

cultural experimentation.³ It was during his association with the cabaret from 1905 through to 1910 that Żeleński developed his stage and pen name, Boy, and it was by this name that he was generally known to friends and foes alike for the duration of his life.⁴

Boy is perhaps best remembered as a feuilleton writer, as an unusually talented and prolific social commentator or “social doctor”⁵ who observed few cultural and national taboos, and indeed, reveled in violating them. And this is the Boy that interests us here. The height of Boy’s publicism and social activism, and, it follows, the time during which he was vilified as a dangerous moral influence, dates from the late-1920s through to the early- to mid- 1930s. During this period, Boy led what many called a “sexual revolution” in the Second Republic by advocating the right to civil marriage and to divorce, and by supporting a woman’s right to birth control and to safe and legal abortions. In general, Boy opposed clericalism, condemned virulent nationalism, mocked what he regarded as a pervasive Polish provincialism, and proclaimed, as one critic stated, the “immorality in morality”.⁶ As a result, Boy was disparaged by some nationalist-right commentators as a depraved national presence, as the perfect incarnation of Sanacja (im)morality.

The term “Boy’s Sanacja” registered a link between the political Sanacja that began in May of 1926 and the so-called sexual revolution of which Boy was the

³ *Little Words (Słówka)*, a collection from Żeleński’s cabaret days, achieved best-seller status in the Second Republic, and remains popular in Poland to this day. *Little Words* was first published in 1913. See: Stefan Żółkiewski, “Kultura literacka”, p. 17; and Barbara Winklowska, *Nad Wisłą i nad Sekwaną: Biografia Tadeusza Boya-Żeleńskiego* (Warsaw: Iskry, 1998), p. 152.

⁴ “Boy” is taken from the English word boy, as in “young man”. For a negative analysis of the name Boy, see: Stanisław Cywiński, “Dekadencja Boya”, in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 52; rpt. from *Dziennik Wileński* (1929-1931). Cywiński used the pseudonym *Orthodoxus*. Boy signed many of his feuilletons “Boy the sage” (“*Boy-mędrzec*”). Calling Boy a sage was also done sarcastically by his critics. For one example, see: Jan Rembieliński, “Gdzie obowiązek?”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 10 (9 March 1930), p. 145.

⁵ For a reference to Boy as a “social doctor”, see: Franck L. Schoell, “‘Enfant terrible de la Pologne, II’”, *L’Europe Centrale* 4 July 1931: 587.

⁶ Mieczysław Piszczkowski, “O trzech Boy’ach i jednym Żeleńskim”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 1 (3 January 1932), p. 6. This article is reprinted in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, pp. 79-86. The phrase comes from p. 79.

undisputed leader.⁷ By linking Boy to the Sanacja, critics created a rhetorically powerfully tool to deride simultaneously both the actual political Sanacja and an invented cultural Sanacja which, they argued, the political caesura had occasioned and licensed. What critics perceived the Pilsudski-ites to be doing in the formal political realm – perverting the hopes of independence and threatening “Polishness” – Boy was perceived to be doing in the realm of culture. Both the political Sanacja and the cultural Sanacja, according to critics, were reflections of a single threat and deserved to be combated with all available resources. As a result, a great deal of attention was devoted to Boy in right-nationalist journals like *The Warsaw Gazette (Gazeta Warszawska)*, *ABC*, *The Voice of the Nation (Głos Narodu)*, *Pole-Catholic (Polak-Katolik)*, *National Thought (Myśl Narodowa)*, *Catholic Review (Przegląd Katolicki)*, and *The Republic (Rzeczpospolita)*.

Linking these two potent symbols of immorality – Boy and the Sanacja – constituted a clever rhetorical gimmick. That does not imply, however, that it was either an unimportant, insignificant or uninteresting one. Conversely, it described a connection that contemporaries themselves discerned between culture and politics, between cultural liberalism and a political system that did nothing to stem what they regarded as an immoral cultural tide. In a period of increasing political tension and growing authoritarianism, as the late 1920s and the early 1930s were, it became especially damaging to each side to be associated with the other.

The assumption has been that, because Boy treated cultural topics, because he wrote about sex, divorce and abortion rights more than he did about the number of seats the Sanacja government bloc held in Poland, he failed to inject himself into the most

⁷ The term “Boy’s Sanacja” is used in: Czesław Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją: szkice literacko-społeczne*, tom I (Miejsce Piastowe: Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Św. Michała Archanioła, 1932), p. 65.

important topics of the day.⁸ I argue that Boy was far from “merely” a cultural affairs writer, and that in fact the discussions which he generated addressed some of the most fundamental issues that the Second Republic faced. The way Boy and the *Sanacja* were manipulated by their opponents goes to the core of contemporary ideas about what Poland was and should be.

Writing Boy

The most notable of Boy’s feuilleton pieces were published first in prominent periodicals associated, as Boy was, with the pro-Piłsudski and left-liberal intelligentsia, centred mainly in Warsaw.⁹ Many of Boy’s feuilletons appeared in the liberal *Morning Courier* (*Kurier Poranny*), as well as in Poland’s premiere literary magazine of the progressive and western-orientated intelligentsia, *Literary News* (*Wiadomości Literackie*), to which considerable attention will be devoted below. Boy’s most popular feuilleton pieces were later published in book form. His articles in support of the right to civil marriage and to divorce were published as *Konsystory Virgins* (*Dziewice Konsystorskie*) (1929). *Women’s Hell* (*Piekło kobiet*) and *How to End Women’s Hell* (*Jak skończyć z piekłem kobiet*) (1930) constituted a defense of a woman’s right to birth control and to safe and legal abortions.¹⁰ *Our Occupiers* (*Nasi okupanci*) (1932) condemned what Boy believed was an oppressive and narrow-minded clericalism which had prevented Poland

⁸ Daria Nałęcz states, for example, that of all the press campaigns that she examines in her study, those with which Boy was associated have the least to do with politics and with the key issues that defined the climate in the Second Republic. See: Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem*, p. 8.

⁹ Boy wrote theatre reviews for the Kraków paper *Time* (*Czas*) from 1919 to 1922. He moved from Kraków to Warsaw in 1922, at which point he began what would become a long association with *The Morning Courier* (*Kurier Poranny*) (1923-1931; 1934-1939). Boy also contributed regular pieces to *The Republic* (*Rzeczypospolita*) (1920-22), *Daily Illustrated Courier* (*Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*) (1931-1934), and *Literary-Scholarly Courier* (*Kurier Literacko-Naukowy*) (1925-1939). For a discussion of Boy’s association with various journals, see: Barbara Winklowska, *Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy). Twórczość i życie* (Warsaw: PiW, 1967), p. 7. Boy’s recent biographer, Józef Hen, states that Boy stopped publishing in the conservative *The Republic* because of Narutowicz’s assassination. See: Hen, *Błazen - wielki mąż*, pp. 176-177.

from adopting progressive attitudes to issues like civil marriage and divorce.

Mythologizers (Brązownicy) (1929) was a “warts and all” exposé of one of Poland’s greatest and most beloved national bards, Adam Mickiewicz.¹¹ In 1958, the Polish Publishing Institute issued an impressive twenty-eight volume collection of Boy’s works, published under the title *Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy), Writings (Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy), pisma)*. This collection contains Boy’s feuilletons, including those previously published in book form, as well as his reviews, verses, literary and historical works, and his very few personal papers and letters that have survived the war.¹² Barbara Winklowska has perhaps done more than any other scholar is amassing, organizing and popularizing sources by Boy and about Boy.¹³

Boy’s bold statements in defense of a secular approach to culture and in condemnation of a narrow nationalist sermonizing made him an appealing figure to the Communists of the Polish Peoples’ Republic. In addition to articles in the press,¹⁴ a

¹⁰ For a summary of the abortion and birth control debates, see: Dobrochna Kałwa, “Głosy kobiet w sprawie planowania rodziny w świetle prasy z lat 1929-1932”, in *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego*, pp. 123-132.

¹¹ Boy focused on the multi-cultural (including Jewish) influences on Mickiewicz, on Mickiewicz’s unorthodox religious ideas, and on his personal life. Boy’s feuilletons about Mickiewicz appeared in *Literary News (Wiadomości Literackie)* from 1929 to 1930. See also: BN, mf. 45286, pp. 11-12, Ossolineum Manuscripts, File 13222 / II, Listy i artykuły Ksawerego Deybela, Letter from Boy to Witold Bełza, dated 19 June 1929. This file also contains Bełza’s response to Boy’s letter, dated 21 June 1929, Bydgoszcz, pp. 17-20, and another follow-up letter from Boy to Bełza dated 23 July 1929, pp. 13-14. Bełza’s response to Boy is reprinted in: Boy, “Mrok się przeciera”, *Kurier Poranny* Nr. 178 (29 June 1929): 2. See also: n.a., “Wiatrologja”, *Kurier Warszawski* Nr. 187 (11 July 1929), p. 4. On the controversy Boy’s writings on this issue caused, see: Stasiński, *Poetyka i pragmatyka felietonu*, p. 82.

¹² The series was edited by Henryk Markiewicz. For our purposes, the most relevant volume of Boy’s *Writings (Pisma)* is number 15. See also volumes 16 to 18 of Boy’s *Writings (Pisma)*, each of which is entitled, simply, *Felietony*. A number of Boy’s prominent feuilletons have been reprinted in Nałęcz, *Nie sabłą, lecz piórem*, pp. 163-185. For publication figures for Boy’s most popular works, see: Winklowska, *Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy)*, p. 11, fn. 3.

¹³ Winklowska participated in preparing the multi-volume collection of Boy’s writings. Shortly thereafter, she published an extensive biographical bibliography of Boy’s works under the title *Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy). Twórczość i życie* (1967). In this work, Winklowska divided Boy’s writings by year and type, making it a very valuable source for the historian. See also: Winklowska, ed., *Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy)*, pp. 345-359 and 441-451.

¹⁴ See, for instance, Jan Kott “Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński”, *Nowa Kultura* 51/52 (1951): 5. Kott was on the editorial committee that organized the multi-volume collection of Boy’s works. See also: Tadeusz Bereza, “Formacja Boya”, *Nowa Kultura* 51/52 (1951): 6; and Zofia Starowieyska-Morstinowa, “Zagadnienie

number of biographies of Boy appeared during the early Communist era. Andrzej Stawar's *Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy)* (1958), for example, depicted Boy as a bold voice battling what Stawar called "feudal attitudes towards morality" during a time which hindsight had shown to have constituted a profound "crisis of capitalism".¹⁵ During the Thaw period of the later 1950s, the Polish People's Republic was itself grappling with the highly charged issue of abortion, making Boy's involvement in the interwar campaigns surrounding the same questions all the more relevant and timely.¹⁶ As many writers of the Thaw period pointed out, the topics which Boy raised went to the very core of ideas about morality and the nation, about individual responsibility and collective society.¹⁷

Since the fall of Communism, interest in Boy has again escalated. This increased attention is, in part, a reflection of a wider appeal, both popular and academic, in the Second Republic generally.¹⁸ Moreover, as questions about abortion and women's rights emerge in the Third Republic, contemporary women's rights activists are turning to Boy's writings on these subjects.¹⁹ Historians, too, have begun to treat the interwar

Boya", *Tygodnik Powszechny* Nr. 22 (13 January 1952): 7-9. For a review of articles written about Boy in the 1950s, see: Mirosława Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko* (Warsaw: BWG, 1992), pp. 71-152.

¹⁵ Andrzej Stawar, *Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy)* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1958), esp. pp. 186 and 205. There are many other biographies of Boy. See, for example, Stanisław Sterkowicz, *Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński. Lekarz-pisarz-społecznik* (1959; rpt. Warsaw: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1974); and Andrzej Makowiecki, *Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy)* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1974). Makowiecki's work takes the form of a popular biography. It covers the various stages and aspects of Boy's life, and offers a good discussion of the late 1920s and early- to mid- 1930s. See also: Wojciech Natanson, *Boy-Żeleński: opowieść biograficzna* (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1977), esp. pp. 262-294.

¹⁶ For English-language overviews and analyses of debates surrounding the 1956 abortion code in the Polish Peoples' Republic, see: Hanna Jankowska, "Abortion, Church and Politics in Poland", *Feminist Review* 39 (1991): 174-181; and Hanna Jankowska, "The Reproductive Rights Campaign in Poland", *Women's Studies International Forum* 16: 3 (1993): 291-296.

¹⁷ See Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, pp. 120-121 for an elaboration of this idea.

¹⁸ For one good example, see: Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, passim. This work contains much interesting information and perspective, but the reference information is shockingly inadequate. The popular Polish appetite for Boy is also reflected, for example, in the fact that the notable weekly magazine of an important Warsaw daily, *Electoral Gazette (Gazeta Wyborcza)*, recently ran a series of lengthy excerpts from the newest Boy biography by Józef Hen, *Błazen - wielki mąż*. See: "Tadeusz, Stachu i Dagny", *Magazyn Gazety* Nr. 25 (19-20 June 1998): 22-26; and "Kaprys", *Magazyn Gazety* Nr. 39 (25-26 September 1998): 48-50.

¹⁹ See, for example, Walczewska, *Damy, rycerze i feministki*, pp. 36-40.

battles over birth control and the family planning initiatives of the day as serious topics that reveal much about the social and cultural history of the period.²⁰

Regrettably, however, researchers have had to make due with a scant source base. The bulk of Boy's personal papers were destroyed during the war, as have those of *Literary News*, the journal with which Boy and much of the left-liberal intelligentsia were associated most intimately.²¹ Studies of Boy have had to rely, and will continue to rely, on Boy's own published writings and on the press generally. It must also be noted that beyond the briefest references, there is as yet absolutely nothing of Boy or about Boy in the English language.²² This chapter is intended to fill that void in only a selective way, and in no way purports to be an exhaustive treatment of Boy or his role in the history of the Second Republic.

The Curtain Opens on Boy's Sanacja

Boy was the *bête noir* of the Catholic-nationalist far-right, both for the ideas which he expressed in his publicism, and for the fact that he was himself an activist for and a vocal proponent of the causes which he advocated in his writings. Most notably, Boy was instrumental in establishing Poland's first Family Planning Clinic, popularly

²⁰ No monograph has yet appeared on these debates, though a hand-full of articles have been published. For the most recent articles, see: Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc, eds., *Równe prawa i nierówne szanse. Kobiety w Polsce międzywojennej* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2000).

²¹ Historian Daria Nałęcz draws attention to the fact that Boy received a fantastic amount of mail from supporters and detractors, but confirms that none of these letters have survived the war. See: Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem*, pp. 164-165. The last editor of the post-war London version of *News (Wiadomości)*, Stefania Kossowska, deposited what remained of *Literary News*' papers with the library of the Nicholas Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. This archive was just being established when research for this dissertation was taking place, but sources confirm that there is little in it that relates directly to the interwar period. See also: Małgorzata Bojanowska, "Korespondencja Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza z Mieczysławem Grydzewskim, 1922-1967", *Twórczość* 2: 579 (February 1994): 122-186; and Małgorzata Bojanowska, ed., *Mieczysław Grydzewski. Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz. Listy 1922-1967* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1997), esp. p. 171. The letters of Iwaszkiewicz to Grydzewski are contained in the Toruń archive.

²² A paragraph is devoted to Boy in Katherine R. Jolluck's dissertation, "Gender, Identity and the Polish Experience of War, 1939-1945", pp. 180-181, pp. 298-299. Jolluck merely notes that Boy was involved in writing about the topic of unwanted pregnancies, and that in general, issues such as abortion, divorce and "free love" were controversial ones during the interwar period. In French, see: Maciej Żurowski, et al., ed., *Les cahiers de Varsovie: Boy Żeleński (1874-1974)* (Cieszyn, Poland: Cieszyńska Drukarnia Wydawnicza, 1976). This collection includes articles, translated from Polish into French, by or about Boy.

referred to as “Boy’s clinic”, in 1929.²³ Boy was also a founding member of an important and controversial journal called *Życie Świadome (Conscious Life)*, which began publishing in 1932 and which was devoted to exploring family planning, “free love”, and eugenics.²⁴ In addition, it was on Boy’s inspiration that the progressive social reform

²³ Key individuals involved in establishing the clinic include: Dr. J. Budziński-Tylicka, H. Kłuszyński, Dr. H. Rubinraut, Dr. Lorentowicz, W. Melcer, P. Hulka-Laskowski, H. Krahelska, I. Krzywicka, Z. Nałkowska, H. Boguszewska, J. Wasowski, and Dr. Z. Radliński. Many of these individuals had socialist sympathies. Radliński was an active member of the Polish Union of Free-Thinkers (*Polski Związek Myśli Wolnej*). The Workers’ Society for Social Service (*Robotniczne Towarzystwo Służby Społecznej*) was also involved in establishing the clinic. The clinic taught women about family planning and birth control and offered fertility therapy, but did not offer abortion services. Segments of the media, however, popularized the notion that the clinic really existed only to offer abortions, and that in doing so, it threatened the integrity of the nation. In 1932, the clinic served about 4,000 women. See: Magda Gawin, “Liberalism społeczno-obyczajowy, czyli rzecz o Boyownikach”, *Społeczeństwo Otwarte* Nr. 6 (1997): 26-27; Magda Gawin, “Planowanie rodziny – hasła i rzeczywistość”, in *Równe prawa i nierówne szanse*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarz (Warsaw: DiG, 2000), pp. 221-242; Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, p. 48; and Sterkowicz, *Tadeusz Boy- Żeleński*, p. 203. Mention of the progress being made on establishing the Family Planning Clinic is made in various organizational reports of the Central Women’s department of the PPS, which, unlike the main body of the PPS, was very supportive of this cause. See, for example, BN-PK, Ossolineum Manuscripts, mf. 52694, File 13511/III, Central Women’s Department of the PPS, “Raport”, 1 March to 20 August 1932, p. 1 (arch. p. 81). For Boy’s views on the criminalization of abortion, see: Boy, “Nasz nowy Kodeks Karny”, *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 38 (20 September 1931), p. 1; Boy-Żeleński, “List Biskupi”, *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 48 (29 November 1931), p. 3; and Boy-Żeleński, “Drugi List Biskupi”, *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 49 (6 December 1931), p. 4. The last two articles are reprinted in: Boy, *Pisma*, tom 15, pp.275-280 and 281-283.

²⁴ The history of eugenic thought in interwar Poland needs to be written, and the source materials for such a project are extremely rich. For archival sources, see, for example: AAN, Ministerstwo Opieki Społecznej, Files 550 and 551; BN, DŹS, File XVI A 16 and File ID 1936 Warsaw. Key persons associated with the Polish eugenics movement include: T. Męczkowska, Dr. L. Wernic, Dr. M. Morawski, Dr. J. Budzińska-Tylicka; Dr. J. Morawska, Dr. L. Wasilewski, S. Moszczeńska-Goszczyńska, Dr. R. Dreszer, Dr. Lorentowicz. See also: Teodora Męczkowska, *Wychowanie seksualne dzieci i młodzieży* (Warsaw: Nakładem ‘Naszej Księgarni’, Spółki Akc. / Związku Nauczycielstwa Polskiego, 1934), pp. 10-11 and 50-52. The official journal of the Polish Eugenics Society (*Polskie Towarzystwo Eugeniczne*) was entitled *The Question of the Race (Zagadnienia Racy)*. It was established in Warsaw in July of 1918 as the organ of the Polish Society for the Battle Against Prostitution and Venereal Diseases. At that time it was edited by W. Chodźko, Dr. Lorentowicz and A. Wysłouch, among others. By 1931 at least, the journal self-identified itself with eugenics. It forms an extremely rich source of information, containing as it does detailed reports from various Eugenics Society meetings, events and projects. A less well-known and decidedly less serious eugenics paper from an earlier period was a monthly entitled *Eugenics (Eugenika)*. It published from November 1918 to 1920 in Zakopane in the south of Poland. It was established, edited and maintained almost exclusively by Dr. Tadeusz Mischke. For an introduction to secondary literature about eugenics in other contexts, see: William Schneider, “Toward the Improvement of the Human Race: The History of Eugenics in France”, *Journal of Modern History* 54: 2 (June 1982): 268-291; Richard A. Soloway, “The ‘Perfect Contraceptive’: Eugenics and Birth Control in Britain and America in the Interwar Years”, *Journal of Contemporary History* 30: 4 (October 1995): 637-664; Bucur, “Disciplining the Future; and Felicia Gordon, “Reproductive Rights: The Early Twentieth Century European Debate”, *Gender and History* 4: 3 (Autumn 1992): 387-399. For other good sources on contemporary Polish attitudes towards eugenics, see also: *Social-Medical News (Nowiny Społeczno-Lekarskie)*, the organ of the Union of Doctors in the Polish State (*Związek Lekarzy Państwa Polskiego*). *Literary News* also reported on the activities of the Polish Eugenics Society.

group, the League for the Reform of Mores (*Liga Reformy Obyczajów*), was established in Poland in 1933 as a branch of the London-based The World League for Sexual Reform.²⁵

One well-known critic, Karol Koniński, summarized the effects of Boy's social activism and writings:

Boy says that it is stuffy, so he opens the windows. But is he opening them well? Is he not opening the windows at the back side of the house, facing the even stuffier smelly out-house?²⁶

Koniński later condemned Boy as a "hedonist" and he asked readers whether it was really worth "diverting the whole direction of our civilization [and] devaluing the entire meaning of Christianity... " in order to participate in Boy's sexual revolution.²⁷ Poland had real problems to contend with, and yet because of Boy's influence, all anyone wished to talk about, it would appear, was sex. Józef Czarnecki, a well-known and active opponent of Boy writing for the Catholic press, suggested that Boy was so sex-obsessed that upon seeing the Sphinx, the most salient question for him would likely be whether "his nose was perhaps not gnawed away by syphilis."²⁸

²⁵ On the World League, see: Ralf Dose, "The World League for Sexual Reform: Some Possible Approaches", trans. Pamela Selwyn, in *Sexual Cultures in Europe. National Histories*, eds. Frans X. Eder, Lesley A. Hall and Gert Hekma (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 242-259. The Polish League was based in Warsaw and located in the offices of the Polish Union of Free-Thinkers. It opposed nationalism and militarism as well as religious fanaticism, and hoped to stimulate the growth of "humanitarian thinking" and "ethics" in social relations. The League was especially interested in realizing women's full equality in the pursuit of a transformed society. The group counted 70 members at its inception, including Wanda Melcer, Irena Krzywicka, Józef Wasowski, and Halina Krahelska. See: AAN, Papiery Haliny Krahelskiej, File 383/VI-3, mf. 2607/3, Wycinki Prasowe, 1932-1938, "Liga Reformy Obyczajów", p. 29. From the press, see: Boy-Żeleński, "U źródeł nędzy i ciemnoty", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 19 (10 May 1931), p. 1; n.a., "Z Ligi Reformy Obyczajów", *Epoka* Nr. 24 (11 June 1933), pp. 6-7; n.a., "Z Ligi Reformy Obyczajów", *Epoka* Nr. 30 (23 July 1933), p. 2; and Halina Krahelska, "Reforma obyczajów", *Epoka* Nr. 30 (23 July 1933), p. 5. Boy left the League in 1934 over conflicts with some of the other members about the direction in which the organization was moving, especially over the League's relationship to the Union of Free-Thinkers. On these conflicts, see: letter from Boy to Ludwik Szczepański, dated 17 October 1934, as reprinted in Tadeusz Żeleński, *Tadeusz Żeleński Boy: Listy*, ed. Barbara Winklowska (Warsaw: PiW, 1972), pp. 416-417.

²⁶ Karol Ludwik Koniński, "Dwie misje Boya", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 5 (25 January 1931), p. 54.

²⁷ Karol Ludwik Koniński, "Boy", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 55 (18 December 1932), p. 804. See also: Ignotus, "Imponderabilia", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 15 (26 March 1933), pp. 195-198.

²⁸ Józef Czarnecki, "Drygał uwieńczony nowy prze-Boy Warszawy", *Antena* Nr. 1 (7 May 1933): 1.

National Thought feuilletonist Adolf Nowaczyński offered some of the most scathing indictments of Boy during this period. Nowaczyński complained that instead of devoting his admittedly numerous talents to good causes, Boy focused attention on topics that ranged from:

copulation, to problems of pederasty, Freudianism, planned parenthood, onanism, abortion, to 'friendly marriages', to gays, to prostitution, to venereal disease clinics and to Eros generally.²⁹

Nowaczyński further observed that Boy had undergone a stunning transformation since his move from Kraków, or "under the Wawel castle" ["*pod Wawelem*"], as Nowaczyński referred to the city, to Warsaw in the early 1920s. He stated: "Under... Belvedere he [Boy] quickly became a poet of satire, a master of polemic...".³⁰ Nowaczyński used "Belvedere" to refer not just to Warsaw, but also to the Piłsudski-ites, and to suggest subtly that under the Sanacja governments, Boy experienced a new kind of license and freedom.

Certainly, the trend toward immorality was a constituent feature of the "modern age", and similar complaints resonated across Europe in the postwar period. Critics, Nowaczyński included, recognized this. But critics were also quick to point out that the Sanacja had compounded the typical problems associated with modernity. Nowaczyński asked his readers not to believe that it was a mere coincidence that Boy had become so influential and popular during the Sanacja era.³¹ The position of Nowaczyński and a number of the writers associated with right-nationalist publications was that post-May or Sanacja-era Poland had actively created an atmosphere in which Boy's anti-nationalism, "free-thinking" and anti-Catholicism was possible and even encouraged. Nowaczyński

²⁹ Adolf Nowaczyński, "Reformacja seksualna", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 121; rpt. from *ABC* (24 June 1932). *ABC* had been established in 1926 by the Camp of great Poland. During this period, it was edited by Józef Matuszczyk. See: Notkowski, *Polska prasa prowincjonalna*, pp. 279-282.

³⁰ Adolf Nowaczyński, "Ofensywa: Tragedja Boya", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 4 (27 January 1929), p. 63. The separation of "under" from "Belvedere" by three dots occurs in the original version. Wawel refers to Kraków's historic Wawel castle.

coined the simple catch-all Polish-English phrase, “*moral in-Sanacy*”, to spell out the connections.³² This coupling referred to a dangerous trend in morality, while it quickly and effectively linked this trend to the Sanacja’s political presence. In the hands of the Sanacja’s opponents, the very word “Sanacja” became a powerful pejorative, a way of describing perversion, moral decay, and a wholesale attack on Polish culture, history, tradition and religion. The cultural slump in which the Second Republic found itself had been transformed, in Sanacja-era Poland, into a bona fide, wide-spread moral and cultural crisis.

The Catholic nationalist publicist Czesław Lechicki³³ devoted a good many years to exploring the nature of Boy’s Sanacja, which he defined as, “the desire to replace family life with herd-life, and Christian morality with the morality of the public house.”³⁴ According to Lechicki, it was only during the Sanacja period that Boy was able to unleash his evil and to preach his immoral ideas and ways undeterred. Lechicki believed that May 1926 constituted a momentous date for Poland in more than just a strictly political sense. “In the era ... of the ‘moral Sanacja’”, Lechicki asserted, “Boy threw off completely his disguise and began his offensive.”³⁵ Lechicki used the plainest possible

³¹ Adolf Nowaczyński, “Boyszewizm”, in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Zeleńskim*, pp. 104-105; rpt. from *Gazeta Warszawska* Nr. 389 (24 December 1931), pp.17-18.

³² Adolf Nowaczyński, “Ofensywa”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 16 (21 April 1929), p. 255. Italics in original.

³³ Lechicki also wrote under the pseudonyms *Catholicus* and *Verus Catholicus*. See: National Library, mf. 60364, from the Manuscripts of the Jagellonian University Library 8976 III, tom VI, *Korespondencja Kazimierza Czachowskiego z lat 1912-1942*, letter from Lechicki to Czachowski dated 2 May 1933, pp. 5-6, and letter from Lechicki to Czachowski dated 25 August 1933, pp. 8-9. Czachowski was the editor of *Czas* (*Time*). These letters concern reviews of Lechicki’s works. On Lechicki’s business card, found on p. 7 in the above-mentioned collection, Lechicki describes his occupation as “publicist”. Lechicki described himself as a “decided opponent of Boy” in a 2 May 1933 letter which Lechicki wrote to Czachowski, and appears on p. 5. I have not been able to determine whether Czesław Lechicki’s papers have survived and whether they have been deposited in an archive. Brief mention is made of Lechicki in: Hen, *Blazen*, p. 252; Winklowska, *Nad Wisłą*, p. x.

³⁴ Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom I, p. 65.

³⁵ Lechicki, “Wstęp”, in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Zeleńskim*, p. LXXXVII. See also: Czesław Lechicki, *Boy-Zeleński we wkłęstem zwierciadle* (Lwów: Nakładem Autora, 1933), p. 87. In *The Truth* (*Prawda*), Lechicki reprinted some of the most important articles (which first appeared in the press of the period) criticizing Boy. For this reason, it constitutes an especially valuable source for Boy scholars. In a letter dated 2 May 1933 to Kazimierz Czachowski, the editor of Kraków’s *Time*, Lechicki asked that the journal consider reviewing *The Truth*. Lechicki urged Czachowski to give the book a try and treat it on its

language to link the emergence of the Sanacja with Boy and to suggest that the political Sanacja had released Boy from the constraints which until that point had bound and contained him.

For Lechicki, the evolution was a logical and predictable one, as he considered it a basic fact that the political downfall of a nation dates from its moral downfall. Piłsudski was able to seize power because, simply, Poland was a mess on all fronts. Lechicki compared the effects of the moral depravity which he saw everywhere around him – everything from a mania for the body, pornography, film and “unhealthy” journalism, to a generalized turn away from religious and national questions – to the effects of some powerfully noxious poison on human muscles: they caused weakness and ultimately, impotence: “Like syphilis for the body, so is immorality for the soul.”³⁶ The Sanacja was able to remain in power because Boy and a handful of other had emerged to subvert every last shred of morality and good sense that Poles possessed; Boy eroded the bases for good citizenship. Given what Lechicki believed was the pitiable state of Polish culture, it was therefore all the more important, he contended, for people to speak out in defense of Polish-Catholic morality.³⁷ In one year alone, Lechicki published no fewer than three works outlining the immorality rampant in Sanacja Poland; Boy figured prominently in each of these. Lechicki offered them as “manly displays of civil courage”

merits. “No contemporary Polish writer”, Lechicki wrote, “has lived to be the subject of such a publication like my *The Truth about Boy-Żeleński*.” See: National Library, mf. 60364, Manuscripts of the Jagellonian University Library, File 8976 III, tom VI, Korespondencja Kazimierza Czachowskiego z lat 1912-1942, letter from Lechicki to Czachowski dated 2 May 1933, p. 6. In a note dated 25 August 1933, which was quite clearly written as a response to Czachowski’s refusal to publish a review of *The Truth*, Lechicki asked instead for an informational-bibliographical note to be published in *Time*. To that end, he noted that *Prawda* sold for 4 zł in 1933. Lechicki’s tone in this second letter was defensive; he made a case to Czachowski for having maintained rigorous methods in his research and a broad knowledge base of Boy and his works. He claimed that this rigour was in fact what set him off from other Boy critics. See: the letter from Lechicki to Czachowski dated 25 August 1933, p. 8. This August note was written by Lechicki on a postcard, which, interestingly, bears a pre-printed statement that reads: “Take care of your child – there will be fewer prisoners and criminals.” See: letter from Lechicki to Czachowski dated 25 August 1933, back of p. 8.

³⁶ Czesław Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją: Szkice literacko-społeczne*, tom II (Miejsce Piastowe: Wydawnictwo Tow. Św. Michała Archanioła, 1933), p. 433.

and independent thinking, as “testaments of truth” and “expressions of Christian conscience”.³⁸

Adolf Nowaczyński would undoubtedly have regarded Lechicki as a second-rate intellectual, as part of the “half-intelligentsia”, as the insult went.³⁹ Nowaczyński’s condemnations of Boy were articulate, displayed a nimble use of language and boasted a clever manipulation of concepts and a subtle suggestion of associations.⁴⁰ In comparison, Lechicki’s were melodramatic and shrill, and often pathetic in their embrace of simplistic notions of nationalist commitment and literal interpretations of the Bible to buttress any given position. And yet both Lechicki and Nowaczyński devoted considerable time and effort to the same questions, and both men understood Boy to be a symbol of an unfathomable and dangerous cultural tide that had erupted with the onset of the political Sanacja. Both Nowaczyński and Lechicki believed that public opinion had to be organized in such a way so as to guarantee that Boy would in fact be discredited successfully, and both waged a press campaign against Boy, immorality, and against the Sanacja itself.

Central to understanding these vituperative condemnations of Boy and the claims that he constituted a plague on Polish culture was a wider concern about the role of the intellectual in the nation. Opponents held Boy up as the most egregious example of a perverted Polish intellectual who had forsaken his historic obligation to the nation to lead

³⁷ Lechicki, “Wstęp”, in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. lxxxix.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. lxxxix. These books (some of which have already been mentioned above) are entitled: *The Truth about Boy-Żeleński. Critical Voices (Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim. Głosy krytyczne)* (1933); *Boy-Żeleński in the Hollow Mirror (Boy-Żeleński we wkłętym zwierciadle)* (1933); *A Guide to Belles Lettres (Przewodnik po beletryście)* (1933); and the two-volume *In a Battle with Depravity. Literary-Social Sketches (W walce z demoralizacją: szkice literacko-społeczne)* (1932 and 1933).

³⁹ The term “half-intelligentsia” is used, for example, in: Aleksander Bocheński, “Taczka do gnoju i złota tarcza”, *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 45 (8 November 1931), p. 1.

⁴⁰ For a text that is simultaneously a defense of Boy and a critique of Boy’s staunchest critic, Nowaczyński, see: Aleksander Świętorzecki, *Handlarz jęzorem. Rzecz o Adolfie Neurwert-Nowaczyńskim i spółce w sprawie ‘Boy’szewizmu’* (Warsaw: n.p., 1932). Świętorzecki defended Boy as a much-needed breath of fresh air, a dynamic force in the otherwise languid atmosphere that the Second Republic had become. 750 copies of this text were printed, and each was sold for 20 groszy.

by example and to serve as Poland's conscience. If ever Poland needed a conscience, it was during what Nowaczyński described as the contemporary era of "political prostitution". Nowaczyński condemned Boy as a "slum intellectual" who turned his back brazenly on the nation and embraced the role of "apologist for sexual prostitution".⁴¹

Nowaczyński further reminded his readers that moral irresponsibility on the part of Poland's elite had once resulted in the partitions.⁴² Raising the specter of the partitions was a relatively common tactic used to argue that the partition era was the repository of some great moral lesson which the Second Republic had better absorb. Dr. Mieczysław Piszczkowski argued that the partitions had created an atmosphere of "moral hypocrisy" which perverted fundamentally people's good judgement. So severe was this perversion that many years later, in an independent Poland, people were still affected by it and embraced what Piszczkowski called Boy's "catechism of pansexualism".⁴³ The real heart of "modernity", Piszczkowski offered, was to be found not in "radio, zeppelins, dances, Americanization, the League of Nations, women's suits, four-times divorced women, *Literary News*, free-thinking, military dictatorship and so on", but was, rather, to be found in Catholic and nationalist approaches to culture and politics.⁴⁴ Piszczkowski slipped in a reference to Piłsudski's military coup alongside references to standard markers of the modern age and of immorality to underscore for his readers that all of these things were part of the same trend. Like Lechicki and Nowaczyński, Piszczkowski

⁴¹ Nowaczyński, "Boyszewizm", pp. 110-111 and 115. For a similar view that Boy popularized base tastes and appealed to the lowest common denominator, see: Jerzy Braun, "Atakujemy Boya", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 5; rpt. from *Zet* Nr. 16-17 (15 November 1932).

⁴² Nowaczyński, "Reformacja seksualna", pp. 121-122. In this article, Nowaczyński discusses specifically the frivolity of early modern Sarmatian culture. See also: Henryk Izidor Rogacki, "Nowaczyński o teatrze", in Nowaczyński, *Porachunki i projekty*, pp. 7-12.

⁴³ Mieczysław Piszczkowski, "Krytyka obyczajowości współczesnej", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 54 (22 November 1931), p. 316. The term "pansexualism" is also used by Lechicki: "Wstęp", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. xxxvii.

⁴⁴ Ibid. For Nowaczyński's critique of the Americanization of Polish culture, see: Adolf Nowaczynski, "Kryzys teatru w Polsce", in Nowaczyński, ed., *Porachunki i projekty*, p. 160; rpt. from *Prawda* Nr. 72 (28 March 1926).

believed that during the post-partition period, Boy had become a potent symbol of the intellectual and moral corruption which could again lead to the state's downfall.⁴⁵

Publicism in the Sanacja's "Golden Age"⁴⁶

From 1926 on, "Sanacja" became a very malleable and popular adjective. It was used, for example, to describe those publications which showed varying degrees of allegiance to Piłsudski, the coup and the notion of a Sanacja. The term referred to the official and flagship journal of the Piłsudski-ites, the *Polish Gazette (Gazeta Polska)*, as well as to the Piłsudski-ites' theoretical journal, *The Road (Droga)*.⁴⁷ The term "Sanacja journal" also referred, however, to those publications which were not overt mouthpieces for political positions and which seldom even discussed the major political issues of the day. The term Sanacja journal came to describe, that is, those periodicals with which Boy and other intellectuals of a similar left-liberal persuasion were associated.⁴⁸

The term "Sanacja journal" conveyed that the editorial staff, writers and readers of a given periodical embraced "modern" ideas which included, as Piszczkowski had suggested, everything from dances and masculine fashions for women, to divorce and, apparently, military dictatorships. The term conveyed a rejection of the primary association between Polishness and Catholicism and revealed something about a paper's

⁴⁵ According to Czesław Lechicki, Stanisław Przybyszewski was one of the first to "morally deprave" the Polish nation, and as such, he deserved the distinction of being named "the archpriest of the cult of the phallus". Boy, Lechicki continued, was Przybyszewski's moral and intellectual heir in the modern, post-partition period. See: Lechicki, *Boy-Żeleński*, p. 17; Lechicki, "Wstęp", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. xvii; and Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom II, p. 369.

⁴⁶ The term "golden age" is used in reference to the Sanacja in: Adolf Nowaczyński, "Ofensywa: Morga", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. x (18 October 1931), p. 247.

⁴⁷ Andrzej Notkowski, "W kręgu Piłsudczyków. Poglądy ideowo-polityczne 'Gazety Polskiej' (1929-1939)", *Rocznik Historii Prasy Polskiej* II: 2 (1999): 221-232. Also on *The Polish Gazette (Gazeta Polska)*, see: Jakubowska, *Oblicze ideowo-polityczne*, passim. In one satirical paper entitled *The Moral Sanacja (Sanacja Moralna)*, the Pro-Piłsudski *The Voice of Truth (Głos Prawdy)* is described as a quintessential Sanacja journal that might more appropriately be called *The Voice from Under the Blanket / from Under Koc (Głos z Pod Koca)*. Adam Koc was the surname of a key Piłsudski-ite politician, and the word "koc" mean blanket in Polish. See: n.a., "Zmiana tytułów", *Sanacja Moralna* Nr. 1 (28 March 1929), p. 6. For more on this journal, see: Chapter One, fn. 126.

position vis à vis the nation, religion and morality. According to Nowaczyński, Sanacja journals, quite simply, “demoralized and depraved the public”.⁴⁹ On one occasion, Nowaczyński referred to the *Morning Courier*, the journal in which Boy first began publishing on sexual and moral reform, and a journal which was generally associated with the liberal, democratic and progressive wing of the Piłsudski camp, as “the organ of Lucifer”.⁵⁰ On another, Nowaczyński described *The Republic's Tomorrow* (*Jutro Rzeczpospolitej*) as marked by “a hatred of God, but a love of Boy”.⁵¹ Father Piwowarczyk, the editor of the Christian Democrats' *The Voice of the Nation* (*Głos Narodu*), referred generally to the “putrefied moral liberalism that seeps out from the government press”.⁵²

Though much “immoral literature”⁵³ and many “Sanacja journals” circulated in Poland during this period, arguably the worst offender, the nationalist-right camp agreed, was *Literary News*. Many of Boy's controversial feuilletons about civil marriage,

⁴⁸ See: n.a., “Na Marginesie”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 12 (13 March 1932), p. 175; Jan Rembieliński, “Na widowni”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 25 (5 June 1932), p. 361; and n.a., “Głosy”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 31 (17 July 1932), p. 454.

⁴⁹ Adolf Nowaczyński, “Ofensywa: Nieco o... repertuarze”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 42 (29 September 1929), p. 207; rpt. in Nowaczyński, *Porachunki i projekty*, p. 166.

⁵⁰ Nowaczyński, “Ofensywa: Tragedja Boya”, p. 63. For a discussion of the *Morning Courier* as a Sanacja paper, see also: AAN, PZWDiC, File 506, n.a., “Sanacyjna fortuna kołem się toczy”, p. 63; and Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień*, p. 62.

⁵¹ Adolf Nowaczyński, *Plewy i perły* (1934; rpt. Warsaw: Presspol, 1991), p. 183.

⁵² W.Z. [Father Jan Piwowarczyk], “Minister W.R.O.P. i ‘Minister Oświecenia’”, in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 175; rpt. from *Głos Narodu* (March 1932).

⁵³ Some commentators decided to publish guide books to help readers choose good and moral literature. See, for example, O. Marjan Pirożyński, *Co czytać? Poradnik dla czytających książki. Beletrystyka* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Księży Jezuitów, 1932), pp. 5-6. Pirożyński regretted openly that the Sanacja government refused to act decisively enough in the battle against immoral literature. Pirożyński named Boy's writings as especially harmful to the moral health of the nation. For his part, Boy dismissed Pirożyński's guide as a pathetic display of Polish provincialism and proclaimed that the name Pirożyński should be inserted into the Polish lexicon as a synonym for obscurity, backwardness and buffoonery. Boy published two reviews of Pirożyński's work: “Ku czemu Polska idzie...” and “Moralnie obojętnie” in Boy, *Pisma*, tom 15, pp. 320-330 and 341-347. For a discussion of Pirożyński's book, see: Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, pp. 59-64. Lechicki published a similar guide book entitled *Literary Guide (Przewodnik po beletrystyce)* (1935). He included 1,092 authors and commented on several thousand titles, categorizing these works as either traditional, psychopathic or morally insane. Lechicki's list is useful for providing a sense of which authors were known in Poland. A separate table at the end of the work provides a list of which authors are of the “Jewish nationalist camp”. See: Czesław Lechicki, *Przewodnik po beletrystyce* (Poznań: Akcja Katolicka, 1933).

divorce and about abortion rights, for example, appeared in *News*. *News* was without question the leading literary and high-culture journal of the interwar period. It was willfully modern and “western”, and openly modeled itself on the French *Nouvelles Littéraires*.⁵⁴ It was founded in 1924 by Mieczysław Grydzewski (who also edited the paper for the duration of the interwar period)⁵⁵ and by Antoni Borman as a non-partisan journal devoted to exploring all possible issues relating to “culture”, broadly conceived. During the first year of publication, 3,000 copies of each issue of *News* were published, and this figure reached a height of 15,000 copies in the 1930s. The number of readers, however, is estimated to have reached 30,000-40,000, as a single copy was passed on from person to person.⁵⁶ Despite its popularity during the interwar period, there is little sustained analysis of the role that *News* played in fashioning and reflecting cultural discourses in the Second Republic, and very little at all about the journal in English.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ For *News*' mandate, see: Editors, *Wiadomości Literackie* 1: 1 (6 January 1924), p. 1. See also: Widz., “Refleksja”, *Kurier Polski* Nr. 5 (5 January, 1924), p. 5. At the end of 1926, Grydzewski established what would become a very successful French version of *Wiadomości Literackie* called *Pologne Littéraires*. It was funded, in part, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jan Błoński has suggested that the Sanacja government did this to try to improve Poland's image abroad in the troubling post-coup period. For a discussion of *La Pologne Littéraire*, see: Jan Błoński, “Le Double Miroir: *La Pologne Littéraire*, 1926-1936”, in *La Presse Polonaise en France 1918-1984*, ed. Daniel Beauvois (University of Lille: Revue du Nord, 1988), p. 152.

⁵⁵ Grydzewski was associated with a number of journals in Poland, including: *Pro Arte et Studio* from 1918, and *Skamander* (1935-39). Throughout his career, Grydzewski wrote under a number of pseudonyms. Some of these include: jam, Jotem, MJG, mg, mjj, Scrutator, and Silva. The radical right liked to refer to Grydzewski by what they regarded as his more properly “Jewish name”. See, for example, a cartoon depicting Grydzewski with exaggerated Jewish features and sporting the name “Grycendler” on a name tag pinned to his chest: Bobby, “Boy i Grycendler, reformatorzy małżeństwa”, *Kurier Poznański* Nr. 506 (3 November 1931), p. 9. For biographical information on Grydzewski, see: “Biografia”, in *Wiadomości i okolice. Szkice i wspomnienia*, ed. Mirosław A. Supruniuk (Toruń, Poland: Nicholas Copernicus University, 1995), p. 239.

⁵⁶ The circulation figures come from: “Prospekt na rok 1925”, *Wiadomości Literackie* 1 (4 January 1925), p. 1. The first 1924 issues of *News* spanned four sides or two pages, were printed on large-sized good quality newsprint. *News* cost 50 groszy in May 1924, and shortly thereafter it cost 80 groszy. See also: Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień*, pp. 16 and 26; and Żółkiewski, “Kultura literacka”, p. 56. For a brief overview of what *News* represented in the interwar Republic, see: Janusz Stradecki, *W kregu Skamandra* (Warsaw: PiW, 1977), pp.192-207.

⁵⁷ On *News*, see: Paczkowski, *Prasa polska*, pp. 259-265; and Magdalena Marcinkowska-Gawin, “Boyownicy i Boyowniczkzi’. Środowisko *Wiadomości Literackich* wobec problemu regulacji urodziń”, in *Kobieta i kultura życia codziennego*, eds. Anna Żarnowska and Andrzej Szwarc (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 1997), pp. 133-147. In English, see: Magdalena M. Opalski, “*Wiadomości Literackie*: Polemics on the Jewish Question, 1924-1939”, in *The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars*, eds. Yisrael Gutman et

News originally refused formal affiliation with any political party or camp and published authors from all positions along the political spectrum, including the nationalist-right. By the later 1920s, however, during a period marked by increasingly tense cultural and political antagonisms, *News* became ever-more associated with left-liberalism. It earned a reputation for propagating a vehement dislike of the Catholic-rightist-nationalist factions within the Polish political and cultural landscape, and for mocking Polish national traditions.⁵⁸ *News* formed, in a sense, the antithesis of the National Democrats' *National Thought*, with which Nowaczyński, Rembieliński, Wasilewski and Świętochowski, among other trenchant cultural and political commentators, were associated.⁵⁹ With notable Polish⁶⁰ and foreign⁶¹ names adorning its pages, *Literary News* was read by everyone who wished to remain alive to the intellectual

al., (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1989), pp. 434-449. Interest in the interwar *Literary News* has been eclipsed by the post-1945 variant of the paper, *News (Wiadomości)*, published in Paris.

⁵⁸ Nowaczyński, for example, wrote for *News* in 1924, 1926-1929, 1931 and 1933-1938. At the same time, *News* was criticized by militantly left journals like *Literary Monthly (Miesięcznik Literacki)*. The socialists of the PPS also often condemned *News* for its elitism. For a brief discussion of *News*' relationship to the PPS, see: Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień*, pp. 42 and 46-48. See also: Jerzy Giedroyc, "Zwalczałem *Wiadomości*", in *Wiadomości i okolice*, ed. Mirosław A. Supruniuk (Toruń, Poland: Nicholas Copernicus University, 1995), p. 138; Stasiński, *Poetyka i pragmatyka felietonu*, p. 55; and Drozdowski, *Sprawy i ludzie II Rzeczypospolitej*, p. 198

⁵⁹ It was not in fact until the establishment of *Straight From the Hip (Prosto z Mostu)* in January of 1935 that Poland's nationalist right-wing could boast a real competitor to *Wiadomości Literackie*. See: Paczkowski, *Prasa polska*, pp. 35 and 265. For more on *Prosto z Mostu*, see: Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień*, pp. 241-308.

⁶⁰ In addition to Boy, who made his first appearance in *News* in mid-1924 with an article on Balzac, many others prominent Poles wrote for the paper. One of the better-known (and best-remembered) was Antoni Słonimski, who maintained a regular column in *News* called "Weekly Chronicle" from 1927 to 1939. On the impact of this column on a number of key personalities from the period, see: Paweł Kądziela and Artur Międzyrzecki, eds., *Wspomnienia o Antonim Słonimskim* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Więzi, 1996), passim. Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz also wrote for *News* between 1932-1936, and often used the pseudonym Kazimierz Bazar. See: Bojanowska, ed., *Mieczysław Grydzewski*, p. 39, fn. 8. Irena Krzywicka (1899-1994), Boy's lover in the later 1920s, also contributed to *News*. On Krzywicka, see: Irena Krzywicka, *Wyznania gorszycielki* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1995). Volume II of this biography was excerpted as, "Długie życie gorszycielki", *Gazeta Magazyn* Nr. 28 (10-11 July 1998): 24-29. A "gorszyciel" is a sinner, the antithesis of a good Pole-Catholic and of a good citizen. See: Cwiński, *Rodowody niepokornych*, p. 186. Nowaczyński displayed a particular venom for Krzywicka. See: Adolf Nowaczyński, "Ofensywa: Donna Krzywicka, "The Devils Disciple" [sic], *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 31 (17 July 1932), pp. 458-459.

⁶¹ The foreign authors whose texts were published or whose books were reviewed in *Wiadomości Literackie* included, among others, Bertrand Russell, G.B. Shaw, Anatole France, G.K. Chesterton, Marcel Proust, and H.G. Wells. See: Jan Błonski, "Le Double Miroir: *La Pologne Littéraire, 1926-1936*", in *La Presse Polonaise en France 1918-1984*, ed. Daniel Beauvois (University of Lille: Revue du Nord, 1988), p. 152.

and cultural trends in Poland and across Europe.⁶² Many of *News*' contributors had earned a much-prized spot at a special table at Warsaw's exclusive Café Ziemiańska, where the elite writers and poets of the day gathered. *News* was without a doubt a pro-western, modern, progressive, liberal and "high culture" publication.⁶³

For these reasons, some contemporary commentators argued that *Literary News* embodied a dangerous anti-Polishness and perverse immorality, and as a result, that it constituted a threat to the integrity and independence of the nation.⁶⁴ Nowaczyński called *Literary News* "*The News of the Indifferent*", referring to the papers' unwillingness to take the "right" stand on political questions. He warned that the fate of the nation was at stake.⁶⁵ One Father Charczewski referred to *News* as *Literary-Gynecological News* to underline what he believed was the journal's obsession with matters of sex, while Lechicki called it *Gynecological-Venereal News*.⁶⁶ As historian Andrzej Paczkowski argues, *News* could be confident in its reputation not just as a disseminator of immorality, but as the organ of Masons, Jews and Bolsheviks.⁶⁷

News was also charged by some opponents with political opportunism and an easy allegiance to the ruling Sanacja clique. There was absolutely no ambiguity in post-May

⁶² For a critique of *News*, see: Jadwiga Kosicka and Daniel Gerould, eds., *A Life of Solitude. Stanisława Przybyszewska. A Biographical Study with Selected Letters* (London: Qaurtet Books, 1986), pp. 188-189. Przybyszewska was, of course, the daughter of Stanisław Przybyszewski. Przybyszewska's comments about *News* are taken from her letter to Helena Barlińska, dated, Gdańsk, 1 April 1930. Witold Gombrowicz was also very critical of *News* and of Grydzewski. See his: *Souvenirs de Pologne*, trans. Christophe Jezewski and Dominique Autrand (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1984), pp. 176-177. The Polish title is: *Wspomnienia Polski*.

⁶³ For Krzywicka's recollections of the Ziemiańska, see her: *Wyznania gorszytelki*, pp. 196-197. The popular expression "military Ziemiańska" ("*wojskowa Ziemiańska*") referred to the presence of a number of Piłsudski-ite military men within the café circle. See: Stradecki, *W kregu Skamandra*, p. 141, and pp. 171-174 for an additional discussion of the café. For an interesting analysis of café culture generally, see: Steve Pincus, "'Coffee Politicians Does Create': Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture", *Journal of Modern History* 67: 4 (December 1995): 807-834.

⁶⁴ See, for instance, Czarnecki, "Drygał uwięziony", p. 1.

⁶⁵ Nowaczyński, "Ofensywa: Donna Krzywicka", p. 458.

⁶⁶ Father Charczewski, as quoted in Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, p. 64; and Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom II, p. 554. Lechicki used *Gynecological-Venereal News* as the sub-title to a section of the Appendix. In this section, he commented on and reprinted an article by Jan N. Miller entitled, "Rozkład wewnętrzny *Wiadomości Literackich*", which first appeared in *Robotnik Nrs. 2-3* (September 1932).

Poland that *Literary News*, despite its avowals of a-politicalness and despite the fact that the journal published authors who associated with all points along the political spectrum, was a Piłsudski-ite paper. Many from the *News* circle, including Boy, sympathized with Piłsudski. A number had been part of Piłsudski's war-time Legions, and many had participated specifically in the Piłsudski-led First Brigade. Some, like Julian Tuwim and Antoni Słonimski, were known to socialize regularly with top-rank Piłsudski-ites like General Bolesław Wieniawa-Długoszowski (1881-1942).⁶⁸ It was not until the Brześć Affair of 1930 that some members of this group, including Boy, severed their close ties with the Piłsudski camp.⁶⁹ Others remained devoted Piłsudski-ites even after the Brześć affair had reduced greatly the credibility of the Sanacja camp. Such was the case with Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski (1885-1944), a notable figure in the interwar literary world, and widely regarded to be, as one critic stated, "the little Piłsudski of literature".⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Paczkowski, *Prasa polska*, pp. 260 and 263.

⁶⁸ Aniela Mieczysławska, "Antoni", in Paweł Kądziela and Artur Międzyrzecki, eds., *Wspomnienia o Antonim Słonimskim* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Więzi, 1996), p. 204.

⁶⁹ Koźniewski, *Historia co tygodni*, p. 43. On Brześć, see: Antoni Słonimski, "List otwarty do Wacława Sieroszewskiego and J. Kadena-Bandrowskiego", *Robotnik* 21 December 1930. Słonimski's attitude toward the Piłsudski camp after Brześć is outlined in his memoirs, *Jedna strona medalu. Niektóre felietony, artykuły, recenzje, utwory poważne i niepoważne publikowane w latach 1918-1968* (Warsaw, 1971). The original memoir on which *Jedna Strona* is based is located at the UW Library Archives, File 1482. A portion of the protest is also reprinted in Słonimski's *Alfabet wspomnień* (1975); 2nd ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1989), pp. 91-95. Słonimski also wrote about Brześć in his "Weekly Chronicles" ("*Kronika Tygodniowa*"). See: *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 1 (4 January 1931), p. 5; and Nr. 34 (23 August 1931), p. 4. Boy, Julian Tuwim and Kazimierz Wierzyński, among others, expressed their criticisms of Brześć in: "Pisarze o Brześciu", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 2 (11 January 1931), p. 3. See also: Juliusz Wirski, "List otwarty", *Robotnik* 21 December 1930. Nowaczyński offered his support of the writers who protested Brześć in: "Korespondencja", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 7 (15 February 1931), p. 4.

⁷⁰ The reference to Kaden as "the little Piłsudski" is made in: Karol Irzykowski, "Przewrót majowy w literaturze", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 44 (20 October 1927), p. 1. The main character in Kaden-Bandrowski's *General Barcz* (1922) is modeled on Piłsudski, and the novel constitutes a critical reflection on contemporary political realities and on the quality of Polish independence more broadly. See: Anna Nasiłowska, *Trzydziestolecie 1914-1944* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PKW, 1997), pp. 26-29. See also Kaden-Bandrowski's *Czarne skrzydła* (*Black Wings*) and *Mateusz Bigda* (*Matthew Bigda*). For an analysis of Kaden-Bandrowski as a political writer and propagandist, see: Włodzimierz Suleja, "Propagandowe powieści politycznych Juliusza Kadena-Bandrowskiego", *Dzieje Najnowsze* XIII: 3 (1981): 93-113. For Kaden-Bandrowski's views on *News*, see: BN, mf. 60350, from the Manuscript Division of the Jagellonian Library, Manuscript 8974, III, Korespondencja Kazimierza Czachowskiego z lat 1912 to 1942", tom IV (J-Koło). See the letter of Kaden-Bandrowski to Kazimierz Czachowski dated Warsaw, 26 March 1932, p. 79A. full-scale study of Kaden-Bandrowski as a Piłsudski-ite author and symbol of the cultural Sanacja remains to be written. Such an analysis is outside the scope of this study.

By and large, the actual contributors to and associates of *News* were not part of a group which participated actively in political parties or spin-off political organizations, and members of the *News* circle were not the sort to run for political office. *Literary News* spent little time analyzing the political scene directly.⁷¹ In reading *Literary News*, for instance, one would have no idea that in May of 1926 the constitutionally elected government of the Second Republic was defeated by a military coup waged by an ex-socialist nationalist hero who had managed to arouse the passions, at least initially, of socialists, centrists, veterans, and much of the left-liberal intelligentsia.⁷²

All of this did not mean, however, that the *News* circle was “a-political”, in a narrow sense of political, or that those associated with the journal were indifferent or oblivious to politics, the fate of the nation or the state of culture, as their critics charged. To Boy and his like-minded friends that constituted Poland’s left-liberal intelligentsia, Piłsudski represented a reasonable alternative to the National Democrats. Boy and many of the others who were associated with *Literary News* were doubtlessly relieved in May of 1926 when Piłsudski seized power away from the right-nationalist Chjeno-Piast coalition. They could believe that the assumption of power by a military leader, supported by part of the army, represented, ironically, the victory of a democratic Poland and the best hope for liberal-democratic and secular ideas to flourish. According to this way of thinking, the coup constituted a morally just act waged against the murderers of President Gabriel Narutowicz, against a “clerical-*Endek*” invasion of Poland.⁷³

⁷¹ Natan Gross, “Przyjmują do *Wiadomości*”, in *Wiadomości i okolice*, ed. Mirosław A. Supruniuk (Toruń, Poland: Nicholas Copernicus University, 1995), p. 227.

⁷² *News*’ earliest reference to the May coup came in 1927 in the form of an article by the eminent literary critic Karol Irzykowski (1873-1944). See: Irzykowski, “Przewrót Majowy w Literaturze”, p. 1. *News* published on 9 May 1926, and then again on 16 May 1926.

⁷³ “Endek” was the pejorative form of “Endecja” and referred to National Democracy. See: Adam Michnik, “Kto to ma czelność zwać mnie odszczepieńcem?”, in Paweł Kądziela and Artur Międzyrzecki, eds., *Wspomnienia o Antonim Słonimskim* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Więzi, 1996), p. 178.

It is from this perspective that one can understand how and why Boy was able to write, only a month after the coup, to his long-time friend and women's rights activist Helena Staniewska that:

You have no idea the extent to which, since the May coup, and despite everything that was painful and tragic in the event, the air has become easier to breathe; this must be a sign that something is changing for the better.⁷⁴

It was precisely this potential for change which both sides – the Piłsudski-ites and the left-liberal intelligentsia on the one hand, and the National Democratic and right-Catholic-nationalist political camp on the other – saw in the political caesura of 1926 and the ensuing Sanacja. The former group approached this potential eagerly and with positive anticipation. In contrast, the national-right condemned the potential for great change, found it vexing and threatening, and so, determined to resist it with all available resources. According to the nationalist-right, Boy embodied the worst of Sanacja Poland, and his sexual revolution threatened the moral and religious foundations on which they believed the nation to be built; Boy was a brilliant incarnation of the potential of the Sanacja. In taking advantage of the potential opened up by 1926 and the ensuing disempowerment of the nationalist Right, Boy and the left-liberal circle of intellectuals of which he was a part led a Sanacja of Polish culture.

The Play-Boy Betroths Miss Sanacja

The fact that Boy chose to write on a variety of sensitive topics, that he was associated with the Piłsudski-ites, and that he was an especially visible member of the left-liberal intelligentsia marked him as an easy target for attack. But if Boy's

⁷⁴ BN-PK, Listy Boya do M. H. Staniewskich, File III 11.143. Letter dated 16 June 1926, p. 31. A fragment of Boy's letter to Staniewska is reprinted in Winklowska, *Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy)*, pp. 214-215; and in Barbara Winklowska, ed., *Tadeusz Żeleński Boy. Listy* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1972), pp. 250-251. The same quote is also used in Hen, *Blazen*, p. 196 and in Winklowska, *Nad Wisłą*, p. 121. In 1933, Staniewska was involved in setting up a family planning clinic in Kalisz, where she was then living. See two letters concerning these efforts: letter from Boy to Staniewska dated 24 October 1933, and letter from Boy to Staniewska dated 12 March 1934. Both letters can be found in BN-PK, File III 11.143, pp. 63-

associations and his ideas were controversial and broached sensitive topics, so too were the specific forms in which he elaborated his views. One of the most vulgar symbols of the new position which journalism occupied in independent Poland, according to some observers, was the feuilleton, a short and light vignette of facts, observations and impressionistic sketches.⁷⁵ Boy was widely regarded to be a master of the feuilleton.

The notable historian of literature, Stanisław Pigoń (1885-1968), granted Boy the dubious distinction of being a "feuilleton virtuoso". Pigoń said that Boy weaved together anecdotes, distorted them in their facts and emphasis, and generally, manipulated and misled people.⁷⁶ The popular interwar writer Jalu Kurek (1904-1983) ascribed Boy's success to the short feuilleton form itself. The lightness of the form added insult to injury, Kurek argued, for it failed to pay adequate respect to the serious and all-important national issues which were treated therein.⁷⁷ Lechicki named the feuilleton form as Boy's primary weapon in his "game of intellectual golf",⁷⁸ and added that in using the feuilleton form, Boy failed to pay due respect to serious national issues.⁷⁹

Eminent interwar literary critic Karol Irzykowski also condemned Boy in his very controversial 1933 publication, *Little Darling. Something about Boy-Żeleński*

70. Staniewska was a member of the Women's Democratic Election Committee. See: Letter of Boy to Helena Staniewska, dated 12 March 1934, as reprinted in Boy, *Listy*, ed. Winklowska, p. 411.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of how literature developed and changed in the Russian partition during the late nineteenth century, see: Beth Holmgren, *Rewriting Capitalism: Literature and the Market in Late Tsarist Russia and the Kingdom of Poland* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), ch. 1, 3, 4 and 6. See also: Stasiński, *Poetyka i pragmatyka felietonu*, ch. 1, esp. p. 14 for a description of the interwar feuilleton; and Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin*, pp. 42-45 and 240-242 for a discussion of the feuilleton form in the context of turn-of-the-century Berlin.

⁷⁶ Lechicki, *Boy-Żeleński we wkleślem zwierciadle*, pp. 38-39. For a laudatory analysis of Boy's feuilleton writings, see: Irena Krzywicka, "Nieznany pisarz", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 11 (16 March 1930), p. 2. Artur Hutnikiewicz discusses the somewhat controversial place of feuilletons, reportage and essays in interwar writing in: Hutnikiewicz, "Literatura i teatr", in *Polska Odrodzona 1918-1939: Państwo, społeczeństwo, kultura*, ed. Jan Tomicki (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1982), pp. 501-506.

⁷⁷ Jalu Kurek, "Legenda Boya", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 14; rpt. from *Głos Narodu* (February 1930). For a discussion of Kurek in the context of the interwar Polish avant-garde, see: Bogdana Carpenter, *The Poetic Avant-Garde in Poland, 1918-1939* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1983). For a discussion of Słonimski's views on the feuilleton, see: Juliusz Sakowski, "Słonimski dawniej i ostatnio", in *Wspomnienia o Antonim Słonimskim*, eds. Paweł Kądziela and Artur Międzyzrzecki (Warsaw: Biblioteka Więzi, 1996), pp. 270-271.

⁷⁸ Lechicki, "Wstęp", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. li.

(*Beniaminek. Rzecz o Boyu-Żeleńskim*) (1933) for raising the feuilleton form and anecdote above scientific studies, history and fact. Irzykowski's work was a wholesale attack on Boy and his writing style, as well as on the "pornographic" content of Boy's works. Irzykowski condemned Boy categorically as a pernicious influence on national literature generally. He objected to the fact that Boy was popular, that Boy enjoyed this notoriety and, unbecoming to an intellectual, that he "advertised" his writing and targeted "everyone" as a potential consumer of his ideas.⁸⁰

Modern-day literary critic Theodor Fontane feminizes the feuilleton form, describing it as:

'...an ornament, a witty illustration; it is coquettish and wants to please, captivate and conquer, but it does not at all intend to convince, once and for all.'⁸¹

Like the feuilleton form, Boy's writings were derided by certain contemporaries as reflecting the supposedly irrelevant concerns of a woman; they were frivolous and unnecessary, and because of this, they jeopardized the nation as a whole. And yet, Boy's feuilletons were dangerous – just like a coquettish woman was dangerous – because they flirted with and titillated the readers, aroused their curiosity and awakened their base instincts, leaving them hungry and eager for more. With his feuilletons, Boy committed "moral prostitution".⁸²

Regrettable though it was, the fact nevertheless remained, Nowaczyński contended, that Boy enjoyed a mass following and that he captivated his audiences: "the

⁷⁹ Lechicki, *Boy-Żeleński we wkleśtem zwierciadle*, p. 52.

⁸⁰ Karol Irzykowski, *Beniaminek. Rzecz o Boyu-Żeleńskim* (1933; rpt. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976). For a discussion of the terms of the disagreement between Boy and Irzykowski, see: Tomasz Burek, "Krytyka literacka – odmiany i rozbieżności wielkiej krytyki", in *Literatura polska*, eds. Brodzka et al., pp. 174–186. For a discussion of the fall-out between Boy and Irzykowski which the publication of *Beniaminek* generated, see: Irena Krzywicka, *Wyznania gorszycielki* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1995), pp. 243–244.

⁸¹ Theodore Fontane, *Politik und Gesellschaft*, as quoted in Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin*, pp. 43–44.

⁸² The term "moral prostitution" comes from: Stanisław Miłaszewski, "Błaski i nędze Boya Żeleńskiego", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 35; rpt. from *Rzeczpospolita* Nrs. 44, 47, 54, 61 and 68 (1929).

green balloon seems like a huge Zeppelin flying over the ocean of readers-admirers."⁸³

The public was eager to glean from Boy's words just a little bit of something racy, forbidden and provocative. In the "Sanacja nation", as Nowaczyński referred to Poland, Boy enjoyed cultural and national clout.⁸⁴ Father Jan Piwowarczyk, editor of the Christian Democrats' *The Voice of the Nation (Głos Narodu)*, relayed his own dismay upon reading in the pro-government *Wilno Courier (Kurier Wileński)* that Boy was "a Minister of Education *in partibus*". In addition to the Minister of Education appointed by the President, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Poland has a second Minister not appointed by the President, and that was Boy.⁸⁵ Piwowarczyk further suggested that certain Sanacja circles (with the exception of the conservative wing of the BBWR) expressed clear sympathies for Boy's ideas and "defended the affairs of Boy-Żeleński as though they were their own, with a great output of energy and passion."⁸⁶

"Who" liked Boy's polemics was very important to Boy's opponents. In an effort to undermine Boy as an intellectual and social activist, critics identified the groups which were most likely to respond positively to Boy's writings. It went without saying that it was only the "self-educated or uneducated Sanacja intelligentsia", as Nowaczyński explained, that liked Boy.⁸⁷ But critics offered a further description of who it was that liked Boy: it was women, who lacked "reasonableness" and who, by "nature", the logic ran, were flippant, weak-willed and feeble-minded, that took Boy seriously.⁸⁸ The "Play-

⁸³ Nowaczyński, "Ofensywa: Tragedja Boya", p. 63.

⁸⁴ Nowaczyński, "Boyszewizm", p. 108 and see also p. 104.

⁸⁵ W.Z. [Father Jan Piwowarczyk], "Minister W.R.O.P. i 'Minister Oświecenia'", pp. 173-174.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁸⁷ Nowaczyński, "Boyszewizm", p. 109.

⁸⁸ Karol Ludwik Koniński, "Boy", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 55 (18 December 1932), p. 804. See also: W.Z. [Father Jan Piwowarczyk], "Przeciw ponizeniu macierzyństwa", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 154; rpt. from *Głos Narodu* Nr. 245 (10 September 1932). The same article is rpt. in Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem*, p. 201. Piwowarczyk further made the point that women (and "not just Jewish women", he added) were especially frequent contributors to *Literary News*.

Boy”, Nowaczyński stated, using the English words, was quite captivating to women.⁸⁹ Similarly, the novelist Jalu Kurek emphasized that it was “hysterical women” who were most attracted to Boy’s immoral ideas.⁹⁰ Lacking men’s direction, and with their own minds and spirits “upset by the war”, women became especially vulnerable to the influence of one Boy Żeleński, and, as another critic offered, embraced Boy’s preachings that “abortion and divorce are the eighth heaven of Mohammed”.⁹¹ Yet another commentator stated that a typical female supporter of Boy (“*kobieta Boyowska*”) “was a bitch and only a bitch. Her purpose was... to satisfy sexual appetite”.⁹²

Christian Democratic publicist and dramatist Stanisław Miłaszewski (1886-1944), writing in *The Republic* in 1929, went further to feminize Boy himself. He suggested that Boy self-consciously played the coquette and enjoyed the attention that was heaped upon him. For his part, Boy played up to the stereotypes. As Boy described his popularity:

A friendly commotion has developed around me a, like around a young woman about whom there is a rumour that she is promiscuous. Time and again, the city or the town moves closer to me... And me?... With a smile... I whisper: ‘I don’t know... maybe... sometime’ – which really means: ‘Some more, gentlemen, some more...’⁹³

⁸⁹ The use of the term Play-Boy can be found in a number of places. Nowaczyński was particularly fond of using it. See: Nowaczyński, “Boyszewizm”, pp. 110 and 113.

⁹⁰ Kurek, “Legenda Boya”, p. 14.

⁹¹ Piszczkowski, “Krytyka obyczajowości współczesnej”, p. 316. Abortion was a frequent subject of satirical cartoons of the period. In one cartoon, an angry and menacing Boy is outfitted in a bow-tie and hat. With furrowed brow, Boy aims a large ax at a stork that is carrying a baby basket. Behind Boy are positioned five beautiful and modern women. They have just exited a building over which the sign “Contraception [Centre]” (“*Zapobiegania*”) is posted. The women look entranced by Boy, as though they have entered a dream state. A red heart beats in the corner. See: “BB: BOY contra BOCIAN czyli... BOY – OREDOWNIKIEM DZIEWIC”, *Bocian* Nr. 18 (15 September 1932), p. 1. See also another cartoon about abortion: Maja Berezowska, “Życie Świadome”, *Cyrulik Warszawski* Nr. 44 (22 October 1932), p. 8. *Życie Świadome* became the name of a journal established in March 1936 by Boy, Dr. Budzińska-Tylicka, and Irena Krzywicka, among others. On the abortion question in the Second Republic, see: Anna Tikow, “Poland”, in *From Abortion to Contraception*, ed. Henry P. David (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), pp. 167-171 and 186-187.

⁹² W.Z. [Father Jan Piwowarczyk], “Przeciw poniżeniu macierzyństwa”, p. 155.

⁹³ Boy, as quoted in: Miłaszewski, “Błaski i nędze Boya-Żeleńskiego”, p. 41.

What critics believed Boy advocated, and what critics said the Sanacja nation licensed, implicitly or explicitly, was feminine immodesty and a conception of womanhood that was removed from, and indeed mocked, nationalist imperatives.

Boy very much considered it his duty to do precisely this, and he reveled in the fact that he aroused so much controversy, even referring to himself as “the anti-Christ... with the pseudonym Boy”.⁹⁴ In a letter to one of his critics, Boy stated that he tended to get “nervous” when he failed to arouse passionate reactions (including critical ones) in others: “I begin to fear ... that I am no longer necessary for the nation.... This is my role. To be [an] antidote for your charming lies.”⁹⁵ Perhaps the most well-known of Boy’s views on contemporary women and mothers – and implicitly, on the state and direction of Polish culture – was revealed in the following provocative statement. Boy wrote:

‘I prefer today’s mother, who, returning from a dance, wakes her son and tells him how much fun she had... And we can be sure that when this little son finds himself in the citadel for dabbling in communism, she will be able to save him less often, but also all the more effectively... Good riddance to the prewar mother!’⁹⁶

Statements like this drew vitriolic criticism from many corners. The publicist Izabela Moszczeńska-Rzepecka (1864-1941) wrote a rebuttal to Boy’s vision of the ideal postwar mother by reaching, as many did, to the partition days and to examples of women’s tremendous national devotion in a time of collective need.⁹⁷ In Moszczeńska’s

⁹⁴ Boy, “Przedmowa”, in *Nasi Okupanci*, as quoted in Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, p. 51.

⁹⁵ Letter of Boy to Izabela Moszczeńska, dated 12 October 1928, as reprinted in Boy, *Listy*, p. 277. The letter is also reprinted in: Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy), *Pisma, Tom 16: Felietony* (Warsaw: PiW, 1958), pp. 327-331. For an article outlining Boy’s unusual and useful role as an “antidote”, see: Jan Skiński, “Problemat Boya”, *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 11 (17 March 1929), pp. 1-2. This article and the entire series of which it forms a part is reprinted in: Urbanowski, ed., *Na przelaj*, pp. 291-308. Urbanowski’s work contains a full list of Skiński’s (1894-1956) contributions to the interwar press. See also: J.E. Skiński, “Jeszcze raz życie ułatwione”, *Pion* Nr. 7 (17 February 1934), p. 2.

⁹⁶ Boy, as quoted in: Dr. K.M. Morawski, “Na marginesie polemiki z Boyem”, in *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, ed. Lechicki, p. 29; rpt. from *Przegląd Katolicki* Nr. 3 (1929). Boy’s statement was first published in *Kurier Poranny* 1 September 1928.

⁹⁷ Izabela Moszczeńska-Rzepecka, “Przedwojenne matki”, in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 149; rpt. from *Kurier Warszawski* Nr. 278 (7 October 1928). The same article is rpt. in Nałęcz, *Nie szabłą, lecz piórem*, pp. 196-199. *The Warsaw Courier (Kurier Warszawski)* was one of two Polish dailies with a circulation of over 100,000. The other was *The Daily Illustrated Courier (Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny)*.

estimation, the result of analyzing serious issues “from a cabaret point of view” and of women spending their nights at dances instead of at home with their husbands and children, would be a future in which one generation after another was lost to Communism, until finally, the Polish nation itself would cease to exist.⁹⁸

As suggested in the first chapter, a number of critics made women’s roles in the independent state a key component of their analyses of contemporary culture. Aleksander Świętochowski, for example, pointed repeatedly to the ridiculous situation in which Poland found itself at the end of the first decade of independence: women in the Republic possessed all the rights of full citizenship, and yet they continued to act “like women” and thereby threatened the collectivity. Instead of witnessing a process whereby the “emancipationists” were transformed into “persons” in the postwar world, Świętochowski regretted that the opposite had in fact occurred and that women were wasting their newly won freedoms.⁹⁹ The result of this would be, as one (female) critic offered, recalling a trope that was so dominant in French culture of the day, a “masculinization of women... à la garçonne”.¹⁰⁰ According to Nowaczyński, Boy was “the Polish Marguerite” who

See: Brodzka et al., *Literatura Polska*, p. 87. For a discussion of Moszczeńska’s writings in the turn-of-the-century *Głos*, see: Magda Gawin, “Jadwiga Szczawińska-Dawidowa, Iza Moszczeńska, Helena Landau i Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska. Publicystki z kręgu radykalnej inteligencji (*Głos* 1900-1905)”, in *Kobieta i kultura* (Warsaw: DiG, 1996), pp. 259-261. Moszczeńska had been a women’s rights advocate and self-described “anti-clerical” in the pre-WWI period. See: Ponichtera, “Feminists, Nationalists and Soldiers”, p. 19. Lechicki described Moszczeńska as a “repentant freethinker”. See: Lechicki, *Przewodnik po beletryście*, p. 288.

⁹⁸ Moszczeńska-Rzepecka, “Przedwojenne matki”, pp. 146-157. Another interesting article by Moszczeńska is: “Sursum corda!”, *Tęcza* Nr. 25 (23 June 1928), pp. 1-2.

⁹⁹ Aleksander Świętochowski, “Liberum Veto”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 8 (24 February 1929), p. 121.

¹⁰⁰ Marja Sucheni, “Wyższe aspiracje”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 38 (3 September 1933), p. 560. The reference is specifically to Victor Marguerite’s *La Garçonne*, published in 1922. Marguerite and the influence of this novel in French debates about morality is analyzed extensively by Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes*, passim. Father Ignacy Charszewski stated that: “The feminist movement is really a masculinizing movement.” See: X. Charszewski, *Niebezpieczeństwo żydowskie w niebezpieczeństwo kobiecym* (Warsaw: Druk. Społeczna, 1929), pp. 49 and 51-52. For a scathing indictment of such views, see: K. Muszałówna, “Przepraszam – jestem kobietą”, *Kobieta Współczesna* Nr. 26 (25 June 1933), pp. 504-505. See also: Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom 11, p. 499. According to Lechicki, France was “the eldorado of immorality” where neo-Malthusianism and materialism worked hand in hand to produce a “moral gangrene” of unparalleled proportions. See: Lechicki, *Boy-Zeleński we wkłesłem zwierciadle*, p. 80; and Lechicki, “Wstęp”, in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Zeleńskim*, pp. lxxxix and xxviii-xxxix; Lechicki, *Przewodnik po beletryście*, pp. 14-15; Adolf Nowaczyński, “Ofensywa: Marjanna a Sanator”, *Mysł*

actively threatened Poland culture and integrity, and ultimately, its independence.¹⁰¹ For these critics, women constituted the weak point in the Polish bulwark against degeneracy and moral decay.

What made the situation in Poland all the more dangerous was the existence of the Sanacja. To dramatize the connection between Boy and the political sanacja, Nowaczyński invented a "Miss Sanacja"¹⁰² and offered her up as the perfectly perverted Polish woman: she valued the latest fashions and ways of apprehending the world, she went to dances and knew the latest steps, she read Boy's feuilletons, and she rejected tried and true Catholic-Polish approaches to life. The way in which women assumed the posture of a Miss Sanacja became so important to these commentators because they believed that women, as mothers, played a vitally important role in forging a sense of national consciousness and good morality.¹⁰³ At the most basic level, Miss Sanacja had forsaken her apparently natural and God-given roles and had rejected her obligations to the Polish nation. This new Sanacja-era woman took as her model the likes of the film star Hanka Ordonówna, an especially crass and cheap Miss Sanacja, rather than a true national model in the style of Emilia Plater, a national heroine of the great November Uprising of 1830/31. In flaunting her sexual morality, Miss Sanacja thumbed her nose at good and proper citizenship and the ideals of civic virtue.¹⁰⁴ Miss Sanacja was the

Narodowa Nr. 51 (1 November 1931), p. 278; and W.Z. [Father Jan Piwowarczyk], "Przeciw ponizeniu macierzyństwa", p. 153. Note that Boy was a great admirer of French culture, and that he had translated dozens of classic texts of French literature into Polish

¹⁰¹ Nowaczyński, "Boyszewizm", p. 111. See also: Lechicki, In *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom I, ch. II for a discussion of the perceived effects of women's emancipation.

¹⁰² Adolf Nowaczyński, "Miss 'Sanacja'", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 9 (3 March 1929), p. 143. This article concerns theatre in Warsaw.

¹⁰³ On women's roles, see, for example, Stefania Marciszewska-Posadzowa, *Matka. Fundamenty wychowania moralnego* (Poznań: Księgarnia Św. Wojciecha, 1937), passim., esp. pp. 5-7 and 49-51. See also: Teodora Męczkowska, *Szkoły mieszane: koedukacja* (Warsaw: Arct, 1920); Teodora Męczkowska, *Wychowanie seksualne dzieci i młodzieży* (Warsaw: Nakładem 'Naszej Księgarni', Spółki Akc. / Związku Nauczycielstwa Polskiego, 1934); and (K.), "Dom, szkoła i wychowanie seksualna", *Ekspres Poranny* (10 March 1934), p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ An interesting depiction of a kind of Miss Sanacja is offered in: Magdalena Samozwaniec, *Kartki z pamiętnika młodej mężatki* (Warsaw: E. Wende i Ska, [1926]). This short memoir is a satire

antithesis of the ideal moral citizen that critics had hoped would emerge in the Second Republic.

With the simple terms “Play-Boy” and “Miss Sanacja”, Nowaczyński drew richly evocative links between private and public morality, between Boy, modern (and hence immoral) women, and the political Sanacja that ruled Poland. These links provided a convenient, clear and rhetorically effective point of focus. Whereas in the pre-coup period, critics talked in vague generalities about how the war and the introduction of new and modern ideas had perverted good tradition, in the post-coup period they could look specifically to the Sanacja political camp for having allowed immorality to flourish undeterred. During the height of Boy’s sexual revolution, critics could further attach their vitriol to a particular individual and transform him symbolically into a living incarnation of Sanacja-era depravity.

Many interesting visual representations of these connections come from satirical cartoons of the period. Cartoons are a valuable source of information about culture and morality, about political trends and social concerns; they represent moods, crystallize opinions, and offer judgements.¹⁰⁵ The images depicted and the messages offered, far from being arbitrary, reflect instead the modes of understanding dominant in society at a

simultaneously of the May coup and of modern femininity. The story concerns a Polish woman who has been living in France, with her wealthy husband, for many years. She arrives in Warsaw just as the coup is beginning, and from her vantage point at Warsaw’s tony Hotel Bristol, observes the unfolding of events. The woman has absolutely no idea what is going on or why, and is annoyed by such things as the fact that streets littered with bullets might damage her delicate French shoes (p. 30). With a little help, she finally understands that what she has witnessed is a civil war, and concludes, “everything that is home-made is healthy” (“To była wojna domowa, a co domowe – to zawsze zdrowe.”) (p. 39). Immediately after the coup, she turns her attention to thinking about how nice it will be to see all the extravagant funerals and all the people dressed up in their pretty clothes (p. 41). Samozwaniec (1899-1972) was the sister of the poet Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska and a friend of the satirical cartoonist and illustrator, Maja Berezowska. See: Magdalena Samozwaniec, *Maria i Magdalena* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1956).

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Milton Kenmitz, “The Cartoon as a Historical Source”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* IV: I (Summer 1973): 81. Elizabeth Waters offers some interesting ways of understanding representations of the new Soviet woman in political iconography of the early Soviet period. See: Elizabeth Waters, “The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography, 1917-1932”, in *Russia’s Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, eds. Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel and Christine D. Worobec (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 225-242.

given moment. By far the best and the most successful satirical paper of the period was *The Warsaw Barber (Cyrulik Warszawski)* (1926-1934). *The Warsaw Barber* was established as a weekly in Warsaw in June of 1926 by certain individuals from within the Skamander¹⁰⁶ literary-artistic circle, many of whom were also quite involved with *Literary News*. In particular, Jan Lechoń and the Piłsudski-ite, Colonel Adam Koc, were instrumental in bringing *The Warsaw Barber* to life. Though it excluded no one and nothing from its target, it was widely known that those who ran and worked for the magazine were politically and intellectually tied to the Sanacja camp, and that they received funds from the Sanacja government.¹⁰⁷

In one particular cartoon by Maja Berezowska, a regular contributor to *The Warsaw Barber* and perhaps the Second Republic's most renowned cartoonist, a man and a woman are depicted enwrapped in each other's arms. The woman's blouse has fallen off her shoulder just a little bit, leaving her breasts exposed, and her hose has fallen down to her ankles to reveal bare legs. Beside her lays an article of clothing. The man is shown looking up with an air of self-satisfaction at a police officer who has approached the couple and begun issuing a ticket. The officer appears to be carrying out a routine procedure and his face depicts an ennui that comes from habit. Ashamed, the woman has hidden her head in her lover's chest. In the distance we see other lovers who will undoubtedly soon receive, or have just received, a similar visit from the officer. The caption reads, "Frequent May Events" ("*Częste wypadki majowe*").¹⁰⁸

It is instructive to read this cartoon with an eye to the debates that were raging in Poland at the time that it was produced, at the height of the press war, in 1932, between Boy and his critics. The context is further described by the existence of the political

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of the Skamander circle of poets associated with *News*, see: Stradecki, *W kregu Skamandra*, passim, esp. pp. 178-192. Skamander was established in Warsaw in 1920 and ran until 1939.

¹⁰⁷ Stradecki, *W kregu Skamandra*, p. 134, and see also pp. 134-163. Stradecki divided *Cyrulik Warszawski* into three periods: 1926 to 1929, 1929 to 1930, and 1930 to 1934.

Sanacja. Since 1930, the political Sanacja had turned decidedly authoritarian and its presence was all the more palpable. In this cartoon, Berezowska relied on the reader recognizing the double meaning inherent in "May events".¹⁰⁹ The cartoon is effective precisely because people recognized that the coup had occasioned, whether in reality or only rhetorically, more than just a political revolution. At the same time, the cartoon offers a gentle reminder of the growing presence of the state in daily and ostensibly private affairs, and suggests, cautiously, that no area of life could escape the watchful eye of the semi-authoritarian regime which had emerged in Poland.

The link to the political Sanacja was never far. Sometimes it was explicit, as with the direct reference to the May Events. In others it was subtler and focused more narrowly on the general state of moral (and hence national) decay which the Sanacja government was doing nothing to stop.¹¹⁰ In a cartoon entitled, "The Diplomatic Body", a very sexy and modern woman, the quintessence of a woman who supported Boy, is surrounded by three adoring older men, obviously political figures drawn from the Second Republic itself. The implication is that Sanacja politicians were themselves benefiting from and participating in the new morality and secretly supported Boy in his sexual revolution. The government was part of the problem in more ways than one.¹¹¹ To battle Boy's sexual revolution, therefore, one had also to target the political regime; each Sanacja, the political Sanacja and the cultural Sanacja, reinforced and supported the

¹⁰⁸ Maja Berezowska, "Częste wypadki majowe", *Cyrułik Warszawski* Nr. 20 (14 May 1932), p. 8.

¹⁰⁹ One could also suggest a triple meaning. In its reference to the month of May, the cartoon recalled the recent May Day demonstrations and the worker and peasant unrest that was a part of those. In doing so, it condemned the government's Depression-era social and economic policies.

¹¹⁰ Other cartoons from *The Warsaw Barber* played with the idea that morality had indeed fallen in Sanacja-era Poland and that women were at the heart of this cultural decline. In one such cartoon, two very fashionable young and modern women are laying together on a bed, reading Boy's *Women's Hell (Piekło Kobiet)*, which presents arguments in favour of easily available contraception and which also discusses the benefits of access to safe and legal abortions. The smoke from one of the women's cigarettes leads up to a cloud where two baby angels look down, and say to the women-mothers: "For you this is a game; for us it is about life." See: Maja Berezowska, "Bajeczka Jachowicza o 'świadomości macierzyństwa'", *Cyrułik Warszawski* Nr. 3 (6 January 1932), p. 8.

other. Nowaczyński summed up the connections nicely when he referred to Boy as being “tightly connected to the Sanacja mentality” and as, simply, a “‘standard’ writer” of the “Sanacja Caliban”.¹¹²

The Sanacja, Jews, Boy-shevism and Bolshevism

Historian Anna Landau-Czajka contends that the nationalist far right in the Second Republic commonly used a very particular string of words – Jew, Bolshevik, Mason, Socialist, Communist, Godless, Moral Relativist – to impugn an idea, trend, person or political reality. The words condemned anything and everything perceived to be too liberal, modern and “un-Polish”, and together they formed the constituent elements of one large and undifferentiated category of perversion and barbarity.¹¹³ These descriptors became even more popular and meaningful during the extremely politically polarized Sanacja period. During this time, moreover, the word “Sanacja” evolved to occupy its own important place alongside Masonic, Jew and Bolshevik.

Boy was accused of many different kinds of assaults on Poland, and one of the reasons which his opponents offered by way of explanation was that he was a Mason. Freemasonry had existed in Poland since the eighteenth century, and the Masons maintained a presence in the Polish lands throughout the interwar period. Masonry in the Second Republic did include Catholics, but was better known to be a base for atheists, liberals, assimilated Jews, and generally, of bourgeois intellectuals who supported the

¹¹¹ Maja Berezowska, “Ciało dyplomatyczne”, *Cyrułik Warszawski* 1932, p. 8. An interesting collection of similar cartoons is found in 1929 issues of *Bocian*.

¹¹² Nowaczyński, “Boyszewizm”, p. 105. Caliban refers to the savage and deformed slave of Prospero in Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, and in this context, is used to describe a degraded and brutal character.

¹¹³ Anna Landau-Czajka, “Elementy światopoglądu prawicy nacjonalistycznej 1926-1939”, *Przegląd Historyczny* LXXIX: 1 (1988): 84. Landau-Czajka focuses on the extreme right in Poland, such as the Camp of Great Poland and the National Radical Camp. See also: Anna Czajka-Landau, “Królestwo bez Żydów. Sprawa żydowska w myśli polskich monarchistów okresu międzywojennego”, *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* XLIII: 1 (January-March 1999): 48. For a review of the National Democrats’ views on Jews, see: Wapiński, *Świadomość polityczna*, pp. 424-430; Walicki, “The Troubling Legacy of Roman Dmowski”, p. 34; and Roman Dmowski, “Wschód i zachód w Polsce”, in Dmowski, *Pisma*, tom 10, pp. 87-90.

Piłsudski-ite political grouping and espoused left-liberal views.¹¹⁴ As one historian of Polish Freemasonry, Leon Chajn, has argued, Masons did not have a revolutionary program, but rather, believed in republicanism, a secular society, and respect for national minorities.¹¹⁵ Boy was well aware of the fact that the label “Mason” was regularly applied to him and that his views were considered to be “Masonic”. In one feuilleton, Boy stated clearly that he was not a Mason, and joked that at one time he had in fact considered joining a Masonic lodge, but was discouraged when he could not easily find out where one signed up for membership.¹¹⁶

The Catholic journal, *The Knight of the Immaculate*, linked the Sanacja and its supporters directly and clearly to the Masons. *The Knight* published, for example, a statement made by Andrzej Strug, an actual member of a Masonic lodge, in which Strug praised the May coup as heralding a new era of committed action. *The Knight* used Strug’s statement as the basis from which to assert that of course all Masons praised the May events, and that these people, with the support of the Polish government, were “enemies of morality, enemies of the Immaculate”. The paper continued: “Away with the backward paganism with which the Masons poison schools, art, theatre, film and

¹¹⁴ Virtually any opinion that was not consistent with Roman Catholic Church teachings and a narrowly circumscribed definition of “nation” could be branded with the label “Masonic”. See, for example: n.a., “Na Marginesie”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 2 (13 January 1929), p. 31. On the Masons generally, see: Ludwik Hass, *Masoneria polska XX wieku. Losy, loże, ludzie* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo KOPIA, 1996); and Ludwik Hass, “Portret zbiorowy międzywojennego wolnomularza polskiego. (Losy pewnej formacji inteligencckiej)”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 101: 1 (1994): 91-103. The newspaper *Liberum Veto* was especially keen on linking Jews to Masons and to the so-called “barbarity of the East” and thus to the problems that the newly independent state faced. See: *Liberum Veto* Nr. 1 (2 December 1918), pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁵ Leon Chajn, *Polskie wolnomularstwo, 1920-1938*, 2nd ed. (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1984), pp. 110-111. For a brief history of Freemasonry and a discussion of the evolution of a “Judeo-Masonic alliance”, see: Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism*, ch. 2.

¹¹⁶ See: Boy, “Rozerwalna nierozzerwalność”, in Boy, *Pisma*, tom 15, pp. 48-49. For a discussion of Boy’s claims that he was not a member of any Masonic organization, see: Cywiński, “Dekadencja Boya”, p. 57. See also: Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, pp. 32-33.

literature".¹¹⁷ From *The Knight's* perspective, the Sanacja represented "secularism", and as such, it portended a kind of Poland which they would combat actively.¹¹⁸

Secularism and immorality – and thus the Sanacja, according to some critics – were perhaps even better associated with the Jews. For their part, Boy's critics were eager to ascribe Jewish-ness to Boy. The publicist Czesław Lechicki, for example, invented a distant Jewishness for Boy (he suggested that Boy's mother, Wanda z Grabowskich Żeleńska, was a descendent of the Frankists), and used this to make sense of Boy's apparent anti-Polishness, so evident in the ideas which he propagated.¹¹⁹ Dr. Kazimierz Morawski (1884-1944), a publicist associated with the conservative Warsaw-based *The Catholic Review (Przegląd Katolicki)*, proposed a distinction between a "born" Jew and an "artificial" Jew.¹²⁰ This was akin to the distinction between an actual Jewish presence and a "Jewish influence" in the nation; both were dangerous and constituted, as another critic suggested, nothing short of a "fourth partition of Poland".¹²¹ A writer in the left-liberal *The Republic's Tomorrow (Jutro Rzeczypospolitej)* explained that the nationalist right-wing simply could not reconcile Boy's ideas and actions with "Polishness". To buttress their beliefs in certain fundamentals, they were compelled, therefore, to invent the category of "artificial Jew" to describe those ethnic Poles who

¹¹⁷ n.a., "Z ostatniej chwili", *Rycerz Niepokalanej* Nr. 7 (July 1926), pp. 193-194. For a scathing critique of *Rycerz*, see: W. Rulikowski, "Pomnik zdziczenia umysłowego w Polsce", *Wolnomyśliciel Polski* Nr. 42 (1 December 1933), pp. 1057-1062. For another expression of the links between the Masons and the Sanacja, see: Jan Rembieliński, "Odwet ojczyzny", *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 52 (1 December 1929), p. 337.

¹¹⁸ Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism*, pp. 64-65 and 243-244.

¹¹⁹ Lechicki, *Boy-Żeleński we wklęstem zwierciadle* pp. 10-11 and 87; Lechicki, "Wstęp", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, pp. x-xi; and Świecki, "Pamflet antyklerykalny", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 168; rpt. from *Gazeta Kościelna* Nr. 40 (1932). Another author described Boy's publicism as pervaded by Free-thinking Nalewki-ite ("wolnomyślicielstwem Nalewkowskim") ideas. Nalewki referred to a main street in Warsaw's Jewish ghetto. See: n.a., "Zielony balonik", p. 123.

¹²⁰ Morawski, "Na marginesie polemiki z Boyem", p. 26.

¹²¹ Es., "Nie może braknąć polskiej inteligencji w szeregach w imię idei odzyskania Polski", *Hasło Podwawelskie* Nr. 5 (31 January 1931), p. 1. This was a Kraków paper established in 1929 as a "non-party weekly". It was edited by Jan Kozicki and published by Ludwik Gronaś. It expressed clear anti-Semitic views.

transgressed against the nation.¹²² Critics wielded with abandon the category of artificial Jew to describe depraved trends, people and governments. This distinction between real and artificial Jews was central to the way in which the epithet “Jew” functioned in the Second Republic.

Reaching to Jews to ascribe blame for unwelcome trends and developments possessed a long and ignoble history, not only in Poland, but throughout Europe, where Jews, as historian George Mosse has argued, formed the classic “other”. European racism created categories of “inferior races” onto which anti-national traits were inscribed; for these purposes, Jews assumed the characteristics of a race. Jews were categorized as “sexual degenerates” and were said to possess an uncontrollable and selfish sexual lust which could not be reconciled with ideal and proper expressions of national masculinity and femininity.¹²³ According to some National Democrats, anti-Semitism was absolutely integral to Polish national survival. Jews, both real and artificial, were a foreign and unwelcome element within Poland that, if not battled assiduously, would put the state in peril.¹²⁴ In addition to the sexual perversion and immorality attributed to Jews, Jews in Poland had long been associated with exploitation, dishonesty, rivalry, alienness, and most basically, anti-Polishness.¹²⁵

¹²² n.a., “Dyskusja o małżeństwie”, *Jutro Rzeczypospolitej* Nr. 1 (3 January 1932), p. 6. This journal was established in Warsaw in 1931, was edited by Adam Uziembło, and was published by Stanisław Wiczorkiewicz. Throughout 1932, it printed many articles in support of civil marriages and divorce.

¹²³ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, ch. 2, see esp. p. 36. For an interesting discussion of the “Jewish Question” and the rise of antisemitism in interwar Romania, see: Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania. Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), see esp. pp. 11-13, and ch. 5.

¹²⁴ For a discussion of the National Democrats’ approach to the Jewish question after the May coup, see: Mieczysław Sobczak, *Stosunek Narodowej Demokracji do kwestii żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1918-1939* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej im. Oskara Langego, 1998), pp. 338-364. See also: William W. Hagen, “Before the ‘Final Solution’: Toward a Comparative Analysis of Political Anti-Semitism in Interwar Germany and Poland”, *Journal of Modern History* 68 (June 1996): 251-381, see esp. pp. 268-239. Jews were often accused of spreading pacifism which, some believed, threatened the integrity of the Polish state. See, for example: Maciej Grajek, “Podejrzany pacyfizm”, *Marjański Huf*, supplement to *Wiadomości Kościelnych* Nr. 30 (19 July 1936), p. 1.

¹²⁵ See, for example, the following interesting piece: Ignacy Oksza Grabowski, “Przeciwko małpim obyczajom”, *Gazeta Poranna* Nr. 13 (14 January 1925), p. 4. *Gazeta Poranna* supported openly the

An interesting visual depiction of these connections is revealed in an illustration for a book entitled *Women's Danger (Niebezpieczeństwo kobiece)* (1929) (see: Illustration #2). A modern woman, wearing high heels and a mini-skirt and sporting short hair, is being led, by a ring and rope attached to her nose, toward a building called "Paradisus". The man leading her is a Jewish soldier. The image is all the more resonant because the woman seems oblivious to her impending fate, and is far more concerned with studying her reflection in the mirror which she is carrying.¹²⁶ The image would have reinforced to viewers that Jews had perverted good mores and good sense thoroughly and completely, such that even obvious displays of Jewish malfeasance were going unnoticed, allowing, ultimately, for the eventual take-over of Poland by a Jewish onslaught.

The inauguration of the Sanacja regime helped to focus and foster this anti-Semitism. Though Polish anti-Semitism was at its most virulent in the mid- and later-1930s, references to Jews as a pernicious and foreign influence in Poland, calls to boycott Jewish businesses and to purge Jews from Poland, existed throughout the Second Republic. Many notable and well-respected politicians, like Roman Dmowski, and indeed, many of the writers associated with *National Thought*, were known to believe passionately in the need to resolve the "Jewish problem" in Poland.¹²⁷ The political Sanacja, in part because it included a number of assimilated Jews among its ranks and because it failed to protect actively a Catholic Poland, provided its opponents with an

Christian Democrats (the Number Eight List). The association of Jews with "liberalism" is also touched on in: Antoni Gronowicz, *Antysemityzm rujnuje moją ojczyznę* (Lwów: Nakładem Dobrego Polaka, 1938). For an early statement of the need to "de-Judaize" Poland before moving forward with a general and profound moral rebirth, see: Editorial Committee, "Do czytelników", *Rozwój* Nrs. 51-52 (23 December 1920), p. 1. For a general and wide-view exploration of these themes, see: Magdalena Opalski and Israel Bartal, *Poles and Jews: A Failed Brotherhood* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992).

¹²⁶ X. [Ignacy] Charszewski, *Niebezpieczeństwo żydowskie w niebezpieczeństwo kobiecem* (Warsaw: Druk. Społeczna, 1929), front cover.

¹²⁷ An interesting collection of Dmowski's articles from the *Warsaw Gazette* are located at the Archives of the University of Warsaw Library. A great number of these concern Dmowski's views on the so-called Jewish problem in Poland. See: UW Library Archives, File 1770, Roman Dmowski, Wycinki z prasy z lat 1924 - 1933.

opportunity to represent the political Sanacja as a “Jewish institution” and as having created a Judeo-philic mood in Poland. The way that critics represented the Sanacja – as a product and a reflection of the Judaization of Polish culture – created, ironically, yet another basis for virulent anti-Semitism.

Time and again, critics of the Sanacja made the statement that Jews were the Sanacja’s most eager supporters. The pro-National Democratic and anti-Sanacja *Poznań Courier* (*Kurier Poznański*) referred to “the Sanacja-Jewish flirt”.¹²⁸ The English term *moral-in-Semity* emerged as a variation of the oft-used *moral insanity*,¹²⁹ but went further and implicated the Jews in the immorality that was acknowledged in right-nationalist circles to be rampant in Sanacja Poland.¹³⁰ Nowaczyński stated plainly that Boy was popular among the “Jews and the Sanacja elite”, and he named the Jews specifically as being particularly susceptible to falling for the Sanacja sham and as lapping up Boy’s ideas.¹³¹ The influential National Democratic paper, *The Warsaw Gazette*, stated that the Sanacja’s failure to tackle head-on the “Jewish problem” in Poland was one of its most serious short-comings.¹³² Sanacja opposition election posters regularly equated a vote for the Sanacja camp as a vote against Poles and the Catholic Church, against tradition and history, and a vote for the Jews.¹³³ One Catholic-National poster created for the 1928 elections warned of the “invasion of Poland by Jews”, and stated plainly why citizens should not vote for the BBWR: “...the Sanacja has given Jews every possibility to realize

¹²⁸ n.a., “Sanacyjno-żydowskie czułości”, *Kurier Poznański* Nr. 518 (10 November 1931), p. 2.

¹²⁹ The English term “moral insanity” is used in a number of places in publicism of the period. See, for example: Stefan Rayski, “O banicję czarnych charakterów”, *Straż Polska* Nr. 8 (August 1926), p. 2; Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom I, p. 187; Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom II, p. 285; and Lechicki, “Wstęp”, in *Prawda o Boyu-Zeleńskim*, ed. Lechicki, p. xx.

¹³⁰ n.a., “Moral-in-semity”, *Gazeta Warszawska* Nr. 75 (12 March 1933), p. 13.

¹³¹ Adolf Nowaczyński, “Ofensywa”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 16 (21 April 1929), p. 255. A very similar view is expressed in: Nowaczyński, “Boyszewizm”, pp. 104 and 107. The assumption that Jews were the most avid supporters of the Sanacja regime is made time and again. See, for example: Tadeusz Bielicki, “Pozory siły”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 51 (20 November 1932), p. 733; and Nowaczyński, “Boyszewizm”, p. 104.

¹³² n.a., “Nie da się dłużej przemilczać”, *Gazeta Warszawska* Nr. 84 (18 March 1933), p. 3.

¹³³ A representative sample of Sanacja-era election posters which singled out Jews in this way can be found at: AAN, Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, Files 73, 103 and 199.

their efforts to control Polish culture and to cut it off from its essential Polish elements.”¹³⁴

Shortly after the May coup, one concerned *National Thought* columnist lamented that the Sanacja version of moral rebirth would see the country taken over by a Jewish presence, and this, in turn, portended a time when Poles would be second-class citizens in “their own” country.¹³⁵ Another *National Thought* commentator, Stefan Sacha, stated plainly that: “The Sanacja is today mostly a force that tears apart existing ties of national, religious and social life.”¹³⁶ Central to Sacha’s criticism was that the Sanacja exhibited clear anti-Catholic and pro-Jewish tendencies.¹³⁷ Sacha wondered at the fact that Sanacja supporters agreed with the idea of a “Palestine for the Jews’, while ironically, it rejected the motto, “Poland for the Poles”.¹³⁸

Aleksander Świętochowski echoed this way of thinking, concluding that the situation was now so grave that Poland “received the blessing only of one power: the Palestinian rabbi.”¹³⁹ Reflecting on the decade that had passed since the inception of the Sanacja, one writer for the virulently anti-Semitic *At-the-Base-of-Wawel Watchword* (*Hasło Podwawelskie*) described the Sanacja period as one in which once-noble ideas like “Poland”, “Pole” and “nation” had developed negative associations: “We must rehabilitate the Polishness that has been defiled and violated by the Jews.”¹⁴⁰

The journal which best represented the supposed and much-feared Jewish-Sanacja take-over of Polish culture was *Literary News*. *News* was vilified by the national-right

¹³⁴ AAN, Zbiór Druków Ulotnych, File 103, Komitet Katolicko-Narodowy, 1928. No page numbers are provided in this file.

¹³⁵ n.a., “Pod gazową osłoną moralności”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 26 (19 June 1926), p. 368.

¹³⁶ Stefan Sacha, “Ciemności sanacyjne”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 36 (18 August 1929), p. 98. For a discussion of how the Sanacja is full of contradictions, see: Karol Ludwik Koniński, “Komasacja”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 30 (27 July 1930), pp. 461-462.

¹³⁷ Sacha, “Ciemności sanacyjne”, pp. 97-99.

¹³⁸ Stefan Sacha, “Rozkład i pustka”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 37 (25 August 1929), p. 115.

¹³⁹ Aleksander Świętochowski, “Liberum Veto”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 3 (1 February 1928), p. 52. Świętochowski argued that he only objected to those Jews who in some capacity worked against Poland. For an elaboration of this point, see: Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski*, p. 285.

for propagating immorality and for simultaneously supporting the political Sanacja, as argued above. Despite the fact that the popular image of *News* was that of a “Judeo-philic”,¹⁴¹ and despite the fact that a large number of assimilated Jews contributed regularly to editions of *Literary News*, specifically or narrowly “Jewish issues” seldom appeared on its pages. It was simply not *News*’ style to focus on particularistic regional or ethnic questions.¹⁴² What critics referred to when they condemned *News* as a “Jewish” paper had more to do with the kinds of questions which its writers raised and with the general disinclination of the paper to foster a particular vision of Polish nationalism which would have affirmed the connections between Polishness and Catholicism. One columnist referred to *News* as *Jadą Moški Literackie*, which translates roughly as *The Literary Jews are Coming*, or as *Here Come the Literary Moshes*.¹⁴³ *Jado Moški* (*The Jews are Coming*) sounds like *Wiadomości* (*News*). This reinforced the already well-established and culturally familiar stereotype that linked left politics and Jews (as in the phrase “liberal-Judeo-philic”),¹⁴⁴ and cleverly invoked the much talked about “Jewish invasion” of Poland.¹⁴⁵ The National Democrats’ *Warsaw Gazette* named *Literary News*

¹⁴⁰ E.T., “O rehabilitację polskości”, *Hasło Podwawelskie* Nr. 27 (13 September 1936), p. 1.

¹⁴¹ Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom II, p. 391.

¹⁴² Słonimski was well-known for his 1924 attacks in *News* on Jewish nationalism, separatism and chauvinism. In launching these criticisms, Słonimski raised the ire of many Jews. At the same time, he angered Polish nationalists by saying that he believed the best talents and the most fruitful results would emerge from a mixing of Polishness and Jewishness. His critics accused him, of course, of being Jewish. One critic stated: “If he bears a Polish surname and first name, it is only to confuse public opinion.” See: Franciszek Lipiński, “O ‘krytykach’ A. Słonimskiego”, *Świat i Prawda* Nr. 29 (1925), p. 646. See also: Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień*, p. 49. For a very good discussion of *News*’ views on the Jewish question, see: Opalski, “*Wiadomości Literackie*”, pp. 434–449.

¹⁴³ The latter translation comes from: Opalski, “*Wiadomości Literackie*”, p. 436.

¹⁴⁴ Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom II, p. 285.

¹⁴⁵ Gross, “Przyjmują do *Wiadomości*”, p. 227. *Jadą Moški Literackie* was also the name of a four-page-long satirical issue of *News* that came out shortly after the May coup. The editor of the satirical issue of *News* was “Eljasz Zielski” from Lwów, though it remains unclear to this day who actually wrote the issue. This special issue of *News* was dated “Sunday, every July, 1926” and was not mailed to subscribers. It mocked all the leading poets associated with *News*, and revelled in becoming all that the critics accused *News* of being. Julian Tuwim became Tertuljan Juwim, for example, Jan Lechoń became Jan Lichoń, and Antoni Słonimski became Frantoni Słorymski. For his part, Słonimski denied having written the satirical issue, and suspected instead some anti-semites from Kraków or Lwów. See: Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień*, pp. 49–51. Koźniewski states that copies of this issue are quite rare and extremely difficult to locate. I have not been able to locate one.

as a singularly effective promoter of immoral views precisely because *News* was “published and edited by Jews”.¹⁴⁶

Never far behind the designation “Jewish” was the label “Bolshevik”.¹⁴⁷ Boy and many of his like-minded colleagues were in fact genuinely intellectually interested in certain cultural and social aspects of the Soviet Communist experiment, and *Literary News* sometimes wrote about and analyzed aspects of Communism on its pages.¹⁴⁸ As such, it was extremely easy for critics to deride Boy as a Bolshevik and *Literary News* as the home base for Bolshevik operations in Poland. “Bolshevik” could describe a person or an act, but could also be used to convey a general attitude towards certain national, moral and cultural questions.¹⁴⁹ Just as Jews were divided into real Jews and ethical Jews, so Bolsheviks were similarly divided. It therefore mattered little that Boy was not an actual Bolshevik. One columnist defined “de facto Bolsheviks” according to “mores and views on God, the person, the nation and the state”.¹⁵⁰ The columnist further employed the term “ethical Bolshevik” to describe the *News* writer, staunch Piłsudski-ite and novelist, Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski: “a lack of moral feeling masks communist ideology”, the critic warned.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ n.a., “Żydzi i ustawa małżeńskie”, *Gazeta Warszawska* Nr. 387 (22 December 1931), p. 3. For its part, *News* took great pleasure in mocking the political Right, especially its shrill proclamations of a Jewish invasion of Poland. Opalski makes the argument that *News* used satire as a political weapon, and that the Right’s anti-Semitism was often a subject of this satire. See: Opalski, “*Wiadomości Literackie*”, p. 446.

¹⁴⁷ For a discussion of “Judeo-Communism”, see: Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism*, ch. 4.

¹⁴⁸ See: Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień*, pp. 74-78 for a discussion of how *News* treated Soviet topics. A special issue of *News* regarding all matters Soviet appeared on 29 October 1933, for example, and stands as an especially rich testament to *News*’ fascination with the Soviet Union. A segment of the Polish nationalist-right argued that this issue was proof of *News*’ Bolshevism and of the influence of “Judeo-Communism” within Polish society generally.

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, Adolf Nowaczyński, “Ofensywa: Antiwersal”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 28 (7 July 1929), p. 15; and Adolf Nowaczyński, “Ofensywa: ‘Sanacja’ i Sowietci”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 28 (7 June 1931), p. 367. See also: n.a., “Ku czemu idziemy?”, *Sygnaly* Nr. 3 (January 1934), pp. 1-2. The author of this last article states that anyone who thinks “differently” is castigated as a “bolshevik, mason, jew, communist”.

¹⁵⁰ n.a., “Na Marginesie”, *Mysł Narodowa* Nr. 2 (11 January 1931), p. 31. See also: Małgorzata Domagalska, “Żydzi w Ofensywie Adolfa Nowaczyńskiego”, *Mysł Narodowa* 1929-1934, and in *Prosto z Mostu* 1938-1939” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Polish Philology, University of Łódź, 1991).

¹⁵¹ n.a., “Na Marginesie”, p. 31. Nowaczyński issued a kind of defense of Kaden in: “Boyszewizm”, p. 105. Boy called Kaden’s works only “modestly vulgar” compared to Boy’s works.

Nowaczyński defined Bolshevism's counterpart in the realm of culture and morality and, as became his trademark, introduced a neologism into the Polish language of the period.¹⁵² Boy-shevism (*Boy-szewizm*) suggested a very clear association between Boy and Bolsheviks and underscored the suggestion that the Boy phenomenon was real and dangerous and that it had the potential to spread quickly. Nowaczyński stated:

Bolshevism is a world view and an anticipation. Boy-shevism is a fad and a narcotic, but one as harmful as 'coco'....¹⁵³

Boy-shevism provided commentators with a catchy and powerful short-hand with which to deride Boy and the kinds of ideas with which he was associated. This was a stunningly effective tactic that went a great distance towards planting powerful associations in the minds of contemporaries. According to Nowaczyński, Boy's only "social service" was to pervert and "de-Christianize" Polish morality and to Boy-shevize the Polish intelligentsia.¹⁵⁴

Czesław Lechicki argued similarly:

The battle with Boy is not a battle with one bad person that will pass us by, but is a battle with the outpost of Bolshevism, with the conspiratorial mafia that poisons the soul and, with its bacteria of anarchy, poisons the atmosphere of public life.¹⁵⁵

The result of the quick spread of Boy-shevism, according to Lechicki, was a perversion of models of femininity and masculinity and a propagation of "gender communism"

¹⁵² As Irena Krzywicka – author and lover of Boy – pointed out in an article in *News*, Boy was himself a master of invention in this regard. Krzywicka noted that many new words in the Second Republic – like "*dziewica konsystorska*" (konsistory virgins), for example – concerned the sexual revolution of which Boy was said to be the undisputed leader. See: Irena Krzywicka, "Nieznany pisarz", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 11 (16 March 1930), p. 2.

¹⁵³ Nowaczyński, "Boyszewizm", p. 105. The term "Boy-shevism" was used by a variety of authors, but according to Father Piwowarczyk, it was coined by Nowaczyński himself. See: W.Z. [Father Jan Piwowarczyk], "Minister WROP i Minister oświeceniowi Boya", p. 174. For other examples of the use of the term Boy-shevism, see: Lechicki, "Wstęp", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, pp. lxxv, lxxxvii and lxxxix; Świecki., "Pamflet antyklerykalny", p. 170; and Nowaczyński, "Reformacja seksualna", p.3. Its use is also mentioned in Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁴ Nowaczyński, "Boyszewizm", p. 115.

¹⁵⁵ Lechicki, "Wstęp", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. LXXXVII. See also: Lechicki, *Przewodnik po beletryście*, p. 369. This same quote is used in: Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, p. 8. Dołęgowska-Wysocka further takes up the connections between Boy and Bolshevism on pp. 52-53.

which no nation could withstand.¹⁵⁶ Another critic summarized simply that: “The strength of Boy-shevism is the weakness of Poland.”¹⁵⁷

Bolshevism was further linked to the ruling clique. Lechicki repeated a saying which “a certain witty landowner” made up:

Polish politics today is disseminated by the BB [the BBWR, the Non-Party Bloc for Cooperation with the Government]; whereas Bolshevism is disseminated by the BBB [*Bezkarność, Bezczelność, Błaznowanie / Impunity, Insolence, Buffoonery*].¹⁵⁸

Boy commented in one of his feuilletons that indeed, his views were derided only with the letter “b”: “*bolszewicki, bezczelny, bezwstydnny and bezbożny*” (“Bolshevik, insolent, shameless and godless”).¹⁵⁹

Perhaps the most compelling evidence of Boy-shevism and of the absolute decline in Polish moral standards in Sanacja-era Poland came out around the issue of civil marriages and divorces. It was due to Boy’s assiduous publicism that the civil marriage and divorce questions garnered as much attention as they did in the late 1920s and that they became the focus of a national debate. The laws regarding marriage and divorce in Poland were in chaos, as statutes from each of the partitioning powers still prevailed in the various regions of the Second Republic. Often, these laws contradicted one another, and this situation was further complicated by the confluence of dozens of religious and civil acts.¹⁶⁰ It was generally accepted that “marriage anarchy” prevailed in Poland.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Lechicki, *Przewodnik po beletrystyce*, p. 369.

¹⁵⁷ Świecki, “Pamflet antyklerykalny”, p. 205.

¹⁵⁸ Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom II, p. 551. The PPS break-away organization, the PPS-Revolutionary Fraction (which had split from the main PPS in October of 1928), was referred to by PPS loyalists (who opposed the Sanacja regime) as “BBS” to underscore this combination of BBWR and PPS. BBS was a derogatory term. See: Rothschild, *Piłsudski’s Coup d’état*, p. 268.

¹⁵⁹ Boy, “Niebezpieczna fikcja”, in Boy, *Pisma*, tom 15, p. 292.

¹⁶⁰ The details of what exactly the various old partition-era laws stipulated are explained in: Renz, “Kobiety a planowanie rodziny”, *passim*; and Winkłowa, *Nad Wisłą*, p. 137. A full study of the controversy surrounding civil marriages and divorces remains to be written. An excellent introduction to various aspects of the law and how it affected women is found in: Pietrzak, “Sytuacja prawna kobiet”, pp. 33-52. Though the archival sources are rather unorganized, they are nevertheless fantastically rich. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was responsible for dealing with questions of civil marriage and divorce. The Ministry’s records are at the AAN. See, for example, File 1543, Volume II, regarding marriage and the law; and File

The Codification Commission that had been established at the start of independence to standardize laws for the new state presented its highly controversial recommendations for civil marriage and divorce rights in 1929.¹⁶²

At this same time, in 1929, Boy published "The Dissoluble Indissoluble Bond" ("Rozerwalna Nierozewalność") in *The Morning Courier*. Boy argued that the Konsistory courts of the Catholic Church frequently dispensed annulments to those who had the means to pay for them. This created a whole class of what Boy referred to ironically as - 'Konsistory Virgins'. Boy was clear in his view that the Church acted hypocritically when it dispensed annulments for a fee, while at the same time, it campaigned assiduously against divorce and lobbied the Codification Commission to disallow divorces and civil marriages altogether. Boy stated his position by using a language reminiscent of Piłsudski's oft-quoted explanation as to why he had launched the coup: "...I would also like for there to be less inequality, a little bit less hardship, fewer lies and hypocrisy in the relations between people in reborn Poland."¹⁶³

1545, Volume II, regarding specific cases of dispensation from marriage, dated 1923-1928 and 1935-1936. See also: AAN, Zespół Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, Files 650 and 651, which contain letters to the Ministry protesting civil marriages and divorces; File 388 contains information about specific cases in which one or both parties wish to procure a divorce; and File 655 contains information about marriages between minors. The Moraczewskich archive also contains many documents pertaining to this question. See, for example, AAN, Zbiór Moraczewskich, File 71/I-98, mf. 2314/11 for a May 1929 copy of *Projekt Małżeński*; and BN-PK, Zbiór Moraczewskich, File 121 for a copy of *Nowe Prawo Małżeńskie* (Warsaw, 1931).

¹⁶¹ Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, pp. 12-15.

¹⁶² On the Commission, see: Dołęgowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, pp. 34 and 48. The general procedures and rules which the Codification Commission followed are outlined in: UW Library Archives, File 1467, *Twórczość publicystyczna, artykuły i odczyty Stanisława Posnera*, p. 20 c. Professor Karol Lutostański headed the Codification Commission. The title of the document concerning the civil marriage and divorce legislation is: *Komisja Kodyfikacyjna RP. Podsekcja i Prawa Cywilnego, tom I, nr. 1: Projekt Prawa Małżeńskiego uchwalony przez Komisję Kodyfikacyjną RP w dniu 28 maja 1929* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Urzędowe Komisji Kodyfikacyjnej, 1931). See also: Karol Lutostański, *Komisja Kodyfikacyjna. Podsekcja i Prawa Cywilnego, tom I, nr. 3: Zasady Projektu Prawa Małżeńskiego uchwalony przez Komisję Kodyfikacyjną w dniu 28 maja 1929* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Urzędowe Komisji Kodyfikacyjnej, 1931). The first document outlines the new legislation. The latter outlines the legislation that the Second Republic inherited from the three partitioning powers and also explains the philosophical, national and social arguments that went into formulating the new legislation.

¹⁶³ Boy, "Rozerwalna Nierozewalność", in Boy, *Pisma*, tom 15, p. 49. See also: Boy, *Dziewice Konsystorskie*, February 1929, rpt. in Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem*, p. 169; and Boy, *Nowa ustawa małżeńska*, *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 43 (25 October 1931), p. 1. The class inequalities of the existing

The Commission's final proposals on the civil marriage and divorce questions represented a rather middle of the road solution. Under the terms of the 1931 project, church weddings were retained, yet civil marriages were also brought in, and both were made equally valid in terms of the law. Civil divorce was formally allowed and yet was restricted to only those cases where certain stipulated causes were met. The proposals caused a fantastic media storm which raised issues about morality, the state of the family, national health, and the quality of independence. Both sides objected to the Commission's proposals. The liberal left believed that they were a sell-out to the Catholic hierarchy. For its part, the Church hierarchy quipped that Poland now courted the devil.¹⁶⁴ Cardinal Hlond stated simply that the proposals were "an affront to God and

divorce legislation were well dramatized in a novel by Władysław Rymkiewicz entitled, *Prawo do miłości: powieść*. Rymkiewicz dedicated the effort to "Mr. Tadeusz Żeleński (Boy)". See: Władysław Rymkiewicz, *Prawo do miłości: powieść* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicza, 1931), p. 38. The book was written from 15 June 1929 to 23 January 1930. Also in 1929, a public sensation was created over the trial of an Evangelical-Reform minister who had performed a marriage ceremony for a Catholic priest who already had out-of-wedlock children. See: n.a., "Rozwody i fałszywe śluby w 'Mekce' Wileńskiej", *Gazeta Warszawska* Nr. 11 (11 January 1929). This newspaper clipping was found in: AAN, Zespół Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, File 388, p. 23. This particular piece concerns the specific situation in Wilno that made it easier to acquire divorces there than in other parts of Poland. The wedding ceremony in question had been performed in Wilno. Boy confirmed that he started writing about the divorce topic without knowing about either the Wilno case or the work of the Codification Commission in: "Od autora", *Dziwice Konsystorskie*, rpt. in Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem*, p. 168. See also: Dolegowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, pp. 8-12.

¹⁶⁴ A Resolution passed by the Secretary General of the Catholic League as early as March of 1926 was delivered to the Minister Religious Denominations, Stanisław Grabski. The resolution stated the group's categorical opposition to civil marriages and divorces and suggested that the proposals were indicative of the atmosphere of "unrestrained physical and moral rot" prevalent in Poland. The resolution pointed specifically to women's positions in the new state, and stated that women should remember that along with their new political rights came new political responsibilities, and that these should be carried out in a "Catholic and national" spirit. See: AAN, Zespół Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, File 651, "Liga Katolicka (Poznań) potężna manifestacja katolicka w sprawie prawa małżeńskiego", 21 March 1926. This resolution is included in a letter to the Minister, Stanisław Grabski, dated 24 March 1926, from the Secretary General of the Catholic League. The letter is signed by Prof. Dr. U.P. Gantkowski and Józef Prądzyński. The note is found on p. 10 and the resolution on pp. 11-14. This archival file contains many more statements of opposition to the proposals for civil marriage and divorce.

to the Polish nation".¹⁶⁵ *The Knight of the Immaculate* described them as "godless and monstrous" and "Bolshevik".¹⁶⁶

Through his committed publicism, Boy shifted national attention to these topics, and critics were well aware of this. The proposals of the Codification Commission were linked not just to Boy and to other proponents of secularism and modernity, but to the larger political Sanacja as well. Nowaczyński faulted the Sanacja government for failing to stem an apparently immoral tide which saw the number of marriages in Poland decline from 320,000 in 1930, to 280,000 in 1931. The sort of "sexual reform" that Poland tolerated, Nowaczyński offered, was unusual even for the Soviet context, weakening the analogy between Boy-shevism and Bolshevism and elevating Boy-shevism to the status of a peculiarly Polish phenomenon.¹⁶⁷ The Polish Episcopate referred to the Commission proposals as "Sanacja Communism."¹⁶⁸ Czesław Lechicki's outburst on this topic constituted a vitriolic attack on "the left and the radical wing of the Non-Partisan Bloc [the Piłsudski-ite political camp]... socialist doctors and actors", as well as against Boy, *Literary News*, and other Sanacja publications like the *Wilno Courier* for allowing the

¹⁶⁵ Hlond's condemnation of the Codification Commission's proposal were published in letter form in *Gazeta Warszawska* 29 November 1931. See: Dolegowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁶⁶ Czytelnik, "Katolicy, na szanę!", *Rycerz Niepokalanej* Nr. 1 (January 1932), p. 7; and see also: Editors, "Przyjdź królestwo twoje!", *Rycerz Niepokalanej* Nr. 6 (June 1934), p. 162. Boy engaged with the Polish Bishops' response to the proposals for civil marriage and divorce in: Boy-Zeleński, "Nasi okupanci", *Wiadomości Literackie* Nr. 50 (13 December 1931), p. 1. Boy offered up the term "the rigours of Boziewiczza" to refer to the logic that the Bishops displayed (or failed to display, in Boy's opinion) in their analyses of the situation. The mouthpiece of the Polish Monarchists also liked to refer to civil marriages as a huge step towards the Bolshevization of Poland. See, for example, Juljusz Bończa, "Żona 'cywilna', dziecko 'cywilne', anarchja 'cywilna'", *Pro Patria* Nr. 75 (26 March 1926), p. 5. See also: Prof. Dr. Jan Sajdak, "Małżeństwo i moralność", *Tęcza* Nr. 2 (1932), p. 1. Sajdak was the rector of the University of Poznań. On the press polemics during this period, see the interesting account given by Dolegowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, pp. 15-16. And see also: AAN, Zespół Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, File 650, letter from Zjednoczenie Polskich Katolickich Towarzystw Kobiectych in Lwów, dated 13 November 1931, to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education, p. 545; and letter from Father Jan Langer, Śmiłowicz, dated 2 February 1932, p. 551.

¹⁶⁷ Nowaczyński, "Reformacja seksualna", p. 126.

¹⁶⁸ "List Pasternki Episkopatu Polski. Kościół Potępia Sanacyjny Komunizm", *Sztafeta: Pismo Narodowo-Radykalne* (Warsaw) Nr. 8 (11 March 1934), p. 3. The episcopal letter was reprinted in a variety of different journals from the period. See, for instance, the following: "List pasternki biskupów polskich", *Gazeta Świąteczna* (Warsaw) Nr. 9 (4 March 1934), pp. 1-2. The letter was signed by: Aleksander

Codification Commission's proposals to come to pass. According to Lechicki, the government displayed an entirely wrong-headed approach with respect to morality and the nation.¹⁶⁹

The journal *Pole-Catholic* stated that only a very tiny fraction of an already small radical social and political circle was pressing for these rights to civil marriage and divorce, but added that, regrettably, this circle had been very powerful since the May coup. *Pole-Catholic* further argued that it was the Sanacja Colonels (the core Piłsudski-ites) who, buoyed by the power they had achieved since May 1926, wanted new sex lives to go along with the political power they enjoyed, and wanted the state to sanction their decisions to leave their wives and families.¹⁷⁰ In her memoirs, Maria Bobrzyńska similarly referred to the inclination shown by former Piłsudski-ite Legionnaires to "change wives like they change gloves".¹⁷¹ Father Piwowarczyk suggested wryly that Brześć, from a Sanacja point of view, represented nothing other than the time when "high-living women" proclaimed their desire to be liberated from the bonds of matrimony to pursue lives of sexual and cultural experimentation.¹⁷² The link between supposed immodesty and the post-May government of the Sanacja underpinned the discourse about morality during this period in the Second Republic.

Kakowski, the Archbishop of Warsaw, August Hlond, the Archbishop of Gniezno and Poznań, Adam Sapięha, and the Archbishop of Kraków, among others. In total, 26 bishops signed the letter.

¹⁶⁹ Lechicki, *W walce z demoralizacją*, tom II, pp. 532-533; and Lechicki, "Wstęp", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. LX. The ideas of the Polish Union of Free-Thinkers (*Związek Wolnomyślicieli Polskich*) are outlined in a typed report contained at the AAN, in the files of the Zespół Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, File 641, pp. 274-277. The report comes from the main Warsaw branch of the organization and has been stamped by the Ministry with the date 1 December 1933. The report is signed by, among others, Dr. Zygmunt Radliński, Iza Zielińska and Teofil Jaśkiewicz (pseudonym Henryk Wroński). See also: Henryk Wroński, "Na co i komu potrzebna jest religia i co są warte 'nierozzerwalne' małżeństwa katolickie?", *Wolnomyśliciel Polski* Nr. 3 (1 February 1929), pp. 1-4. *Wolnomyśliciel Polski* was published in Warsaw and ran from 1928 to 1936. The statute of the Union (Statut Związku Myśli Wolnej) is found in: AAN, Stowarzyszenie Wolnomyślicieli Polskich, File 183/I-1, pp. 1-4a. The organization was formed in 1921.

¹⁷⁰ See: Dolegowska-Wysocka, *Poboyowisko*, p. 16 and see also pp. 42-44.

¹⁷¹ BN, mf. 52720, Ossolineum Manuscripts # 13533/II, Maria Bobrzyńska, "Życie zmiennym jest", tom II, 1919-1939, p. 54.

The Sanacja government's approach to these questions, Father Piwowarczyk continued, was inconsistent with the repressive and authoritarian political system that it had built and which it defended so tenaciously.¹⁷³ Other authoritarian systems, like that found in Mussolini's Italy, Father Piwowarczyk stated, had introduced legislation and policies that were clearly intended to promote moral and national discipline in the "right" way. Dance halls were closed, for example, divorces became illegal, and motherhood was raised to a national duty and women's highest calling. A campaign in support of planned parenthood would have been unthinkable in the Italian fascist context. The opposite was true in Sanacja Poland. Piwowarczyk stated:

It is undoubtedly one of the weakest points of the post-May camp in Poland. Moral liberalism is all the more striking when political strictness is that much more ruthless.¹⁷⁴

Linking the notion of the Sanacja as a loathsome political reality with that of a perceived cultural and moral decline also came even from the Left. Though initially supportive of the coup and the potential of the Sanacja to launch a real socialist revolution, the Left was quickly disillusioned by Piłsudski and became one of its most bitter critics, as we have already seen.¹⁷⁵ Emil Haecker (1875-1934), the editor of the Kraków socialist paper *Forward (Naprzód)*, and a one-time Piłsudski supporter, referred to the "divorced Sanacja men" "for whom changing wives is no less important a dogma than Brześć."¹⁷⁶ Indeed, a few key Sanacja men were known to have taken advantage of a

¹⁷² W.Z. [Father Jan Piwowarczyk], "Wystąpienie p. red. Haeckera", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 132; rpt. from *Głos Narodu* (January 1932).

¹⁷³ W.Z. [Father Jan Piwowarczyk], "Minister W.R.O.P. i 'Minister Oświecenia'", pp. 173-174.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 175. For Boy on Mussolini, see: Boy, "Co mówi Mussolini?", in Boy, *Pisma*, tom 15, pp. 211-213. On the Italian Fascists' policies towards women, see: de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, passim. See also: Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), pp. 150-161.

¹⁷⁵ For a discussion of how the Left and the Right both condemned Boy, see: T. Brzeski, "Lewica robi to, co i prawica: zwalcza zaciekle Boya Żeleńskiego", *Wolnomysliciel Polski* Nr. 4 (15 February 1932), pp. 115-117.

¹⁷⁶ Emil Haecker, "Słówka do Boya", in Lechicki, ed., *Prawda o Boyu-Żeleńskim*, p. 131; rpt. from *Naprzód* Nr. 13 (17 January 1932). The same article is rpt. in Nałęcz, *Nie szablą, lecz piórem*, pp. 191-193. For a review of Haecker's years as editor of *Forward*, see: Alfred Toczek, *Krakowski Naprzód i jego*

loop-hole in the legislation and to have converted from Catholicism to Protestantism in order to circumvent the strictures of the Catholic Church forbidding divorce and remarriage.¹⁷⁷ Haecker further argued that Boy's concern for women was selective, at best, and he that Boy only seemed to have an interest in the plight of women when they were seeking a divorce or when they were pregnant.¹⁷⁸

Unlike the vague references to "a growth in immorality" in Sanacja Poland and to Boy "depraving" the nation with his talk about sex, the civil marriage and divorce question was a tangible and centrally important one. It was, further, most easily linked to the political Sanacja, as the Codification Commission that developed the legislation was, after all, a an institution of the Republic. The Sanacja government, though it ultimately adopted a middle-of-the-road position with respect to these issues, did not, in the opinion of nationalist-right commentators, go far enough. The Sanacja could have acted decisively to simply disallow civil marriages and divorce altogether, and it could have confiscated Boy's articles on the subject. Instead, the Sanacja revealed its real preferences and "proved" to critics that in fact, it was everything they said it was. The cultural Sanacja was best revealed in the heated polemics which arose around the civil marriage and divorce issues.

Conclusion

This chapter has used Boy – an especially inflammatory symbol of modernity, immorality, and anti-Polishness – as a focus for an analysis of the nature and meaning of the "cultural Sanacja". But Boy was far from simply an arbitrary symbol of the cultural Sanacja and of moral decay. In Boy, critics found a composite character of everything

polityczne oblicze, 1919-1934 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1997), pp. 23-24, 151, and 313-32. After *The Worker, Forward* was the most popular socialist journals of the period.

¹⁷⁷ Kazimierz Świtalski, Józef Beck, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, Ignacy Matuszewski and Bogusław Miedziński were said to have converted to Protestantism for this reason. See: Zaporowski, *Józef Piłsudski*, p. 46.

¹⁷⁸ Haecker, "Słówka do Boya", p. 131.

they believed was wrong with post-May Poland: Boy was a symbolic Jew, a symbolic Mason, a symbolic Bolshevik; Boy was the incarnation of Sanacja Poland.

Critics of the sexual revolution which Boy created and lead invented the notion of "Boy's Sanacja" and used it not just to impugn Boy, but also to deride the political camp which they had already spent years maligning. To critics, Boy and the Piłsudski-ites were part of the same package, as it were. Critics argued that Boy was reasonably contained in pre-May Poland, but that in Sanacja Poland, Boy wrote and acted with a greater sense of entitlement. Boy, according to critics, tried to complete the revolution that had been announced in May of 1926; Boy's Sanacja was the logical accompaniment to and the corollary of the political Sanacja. In the hands of nationalist-right commentators, "Sanacja" conveyed more than just political authoritarianism and the demise of democratic institutions; it conveyed a sense of moral laxity, promiscuity, and a flagrant violation of nationalist imperatives. The cultural Sanacja was a reminder that independence was not yet secure and that in fact it had gone dreadfully wrong.

Conclusion: Assessing the Spring of Miracles

This dissertation has taken as its focus the singlemost explosive political event of the Polish interwar period : Piłsudski's coup d'état of May 1926 and the period of Sanacja that it inaugurated. I argue that the May coup both triggered and reflected strident debate about the moral health of the newly independent nation – debate about modernity and the pace of social change, about public and private mores, national identities, and cultural boundaries. This approach to the Sanacja has introduced a much-needed cultural dimension to our understandings of political discord and of contested visions of national identity in the Second Polish Republic.

Historians have approached the period from a strictly political perspective, and have emphasized the Sanacja camp's visions for changing state structures and the state apparatus. But there was no single way of understanding the Sanacja, of acting on a perceived need for moral rebirth, or of effecting change in the nation. This dissertation has explored the ways in which a variety of different constituencies seized upon the coup and the ensuing calls for moral and spiritual rebirth – for a Sanacja of the Polish nation – and twisted and shaped this concept to reflect their own ideas about what the post-partition nation needed. Citizens of Poland engaged selectively but eagerly in a process of inventing the terms and the targets of some idealized Sanacja. "Everyone" was prepared to accept that Poland needed to be fixed and reformed, but exactly how this would be done constituted the point of contention and the source of such acerbic polemic. The post-1926 period was one during which people interpreted and re-interpreted what "Sanacja" meant and used the event to focus their criticisms of and views on the nation.

This study has outlined a wide range of the expectations which people brought to the Sanacja and has included a broad sampling of sources. Each chapter has taken some different "imponderable" as its starting point. The first chapter has relied on the press of

the period, and has explored the way in which a language of crisis and of a need for healing and rebirth, for moral reform and spiritual renewal, swelled in the post-coup period; a veritable industry devoted to thinking and writing about morality, in the widest possible sense, exploded in the post-May days.

The coup and the ensuing Sanacja provided convenient rhetorical focal points for criticisms of contemporary moral and cultural developments. This was especially true of that portion of the press associated with the right-nationalist camp, the National Democrats. To many of the publicists associated with the right-nationalists, it was clear that a pernicious cultural Sanacja accompanied the political caesura launched by the May Events. Opponents of the political Sanacja seized upon the language that the coup introduced – a language of healing, rebirth and fundamental reform, citizen activism and work as the highest moral calling – and manipulated it easily and cleverly in order to launch wholesale attacks not just on the ruling clique, but on the state of independence generally. In the process, they advanced ideas about what it should mean to be "Polish" in the early twentieth century.

Chapter Two has focused on the letters written to Piłsudski after the coup. These letters further reveal the degree of creative manipulation that went on with respect to the Sanacja in post-May Poland. Ordinary men and women used the Sanacja as an opportunity to inject themselves into the political and cultural debates of the period and to offer their own analyses of what ailed Poland. The ideas expressed in their letters reflect some of the wider trends and themes evident both in the press and in Sanacja-era cultural and political organizations.

Chapters Three and Four approach the Sanacja from the perspective of organizations. The Sanacja fully intended to spark the growth of non-parliamentary, citizen-based organizations that would devote themselves fully to the state. Chapter Three is a study of a marginal pro-Sanacja group called the Society for Moral Rebirth. A

study of this Society provides us with a view of how some members of the Piłsudski-ite left-liberal intelligentsia understood the coup and the idea of moral renaissance. The men and women grouped in the Society regarded Piłsudski's coup as a brilliant symbol of national potential, and they embraced the event accordingly. Yet the Society remains a curiosity. It achieved virtually nothing, despite its association with many important Piłsudski-ites. Like the political Sanacja, the Society's goals were perhaps too broad and unrealistic, and its activism too unfocused.

Chapter Four concerns women's understandings of the coup and their organizational responses to the Sanacja. This is a topic which has had far too little attention devoted to it, and yet it is one loaded with possibilities. Women within the urban, left-liberal intelligentsia, many of whom had emerged from within the fold of the Polish Socialist Party, acted swiftly in the wake of the coup to popularize the notion that the event promised a magnificent moral renaissance. The women argued, moreover, that they, as women, had a key role to play within it. Through the Women's Democratic Election Committee and the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, these women inserted themselves directly and visibly into political life. They believed that the Polish nation needed them during the Sanacja period, just as it had needed them during the partition period. Accordingly, they proposed a marriage between moral purity and political purity, and argued that as women, they were uniquely well-equipped to transform the nature of independence-era citizenship.

In doing so, pro-Sanacja women forced a redefinition of the very meaning of politics in the Second Republic, of the public sphere and of female models of citizenship. The Sanacja-era model of womanhood which women like Zofia Moraczewska espoused constituted an updated and modernized version of the Matka-Polka (Mother-Pole), one that would be equipped to meet the real challenges which women faced in the twentieth century. Like the members of the Society for Moral Rebirth, however, many of the

women associated with the Women's Democratic Election Committee and the Women's Union for Citizenship Work were disappointed with and disheartened by not being able to affect a the kind of broad-reaching change for which they had hoped.

In the last chapter, we come, as it were, full circle. The last section represents a return to some of the issues first raised in Chapter One about the existence of a cultural Sanacja alongside a political Sanacja. It probes the ways in which a small number of critics of the Sanacja camp used Tadeusz Boy Țeleński as a focus for their analyses of the Sanacja's effects on culture, broadly conceived. Boy became an ideal target for attack, a powerful incarnation of Sanacja-era moral laxity and cultural decay. Critics created the term "Boy's Sanacja" to suggest that the political caesura of 1926 had also ushered in an atmosphere of moral license and decay, which would, in turn, jeopardize the nation itself. These critics understood full well that the Sanacja was about much more than just parliamentary affairs and constitutional reform.

Throughout, we have studied the "clash of moral nations" to which Maria Dąbrowska referred just days after the coup. At the most basic level, the clash was between the Left and the Right. The struggle was over "who" would shape and ultimately control definitions of everything from models of femininity and definitions of the nation, to ideas about ideal citizen activism and service to the state. The fight was over symbols and definitions of "Polishness" and of Poland, over who would determine and control the post-partition future. The political caesura of 1926 forced people to take sides, declare allegiances, and articulate visions of the ideal future.

This study end with the early-1930s, after the Brześć affair exploded and undermined definitively the moral integrity of the Sanacja. By this time, the discussions about morality and culture that had marked the first years of the Sanacja fizzled out. There were many reasons for this. First, the direction in which the Sanacja moved swiftly and assuredly from 1930 was towards authoritarianism. As a result, fewer and

fewer constituencies could realistically and honestly support the political Sanacja, and fewer could, in turn, speak with any sincerity about the noble potential of the Sanacja and Sanacja-inspired moral rebirth. It became increasingly clear that the political Sanacja had become an authoritarian political machine and a socially and culturally conservative force. As this realization took hold, the potential for creative manipulations of the Sanacja idea diminished.

Moreover, Piłsudski himself had receded from the spotlight by the early 1930s, and certainly by the mid-1930s, as his health continued to fail, his physical and spiritual presence was noticeably absent. He died in the spring of 1935, after a long illness.¹ Without Piłsudski, the symbol and heart of the Sanacja, the very idea of moral renaissance could not but fade away. As many historians have argued, Piłsudski was the singlemost important unifying element of the Sanacja. After his death, and with the power struggles that developed in the ruling camp afterwards, the Sanacja became simply another authoritarian regime. It became increasingly obvious that the Sanacja was about power, plain and simple.²

The Great Depression, too, exerted a powerful impact on the ways in which contemporaries regarded and wrote about moral revolutions and rebirth. The Depression hit Poland especially hard, and by the early 1930s, profound social and economic problems were felt across the country. Economic problems exacerbated social ones, and the mood grew increasingly tense and violent. Even the left-liberal intellectuals who had devoted so much time to linking the political Sanacja with positive cultural transformation gave this up in favour of pointing out that the majority of Poland's people

¹ Accounts of and reactions to Piłsudski's death are plentiful. Gombrowicz described his "irritation" at witnessing "the cream of the Polish intelligentsia" assembled in front of the Belvedere Palace, "humble, trembling, frightened... as though it were not a man that had died, but a super-man". See his: *Souvenirs de Pologne*, p. 189.

² Rothschild, "Marshal Josef Piłsudski on State / Society Dialectics", p. 35.

were in dire straits and that the government was failing to initiate policies and programs that might have alleviated the problems.

This shift in emphasis was most marked in the press and in the literature of the period. What literary critics have called “social reportage” arrived in the Second Republic of the mid-1930s with a great fury.³ Neo-realism pervaded journalism and literature of the period, and authors exhibited ever-stronger social consciences.⁴ Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina’s *Ecce Homo* (1932), for example, constituted a bitter condemnation of the Polish state for its failure to deal adequately with the Depression and to look upon human suffering with such callous indifference. Irena Krzywicka, a devotee of Boy’s sexual revolution and a prominent figure within the *Literary News* circle, embraced what she referred to as “the literature of fact”. She argued that ordinary people wanted to know basic, day-to-day information about what was going on around them, and that journalists had a moral obligation to tell these simple stories.⁵ Krzywicka wrote an especially moving account in 1932 of the unemployment and chronic poverty in an industrial town near Warsaw called Żyrardów.⁶

By the mid-1930s, basic economic and social needs – needs to which the Sanacja governments had devoted too few resources – eclipsed nebulous moral and cultural concerns. In an atmosphere of economic desperation, debating moral questions and talking in abstract terms about rebirth, healing and national renaissance rang rather hollow. In addition, Poland’s increasingly tense and precarious international situation

³ Nasilowska, *Trzydziestolecie 1914-1944*, pp. 159-169.

⁴ On the neo-realist literature of the mid- to late- 1930s, see the Ph.D. dissertation by Christine Anne Brown, “The Image of Polish Society in the Novel of the 1930s”, Slavic Department, University of Toronto, 1983. Brown’s introduction nicely outlines how and why the novel changed during this period.

⁵ Irena Krzywicka, “Ankieta *Epoki* o współczesnym kryzysie duchowym”, *Epoka* Nr. 14 (2 April 1933), p. 5.

⁶ Others, like Wanda Melcer, reported in *Warsaw, Black Land (Czarny ląd Warszawa)* (1935) about the economic devastation that marked the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw. For a brief discussion of these social reports, and of the tendency for women to dominate in this kind of writing, see: Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień*, pp. 63-69.

also came to preoccupy peoples' thoughts and efforts. Alongside actual threats to the territorial integrity of the state, no other issue could seem as important or pressing.

As a regime, the Sanacja maintained power more or less successfully from 1926 through to the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. In this sense, the Sanacja was successful. After all, it had achieved some of its main aims: the elevation of the state over particularistic interests, the taming of parliamentary democracy, the reform of the constitution and the strengthening of the executive. Work on a new constitution had begun immediately after the coup, and was completed with the April Constitution of 1935. The new constitution was anti-democratic, anti-parliamentarian and authoritarian, and made the President responsible only "before God and the state"; it was tailor-made for Piłsudski.⁷ Yet Piłsudski died just weeks after the April Constitution was passed, and a power vacuum emerged in the Sanacja camp.

In the period after the death of Piłsudski, the Sanacja camp entered its final phase of decomposition, and various interests vied for pre-eminence. The BBWR was replaced by the Camp of National Unity (*Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego, OZON*) in 1937 as a response, in part, to the growing social influence and political power of the Right and of the increasingly radicalized peasant and socialist movements. The Sanacja camp moved to the right during this period and embraced the nationalism and anti-Semitism which had been associated previously with the National Democrats; the Sanacja came to resemble the nationalist-right camp that it had, at one time, fought so assiduously.⁸

⁷ Andrzej Chojnowski, "Wobec Boga i historii", *Nowa Res Publica* 11 (November 1996): 27-30. An interesting collection of comments about the 1935 Constitution is contained in: NL – DŹS IB 1935 (Warsaw), BBWR. *Sek. Generalny Komunikat Polit.-Gospodarczy* various issues, February 1935. See also: Ewa Gdulewicz, Andrzej Gwiżdż and Zbigniew Witkowski, "Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z 1935 r." in *Konstytucje Polski. Studia monograficzne z dziejów polskiego konstytucjonalizmu*, ed. Marian Kallas (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990), pp. 141-156; and Nałęcz, "Droga", pp. 606-607.

⁸ On the post-1935 period, see: Edward D. Wynot, Jr., *Polish Politics in Transition: The Camp of National Unity and the Struggle for Power, 1935-1939* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1974); and Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, ch. IX and X.

The Sanacja as an ideal and a potential is far more difficult to evaluate. The Sanacja that did exist failed to measure up to the potential which people like Zofia Moraczewska or Aniela Samotyhowa had ascribed to it, and from their perspective, it could not but have represented a wasted opportunity. The disappointment came in part from the dissonance between the political Sanacja and the invented Sanacja. It was in part because of the political regime's lack of clear policies and boundaries that the Sanacja as an ideal was so easily manipulated. This dissertation has not been interested in the Sanacja as a political movement or presence in a strict sense. It has, rather, been interested in the way in which the Sanacja circulated through society and developed a meaning and potential that was quite removed from that which was intended for it by Piłsudski in May of 1926, or by his governments after 1926. On the one hand, the idea of a Sanacja was a powerful one, and this is revealed in the many unusual ways in which people and groups embraced the term and applied it to all manner of issues. On the other, no one individual or group achieved the much-heralded moral renaissance or revolution, and no one was even certain what exactly this revolution would have entailed or looked like. By studying peoples' attempts to define and to shape the Sanacja, to give it meaning, texture and form, however, we learn much about the preoccupations, hopes and mood of the period.

This project has tried to introduce new ways of reading the most important political caesura of the interwar period, of unpacking its potential and extending its reach. The imponderabilia that form the basis of this study in no way purport to be the only ones or even the most important. They are, rather, selected examples, and they are intended to spark further interest in studying the sub-text of the Sanacja; each chapter could easily serve as the basis for a more focused study of the period and mood launched by Piłsudski's coup of 1926.

Would these discursive emphases on the nation, on moral health and potential, have circulated in the Second Republic with or without Piłsudski and the Sanacja? They more than likely would have, just as some of these conflicts and tensions erupted in the rest of Europe in the postwar period. In a Poland dominated not by the Piłsudski-ites but by National Democracy, however, the arguments would have taken a very different shape and would have followed quite a changed course. But it is also fair to state that these debates would not have reached the pitch which they did without the Sanacja and the introduction into the Second Republic of a vocabulary of rebirth and healing, cleansing and fundamental reform. The Sanacja provided an extremely important focus for these discourses, and it nourished and discharged them in a variety of fascinating ways.

The May coup was much more than just a simple “event” or occurrence, as some contemporary language described it.⁹ The coup was not caused only by the political problems in the Second Republic, and its impact cannot be assessed only in relation to how it altered political structures and conceptions of the public sphere. The May coup was the start to a “spring of miracles”, as one commentator suggested.¹⁰ The May coup was, I argue, “a revolution *with* revolutionary consequences”, not *without* revolutionary consequences, as Piłsudski had claimed in the spring of 1926 that it would be. The features and terms of this revolution were articulated by the Poles themselves, and they evolved around issues which the Piłsudski-ites in power had neither intended nor authorized. The May coup was “revolutionary” in offering Poles a chance to define and to work on the great imponderables. In the process, the Sanacja provided people with a valuable education in political participation, construed in its broadest formulation. As one historians remarked just a few years after the May coup:

⁹ For a general discussion of how the post-World War Two Communists creatively used language in order to emphasize or to obscure certain realities, see: C. Tighe, “Living in Unreality: Politics and Language in the People’s Republic of Poland”, *Journal of European Studies* 22: 86 (1992): 150-151.

That which Piłsudski has achieved is rather to be read between the lines than in any casual deed; he is not merely the hero of a world of romanticism, but at the same time of a world of imponderabilia.¹¹

¹⁰ NL – mf. 83263, Ossolineum Manuscripts #15346 / II, Wincenty Bryja, “Wincenty Witos w mojej pamięci. Wspomnienia z lat 1923-1939”, p. 49.

¹¹ Landau, *Piłsudski and Poland*, p. v.

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Warsaw, Poland

Jan Skotnicki: Wspomnienia

Files IV.6396, Tom II

Listy Boya do M.H. Staniewskich

Files III.11.143

Papiery Anieli Samotyhowej

Files II.11.006; II.11.017; II.11.016; II.11.045; III.11.004; III.11.006; III.11.013; III.11.018; III.11.021; III.11.045; III.11.052; III.11.053; IV.11.003; IV.11.026

Papiery Edwarda Chwalewika

Files III.10.502

Papiery Teodory Męczkowskiej

Files II.10.303; II.10.302; III.10.304

Zespół Jędrzeja i Zofii Moraczewskich

Files 30, 36, 48, 52, 71, 81, 94, 99, 101, 106, 114, 116, 118, 121, 122, 125-127, 131, 136, 137, 138 (tom V), 144,

- **National Library Special Collection: Documents from Social Life (*Dokumenty z Życia Społecznego*) – BN-DŹS**
Warsaw, Poland

Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem

BN-DZS- IA6c1 and IB 1935

Komunikat Informacyjno-Polityczny. Wydawnictwo Okręgu Warszawskiego Polskiej Organizacji Wolności – P.O.W., Nr. 4 (15 October 1922).
BN-DZS- IB 1922 Warsaw

Narodowa Organizacja Kobiet
BN-DZS- IO

Piąta Rada Naczelna Koło Polek
BN-DZS- IO 1923 Warsaw

Polska Organizacja Wolności i Związek Legionistów
BN-DZS- IB 1926 Warsaw

Sprawozdanie Sodalicii Pań w Poznaniu
BN-DZS Files XX B1i, 1928-1930

Sprawozdanie Zarządu Związek Sodalicii Marjańskich Inteligencji Męskiej w Polsce
BN-DZS Files XX B1I 1926, Kraków, 1926-1934

Sprawozdanie z Działalności Polskiej Ligi Przeciwalkoholowej (Lwów) [1928-1929] BN-DZS- XVI A3g

Sprawozdanie Z.P.O.K., Poznańskie Zrzeszenie Wojewódzkie [1931-1933]
BN-DZS- ID 1933, Poznań.

- **Central Military Archives (*Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe*) - CAW**
Rembertów, Poland

Dowództwa Okręgów Korpusów i Wojskowych (DOK)
Files I.371.1.42; I.371.1.53; I.371.1.62

Gabinet Ministra Spraw Wojskowych
Files I 300.1.327, I 300, 1.365, I 300.1.403, I 300.1.440, I 300.1.504, I 300.1.652, I 300.1.653, I 300.1.654

Kwatera Główna Ministerstwa Spraw Wojskowych 1919-1939
I.300.65
Files 1, 3, 36, 164, 166

Wojskowy Instytut Naukowo-Oświatowy (WINO) 1921-1939
I.300.68
File 11

Summary of abbreviations used to refer to archives listed above:

AAN – Archiwum Akt Nowych
A-BUW – Archiwum Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego
AMSiWW – Archiwum Miasta Stołecznego i Województwa Warszawskiego
A-PAN – Archiwum Polskiej Akademii Nauk

BN-DŹS – Biblioteka Narodowa, Dokumenty z Życia Społecznego
 BN mf. – Biblioteka Narodowa
 BN-PK – Biblioteka Narodowa, Pałac Krasieńskich
 CAW – Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe

Periodical Literature

ABC (Warsaw) 1932
Adam i Ewa (Łódź) 1935-1936
Antena (Warsaw) 1933
Ateneum Kapłańskie (Włocławek) 1936
Błyski Wolnomyślicielskie (Warsaw) 1933, 1935
Bocian (Kraków) 1923, 1929-1932
Chłopski Sztandar (Warsaw, Kraków, Lwów, Poznań) 1926
Cyrulik Warszawski (Warsaw) 1926-1934
Czas (Time) 1926, 1928
Czystość (Warsaw) 1928
Dla Przyszłości (Warsaw) 1927-1928; 1929-1931, 1933, 1936, 1939
Dla Zdrowia (Warsaw) 1934, 1936-1938
Droga (Warsaw) 1924-1928
Drogi Naprawy (Warsaw) 1926
Dwór Marji (Kraków) 1926-1937
Epoka (Warsaw) 1932-1933, 1936
Eroticon (Warsaw) 1923-1924, 1930-1931
L'Europe Central (xxx) 1931
Ewa (Warsaw) 1928-1929
Express Poranny (Warsaw) 1928
Falanga (Warsaw) 1936-1937
Faszysta Polski (Warsaw) 1926
Figlario (Warsaw) 1924-1925
Gazeta Bydgoska (Bydgoszcz) 1930-1931
Gazeta Polska (Warsaw) 1929
Gazeta Poranna (Warsaw) 1925
Gazeta Świąteczna (Warsaw) 1934
Gazeta Warszawska (Warsaw) 1924, 1931-1933
Gazeta Warszawska Poranna (Warsaw) 1926
Gazeta Wieczorna (Lwów) 1937
Głos Kobiet (Warsaw) 1928-1930
Głos Lidzki (Lida) 1927
Głos Monarchy (Częstochowa/Warsaw) 1926-1934
Głos Prawdy (Warsaw) 1926
Gontyna (Sosnowiec) 1931
Gontyna (Warsaw) 1937
Hasło Podwawelski (Kraków) 1929-1932, 1935-1936
Hasło Polski (Bielsko) 1934, 1937
Hasło Polski (Łódź) 1926-1927
Herold Polski (Lwów) 1927
Illustrowany Kurjer Codzienny (Kraków) 1931
Jutro Rzeczypospolitej (Warsaw) 1931-1932
Kobieta Nowa (Warsaw) 1932
Kobieta w Sejmie (Warsaw) 1919

Kobieta Współczesna (Warsaw) 1927-1934
Kurier Informacyjny i Telegraficzny (Warsaw) 1924
Kurier Poranny (Warsaw) 1926, 1929, 1935
Kurier Poznański (Poznań) 1931
Kurier Warszawski (Warsaw) 1924-1925, 1929
Liberum Veto (Warsaw) 1918-1919
Liga Zdrowia (Kraków) 1930, 1932
Marjański Huf (Toruń) supplement to *Wiadomości Kościelne* 1935-1936
Mucha (Warsaw) 1926-1928
Myśl (Warsaw) 1927, 1929
Myśl Narodowa (Warsaw) 1926-1933
Myśl Niepodległa (Warsaw) 1926-1928
Nacjonalista Łódzki (Łódź) 1926
Nakazy Chwili (Warsaw) 1926
Nakazy Dnia (Warsaw) 1935
Naprzód (Kraków) 1931
Nasz Przegląd (Warsaw) 1929-1935
Nasze Jutro (Warsaw) 1935
Nowa Polska (Warsaw) 1929
Nowa Sprawa Robotnicza (Warsaw) 1926
Nowiny Społeczno-Lekarskie (Poznań) 1927-1929, 1931
Nowy Dekameron (Łódź) 1924
Oblicze Dnia (Warsaw) 1936
Odrodzenie (Katowice) 1926
Pion (Warsaw) 1933
Pologne Littéraire (Paris) 1926-1928
Polska Monarchistyczna (Warsaw) 1926
Polska Odrodzona (Kraków) 1923-1924, 1926-1928, 1930
Polska Reformacja (Warsaw) 1929
Praktyczna Pani (Warsaw) 1938
Prawda (Łódź) 1926
Prąd (Lublin/Warsaw) 1926
Pro Fide, Rege et Lege (Warsaw) 1926-1928
Pro Patria (Warsaw) 1924-1929
Przełom (Poznań) 1934
Przyszłość (Biała-Bielsko) 1928
Rakieta (Warsaw) 1925
Robotnik (Warsaw) 1926-1927
Rozwój (Warsaw) 1919-1920, 1922
Rycerz Niepokalanej (Grodno) 1926-1927, 1929, 1932-1934
Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw) 1926
Sanacja Moralna (Warsaw) 1929
Siejba (Lwów) 1927-1928
Słowo 1929, 1935
Sprawiedliwość (Lwów) 1922, 1928-1930, 1935-1936, 1938
Sprawiedliwość (Kraków) 1928
Sprawy Kobiące (Warsaw) 1934
Ster: Kultura-Sztuka-Sprawy Społeczne (Warsaw) 1934-1935
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Ster Zagłębia (Sosnowiec) 1926
Straż Polska (Lwów) 1926

Strzelec (Warsaw) 1921
Sygnaly (Lwów) 1933-1934
Szaniec (Warsaw) 1927, 1929-1930
Szczutek (Lwów) 1924
Świat (Warsaw) 1932
Świat Ducha (Brześć nad Bugiem) 1934
Świat i Prawda (Grudziądz) 1924-1926
Tęcza (Poznań) 1927-1929, 1931
Tygodnik Ilustrowany (Warsaw) 1935
Warszawianka (Warsaw) 1931, 1934
Wiadomości Kobiety (Warsaw) 1931, 1933
Wiadomości Literackie (Warsaw) 1924-35
Wiek XX (Warsaw) 1921
Wolnomyśliciel Polski (Warsaw) 1928-1933, 1936
Wspólna Praca (Łomża) 1926
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