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Difficult Beginnings: The Problem Concerning the Restoration of Diplomatic Relations between Poland and Japan after World War II¹

Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to analyze the process leading to the reestablishment of official relations between Poland and Japan after War World II. The authoress intends to present this process on the basis of unknown and unpublished primary sources, in Japanese and in Polish. There has been no research on this topic, despite the fact it is important also in its regional and global role, in the context of processes taking place in Europe, Asia and around the world. Bilateral relations between Poland and Japan were broken off on 11 December 1941, after Japan engaged in Asia-Pacific war. After the war, the Iron Curtain was falling deeper between East and West, the division between the two camps was becoming vivid. Post-war Poland found itself in the zone of Eastern influence, totally dependent on the USSR. This dependence naturally included Polish foreign policy also towards Japan. Greater possibilities for negotiations appeared after the death of Stalin (1953) and from that point the talks on reestablishing diplomatic relations were intensified.

Introduction

The history of official relations between Poland and Japan extends over a period of nearly one hundred years. It started on 6 March 1919, when the government of Japan recognized independent Poland after World War I.² Throughout the entire interwar era our countries

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¹ The present material is a result of my research supported by the Japan Foundation Fellowship Grant (2013). Hereby, I express my deep gratitude to the Foundation for its generous support.

² The Ambassador of Japan in Paris, Matsui Yoshikazu, passed this decision to the Chairman of the Polish National Committee, Roman Dmowski, on 22 March hence this date is considered official by the Polish side. See: *Komitet Narodowy Polski – Paryż* [Polish National Committee – Paris], pp. 31–35, The Central Archives of Modern Records, Warsaw; *Taishō hachinen sangatsu muika no kakugi kettei* [Cabinet Decision, 6 March 1919] in 1.4.3.17 *Ōshū sensō kankei Pōrando mondai ikken* [Problem of Poland Concerning the War in Europe], Gaimushō Gaikō Shiryōkan (Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; hereafter as GGS); More information on Polish-Japanese relations in: Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Andrzej T. Romer, *Historia stosunków polsko-*

maintained friendly relations, although due to geopolitical conditions they did not keep especially intense contact. However, what was seen as important was primarily related to military and espionage cooperation. The last of which was of special interest to Japan as they did appreciate the abilities of the Polish intelligence officers. Moreover, Poland was a great strategic spot to gather intelligence, from both the East – USSR, and the West – Germany. When World War II started on 1 September 1939, Japan proclaimed itself neutral and kept friendly relations with Poland nearly to the end of 1941. Against their ally Germany, with whom Japan signed the Axis alliance agreeing to create new order in Europe, Japan kept allowing the Polish embassy in Tokyo to officially operate. Japan's attitude changed a year later, due to German pressure, since by that time, after starting the offensive against the USSR, Germany already occupied the whole of Poland and wanted it to disappear from the map of the world. Japan, already getting ready for an offensive against Allied forces, on 4 October 1941, took back its recognition of the ambassador of Poland, closed Polish outpost in Tokyo and officially closed Japan's embassy in Warsaw (which had practically been non-operational since the end of 1939). Bilateral relations were officially broken off on 11 December, three days after Japan engaged in operations in the Pacific. Even though the espionage cooperation was still ongoing, Poland, just as its allies, Great Britain and the USA, declared war on Japan.

The Iron Curtain – two camps after the war

Eventually the Japanese offensives in Asia-Pacific Region ended in defeat and on 15 August 1945 the unconditional surrender of the Japanese was received, after having been prepared during the Potsdam Conference (17 July–2 August 1945) by the President of the United States, Harry Truman (1884–1972), Great Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill (1874–1965; succeeded by Clement Attlee, 1883–1967) and the leader of the USSR, Joseph Stalin (1874–1953).³ On

japońskich 1904–1945 [History of Polish-Japanese Relations 1904–1945], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo TRIO, 2009 (the first edition of the book: Warszawa: Bellona, 1996); the same book in Japanese as: *Nihon Pōrando kankeishi*, Tōkyō: Sairyūsha, 2009.

³ 'Potsdam declaration' in *Zbiór dokumentów* [Collection of Documents], The Polish Institute of International Affairs (hereafter as ZdPISM), 1951, No. 9–10, Doc. 129, pp. 1540–1544. Representatives of the United States and Great Britain signed the Potsdam Declaration with the concurrence of the representative of China, Jiang Jieshi. The

2 September the representatives of Japan signed the capitulation act. The occupation by Allied forces, practically by American forces under General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964), as a Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan, began. From the beginning, he attempted to bar Moscow from decisions concerning Japanese issues (although as the capitulation conditions dictated, the USSR was granted the South Sakhalin and four islands referred to as part of Kuril Islands by Russia, and as Northern Territory by Japan) to avoid a situation similar to the one that took place in Europe after the war; to avoid clear influence zones of opposite political systems.

The division between the two camps – capitalist and communist/socialist was becoming more and more vivid, the Iron Curtain was falling deeper between East and West, with additional hindrances due to the fight for influence zones in Europe and Asia. As an outcome of war and the crossing of the Red Army into the territories of Central and Eastern Europe, countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria found themselves under Soviet influence. In China the civil war ended with the victory of communist forces and on 1 October 1949, their leader, Mao Zedong (1893–1976) proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). His opponent, Jiang Jieshi (1887–1975), the leader of the Kuomintang, took refuge on Taiwan where, supported by the United States, the Republic of China was established. Also, on the Korean Peninsula, two influence zones were created in 1948 – the land to the south of the 38th parallel north was established as the pro-American Republic of Korea while that to the north – the pro-Soviet Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In June 1950 the forces of DPRK engaged in war against the south – war that created millions of victims and ended only in the confirmation of the existing territorial division. This war, however, gained an international meaning, since Koreans from the north were supported by so called Chinese volunteers, and the south had support of the Americans operating as official United Nations forces. The situation was similar in Vietnam, divided into those supported by the French and

signature of Stalin would be considered a breach of the law since the USSR was not officially at war with Japan and still had to abide by the neutrality treaty. The Russians joined the war on 8 August 1945. On the occupation of Japan and postwar situation see e.g.: Nakamura Takafusa, *Shōwashi* [History of Shōwa], Vol. 2, 1945–89, Tōkyō: Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 2012, pp. 483–582.

the West – South Vietnam, and those having the backing of the USSR and the PRC – North Vietnam. Communists also had strong influence in Cambodia, Laos, Burma, and Indonesia. The divisions in Asia were becoming deeper, the further consequence of which was an arms race, all the more intense after the successful test of Soviet nuclear weapons (September 1949).

This situation naturally had an influence on Washington's policies towards Tokyo. After the first years of deep reforms dealing with democratization, demilitarization and decentralization, introduced intensely since the beginning of the occupation, in 1949 the so called Reverse Course was introduced – Japan was supposed to gradually assume the role of the ally of America and due to its geographical location become the anti-communist beachhead during the intensifying Cold War. Washington increased economic aid for Japan, followed by the intensification of investments aimed at rebuilding the Japanese economy, and after the outbreak of war in Korea – concentrated on the Japanese defensive potential.

Cold War: Poland and Japan (1947–1951)

Post-war Poland, according to decisions made by the heads of government of the United States, The United Kingdom and the Soviet Union during the Yalta Conference (4–11 February 1945),⁴ found itself in the zone of Eastern influence, totally dependent on the USSR. This dependence naturally also included our foreign policy, also towards Japan. Generally speaking, same as the USSR, Poland was against any quick signing of peace treaties with countries defeated during the war because of the necessity of taking into consideration the interests of the victors, including reparations. The documents show though, that the representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) did see the necessity to consider the stance of Poland in regard to its relations with Japan. On 12 April 1947, the head of the Eastern Division, Janusz Makarczyk (1901–1960), was writing to Tadeusz Chromecki (1904–1956?), the vice-director of the Political Department:

I do not find the exceptional stressing of the state of war between Poland and Japan advisable; it seems doubtful to me that we would have a significant vote in the case of a peace treaty with Japan or that we would have legal claim to demand reparations. In such a case we should

⁴ See: ZdPISM 1951, No. 9–10, Doc. 128, pp. 1537–1539.

reassess the way of our representation in Japan, especially that Belgium, who was in a comparable political situation to us, has its consulate in Tokyo. [...]

To gain a proper insight into the course of important political events in the whole Far East and to be able to have a due understanding of possible economic profits that Poland could gain from the new situation in Japan, the Polish government should have its own independent observation post in Tokyo.⁵

In the margin of the document, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zygmunt Modzelewski (1900–1954), wrote however that he considered the project of establishing the post premature.

In the next months of 1947, as the documents from the Archives of Polish MOFA reveal, Makarczyk kept informing his superiors about the situation in Japan, about the role of the United States in its restoration, and the preparations of the main Allied countries to sign the peace treaty. On 2 June he was explaining that Great Britain was going towards a solution where instead of the representatives of four or five powers, there would be representatives from eleven countries that had fought against Japan taking part in the negotiations, initiating “an attempt to dominate Russia”.⁶ He also characterized briefly the new, and according to him, “centrist” cabinet, lead by socialist Christian, Katayama Tetsu (1887–1978) from 27 May.⁷

On 10 March, Makarczyk, concerning the issue of MacArthur’s policies with regard to demilitarizing Japan, stated that the same policies were strongly connected to those with Russia. “America is not pushing towards the complete demilitarization of Japan, considering Japan a future vassal-ally in case of a possible duel with the USSR”. Then in September he was writing about Japan’s importance for the United States’ economic interests, which was supposedly troubling to the Eastern Bloc.⁸ At this point it should be mentioned that at more or less the same time, the autumn of 1947, the MOFA and the Ministry of

⁵ “Dept. Polityczny, Wydz. Wschodni, *Japonia 08. Org. stosunków dyplomatycznych (...), 1947*” [Political Department, Eastern Division, Japan 08. Organization of diplomatic relations /.../, 1947], collection 6, file 1535, bundle 97, pp. 1–2, The Central Archives of Modern Records (hereafter as AAN), Warsaw.

⁶ Political Department, Eastern Division, *Japan 2421. Political notes, 1947*, collection 6, file 1536, bundle 97, p. 1, AAN.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 8 and 9–10.

Commerce and Trade in Warsaw were considering the possibility of establishing trade relations with Japan. With this proposition in mind, the Polish authorities were approached in the spring that year by the American embassy in Warsaw and the Chamber of Commerce in Osaka.⁹ Although some of Polish officials were interested in this exchange, especially imports from Japan, an official agreement on the subject was never reached.

San Francisco Peace Treaty (1951)

Both the intensification of the Cold War and implementation of the Reverse Course in relation to Japan stepped up the speed at which the peace treaty was worked on. In the new international situation it became increasingly important that the security system in this region of Asia had to be protection not only against the rebirth of Japanese militarism, but first and foremost against the expansion of communism. Connected to all this was the contingency of keeping American army bases on Japanese territory (mainly on Okinawa) after the occupation. Keeping the bases after reaching peace was even proposed by Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru (1878–1967).¹⁰

After the outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula, efforts on signing the treaty again picked up speed. On 26 October 1950, John Foster Dulles (1888–1959), plenipotentiary of the Department of State regarding this issue (Secretary of State from 1953), handed Jakub Malik (1906–1980), representative of the USSR to the United Nations, the memorandum containing the conditions of the Treaty of Peace.¹¹ Moscow rejected them in the middle of the following year, deciding that separate talks with Washington were not advisable. In this case the Americans started to consider the possibility of finalizing the occupation of Japan without the participation of the countries from the Eastern Bloc.

The San Francisco Peace Conference took place from 4 to 8 September 1951. Fifty-two countries were invited to participate. The

⁹ Political Department, Eastern Division, Japan 25. Republic of Poland's economic relations. Propositions of establishing trade relations with Japan, 1947, collection 6, file 1537, bundle 97, pp. 1–8, AAN.

¹⁰ Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Katarzyna Starecka, *Japonia* [Japan], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo TRIO, 2004, pp. 218–219. On San Francisco Conference see also: Nakamura Takafusa, pp. 562–582.

¹¹ Wojciech Materski and Waldemar Michowicz (eds.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [History of Polish Diplomacy], Vol. 6, 1944/1945–1989, Warszawa: PISM, 2010, p. 421.

countries omitted were the PRC and Taiwan, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Mongolian People's Republic. Moreover, countries that did not take part were India, Yugoslavia and Burma. On 8 September the Treaty of Peace with Japan¹² was signed by 49 countries – the only countries present that did not sign the treaty were the USSR, Poland and Czechoslovakia. During the conference issues of territorial disputes involving territories occupied until 1945 by Japan were resolved. Tokyo was obliged to pay retributions but only to the extent that they would not endanger Japan's economic recovery.¹³ It was also pointed out that Japan, as a sovereign country, had the right to defend itself, and due to its disarmament, had the right to sign treaties concerning collective security. It was then announced that even though the occupation forces had to withdraw from the Japanese Islands within a period of 90 days, there existed a possibility for a foreign military presence on Japanese soil under the clear and explicit request of the Japanese authorities. On 8 September Japan and the USA signed a Security Treaty in which they agreed among other things, that the USA would place its ground, air and naval military forces on and around Japanese territory.¹⁴

Let us get back to the issue of Poland's attitude towards the Treaty of Peace. As is common knowledge, Poland, the same as Czechoslovakia, was fully dependent on the USSR in its foreign policies. The invitation to the San Francisco Peace Conference was handed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stanisław Skrzyszewski (1901–1978), by Ambassador

¹² Treaty of Peace with Japan in: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20136/volume-136-I-1832-English.pdf> (accessed 12.10.2015).

¹³ Japan recognized the independence of Korea, abandoned the claim to Taiwan, Penghu Islands, Kuril Islands and a part of Sakhalin. *Traktat pokoju z Japonią* [Treaty of Peace with Japan] see also: Ludwik Gelberg (ed.), *Prawo międzynarodowe i historia dyplomatyczna. Wybór dokumentów* [International Law and History of Diplomacy. Selection of Documents], Vol. 1, Warszawa: PWN, 1954, pp. 455–465.

¹⁴ *Security Treaty Between Japan and the United States of America*, Database of Japanese Politics and International Relations Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo: <http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/docs/19510908.T2E.html> (accessed 12.10. 2015); See also: *Traktat o bezpieczeństwie między USA a Japonią* [Security Treaty between the USA and Japan] in *Prawo międzynarodowe...*, Gelberg (ed.), Vol. 1, pp. 466–467. Those forces were only to be used to keep peace in the region and to secure Japan from an outside attack. It was also stated that Japan would not grant permission to set military bases on its territory to any other country without consent of the USA.

of the USA in Warsaw Joseph Flack (1894–1955), on 20 July.¹⁵ It was rejected since the document did not include important fragments regarding the Treaty. The invitation was finally approved by the end of August. The Polish delegation consisted of: Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, Stefan Wierbłowski (1904–1977), Ambassador of Poland in Washington, Józef Winiewicz (1905–1984) and Director of the Department of Treaty Issues of the MOFA, Manfred Lachs (1914–1993).

Wierbłowski spoke three times during the conference. His first and second address – on 5 September – were concerning the procedure itself.¹⁶ The text of the treaty was decided on in advance and sent to the participants, so they did not have any possibility of participating in negotiating its contents. Wierbłowski demanded the creation of a statutory committee since without it, according to him, the San Francisco meeting was not a conference of sovereign countries. The third address – on 7 September – was Wierbłowski's complete support of the stance of the USSR.¹⁷ He talked about not keeping the resolutions from Yalta and Potsdam on the issue of peace in the Far East and territorial issues. He also called the exploit of not inviting the PRC to the conference “a shameless act of lawlessness”.

Finally on 8 September the delegation of the People's Republic of Poland refused to sign the Treaty. During the press conference on the same day Wierbłowski concluded that Poland could not agree to the form of the Treaty of Peace others had accepted in San Francisco¹⁸. In an interview for the Polish Press Agency he added that this treaty had gone far towards creating new sources of tension in Asia and contributed to “rebuilding a defeated militarism in the service of American imperialism”.¹⁹

Improvement of Polish-Japanese relations (1953–1956)

The next years did not bring vivid changes in Polish policies towards Japan, although many politicians talked about Japan in positive terms, acknowledging that there were no specific points of conflict between our

¹⁵ Materski and Michowicz (eds.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, Vol. 6, p. 421.

¹⁶ ZdPISM 1951, No. 9/10, Doc. 151 i 154, pp. 1806–1811 and 1827–1837.

¹⁷ Ibid., Doc. 157, pp. 1936–1948.

¹⁸ ZdPISM 1951, No. 9/10, Doc. 159, pp. 1969–1971.

¹⁹ Ibid., Doc. 160, pp. 1972–1979.

countries.²⁰ Greater possibilities for negotiations appeared after the death of Stalin in 1953, since Moscow also alleviated its attitude towards Japan. From that point on the talks on reestablishing diplomatic relations were intensified, which Poland observed with great interest. But ending the state of war between Poland and Japan on the grounds of a peace treaty was still impossible both for political and legislative reasons. In Article 26 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty it was stated that a bilateral treaty of peace concluded by Japan could only be possible on the same or substantially the same conditions as provided by the treaty of 1951. It was also stated, that “this obligation on the part of Japan will expire three years after the first coming into force of the present Treaty”.²¹

The next diplomatic documents regarding relations with Japan appear in 1954. In the Polish MOFA it was believed that even though signing the treaty with Japan was still difficult in the given situation, there was a possibility for reestablishing diplomatic relations without officially finalizing the state of war. It was what happened for example with Italy and Finland – Poland had kept relations with those countries before the treaties of peace were signed.²² The second Minister from the Japanese embassy in Paris, Takahashi, was talking about this issue with Klos, the Press Attaché of the embassy of Poland. Within the Polish MOFA it was decided that the case was too substantial and a minister should replace the attaché for example. In the end of a note with no author from 4 April 1954 there was an important passage: “The government of the People’s Republic of Poland, given a proposal on the part of Japan, is ready to exchange outposts through establishing embassies in the capitols of both countries”.²³

Negotiations considering this issue were ongoing until February 1957. On 22 April the Polish MOFA was granted Moscow’s approval for such operations – the Ambassador of the USSR in Warsaw, Nikołał Michajłow (1906–1982), told the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Skrzyszewski, that he did not see any obstacles in undertaking

²⁰ Materski and Michowicz (eds.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, Vol. 6, p. 423.

²¹ See: <http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/docs/19510908.T1E.html>; Cf.: *Prawo międzynarodowe...*, p. 465.

²² Department V, Division III, *Japan 08. Establishing diplomatic relations with Japan, 1954–1957*, collection 12, file 367, bundle 15, p. 1, AAN.

²³ Department V, Division III, *Japan 08. Establishing diplomatic relations with Japan, 1954–1957*, collection 12, file 367, bundle 15, p. 1, AAN.

negotiations with Japan, but he did suggest that the wording of the document should leave the issue of the peace treaty open-ended. He also expressed his support for signing commercial agreements between the People's Republic of Poland and Japan.²⁴

The case continued for the next few months. From May 1954 talks in Paris were conducted, according to the suggestion of the Polish MOFA, by Chargé d'Affairs Przemysław Ogrodziński (1918–1980). It was still stressed though that the agreement on reestablishing bilateral relations would not solve the contentious issues between the two countries, specifically the Polish attitude towards the Treaty of San Francisco. The Director of the Department of Treaty Issues of the MOFA, Lachs, maintained the above-mentioned opinion, that even though it was most advisable to establish relations with Japan, signing the peace treaty was still impossible for legislative reasons.²⁵

The bilateral talks were continued in 1955 and 1956 in Warsaw, Paris, Stockholm and New York. The Polish optimistic attitude concerning the issue of establishing official relations with Japan is reflected in the correspondence of Nishimura Kumao (1899–1980), the Japanese Ambassador in Paris, which was addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shigemitsu Mamoru (1887–1957).²⁶ In the note dated 21 January 1955, he writes that Stanisław Gajewski (1912–1995), Polish Ambassador to France, received a note from the Japanese government considering this issue and that according to him, establishing bilateral relations was possible. More significantly, the issue of regulating relations on the Tokyo – Moscow line is here of no consequence and should not influence the relations of the Warsaw – Moscow line.²⁷ He went on to confirm the Polish attitude towards the Treaty of San Francisco. Further, Minister Nishimura wrote that regardless of establishing diplomatic relations, the Polish side also considered it necessary to sign trade and cultural agreements. The content of the agreement on reestablishing bilateral relations was to be jointly

²⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 4–8.

²⁶ *Pōrando to no kokkō kaifuku ni kansuru ken* [Case of Reestablishing Diplomatic Relations with Poland] in A*1.3.3.5-1 *Nihon Pōrandokan gaikō kankei zasshū. Kokkō kaifuku kōshō kankei* [Various Documents Regarding Diplomacy between Japan and Poland. Negotiations Regarding Reestablishing National Relations], Part 1, pp. 15–35, GGS.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 33–35.

formulated with consent of the governments of both countries and jointly proclaimed. He announced that the project of the agreement discussed in Paris would be presented for further acceptance.²⁸ Ambassador Gajewski stressed that the Polish people continue to harbor friendly feelings towards Japan. In one of the successive notes on various topics to Minister Shigemitsu, from 10 June 1955, Ambassador Nishimura in Paris described his talk with Ambassador Stanisław Gajewski on the subject of the attitude of communist countries towards various European problems, which was important information for Japan.²⁹

In the context of Polish-Japanese relations, the address by the President of the Council of Ministers, Józef Cyrankiewicz (1911–1989), that took place in the Sejm, Polish Parliament on 16 March 1955, did bare importance.³⁰ Speaking on the subject of Polish foreign policy he acknowledged that the normalization of relations with Japan was necessary. The change in the USSR's attitude towards Japan at this time was favorable. Negotiations were ongoing between both countries from June to September 1955, and in the beginning of the year 1956. The agreement however was not signed for a lack of accordance as far as the issue pertaining to the rights to four islands – Habomai, Shikotan, Etorofu and Kunashiri, was concerned. After the war the USSR was vested with rights to the islands, Japan did not consent. Neither in Yalta, nor in San Francisco was the exact extent of the Kuril Islands clearly specified and in Tokyo the islands in question, referred to as Northern Territory, were considered the rightful territory of Japan. For this reason, signing the peace treaty was still out of the question. Finally though, on 19 October 1956 in Moscow, after long and intractable negotiations, both parties setting apart the normalization of relations from the peace treaty signed a joint declaration on finalizing the state of war and the reestablishment of diplomatic relations.³¹

It can be said that since the year 1955 the issue of regulating Polish-Japanese relations, although still dependent on Moscow's policies, picked up steam. The gradual build up of cooperation between Poland

²⁸ Project of the agreement see: *ibid.*, pp. 38–40.

²⁹ *Ōshū shomondai ni taisuru kyōsan'en no tachiba ni tsuki Pōrando taishi no danwa* [Talk with Polish Ambassador Concerning the Stance of the Communist Bloc towards Various European Issues], A'1.3.3.5-1, Part 1, pp. 68–73, GGS.

³⁰ Full text of the exposé in: *Trybuna Ludu* [People's Tribune], 17 March 1955, pp. 3–5.

³¹ *ZdPISM* 1956, No. 10, Doc. 308, pp. 1584–1591.

and Japan became visible. For example in the period from 22 to 25 September 1955, upon the invitation issued by the Sejm (lower house of parliament of the PRP) and the Polish Inter-parliamentary Group, a delegation of Japanese members of the parliament visited Poland for the first time. The leader of the delegation, Nomizo Masaru (1898–1978), during a press conference in Warsaw also stressed the need for normalization of mutual relations.³²

In the same year, at the University of Warsaw, upon the initiative of an outstanding japanologist, prof. Wiesław Kotański (1915–2005), the Japanese Studies Section was founded appending the Department of Chinese Studies.³³ A Polish delegation took part in the International Conference to Ban Nuclear Weapons organized in Hiroshima. The visit of a delegation of the Committee of International Communications of the Japanese Labor Union of Construction and Lumber Workers in May 1956 launched future contact between Polish and Japanese unionists. On 28 September 1956, The Japan-Poland Society (*Nihon Pōrando Kyōkai*) was founded in Tokyo.³⁴ Its inauguration took place in the Japanese Parliament building and was attended by Mori Motojirō (1907–1999), Nomizo Masaru, Sakō Itoko, a wife of Shūichi (1887–1949), the first and the last before the World War II Ambassador of Japan to Poland, Hara Chieko (1914–2001), the first Japanese pianist who took part in the Chopin Competition in Warsaw (1937); all of whom had contact with Poland and had visited Poland before or after the war. The main organizer of the society was Mori Motojirō, a member of the higher house of parliament and a correspondent of the *Dōmei* Press Agency in Poland before the war, who took upon himself the duties of the secretary general until elections for the office of the president took place.³⁵

³² *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, p. 425.

³³ Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska and Katarzyna Starecka, *Kalendarium kontaktów polsko-japońskich* [Timeline of Polish-Japanese Contacts], *Japonica*, No. 12, 2000, p. 224. See also: *Pōrando Nihon kankei nenpyō* [Timeline of Polish-Japanese Contacts] in *Shopan – Pōrando – Nihon; Chopin – Polska – Japonia* [Chopin – Poland – Japan], Tōkyō: Toppan Printing Co., Ltd., 1999, pp. 237–238.

³⁴ Letter from Mori Motojirō to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland in *Department V Division III, Japan 568. Note on the foundation of The Japan-Poland Society 1956*, collection 12, file 364, bundle 15, pp. 1–2, AAN.

³⁵ The Society was disbanded in 1961 then revived in 1975 thanks to Mori's efforts. Documents from the collection of Mori Mariko.

The restoration of diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan

Diplomatic talks between the representatives of Poland and Japan were led with greater intensity in the year of 1956. These talks were not limited to Warsaw and Tokyo. During March in Stockholm the Japanese envoy Ōe Akira talked to the PRP envoy Koszutski expressing the belief that the relations would soon be established.³⁶ The Japanese Ambassador in The Hague, Okamoto Suemasa (1892–1967), who visited Poland accompanied by his wife and the attaché of the embassy, Yatabe Atsuhiko (1929–), in the period from 1 to 4 May 1956, in order to sign The Hague Protocol to the Warsaw Convention on International Carriage by Air, shared this opinion. During a meeting at the MOFA, as well as during his prior talk with the PRP envoy in The Hague, Tadeusz Findziński (1911–1987), the Ambassador claimed that soon after regulating the relations with the USSR, it would be possible to establish relations between Poland and Japan.³⁷ He also stated that “we did not have any disputes, we were friends and we can still be friends in the future”.³⁸ The Ambassador visited the Auschwitz concentration camp and on this occasion alluded to the camps in USSR territory that still held Japanese prisoners. He inquired whether the Polish side could influence its Eastern neighbor to regulate this problem as soon as possible.

The issue of Japanese relations with Eastern European countries in the years 1939–1956, including the possibility of reestablishing official diplomatic contacts, is presented by the Department of Europe and United States of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in documents of 5 and 22 June 1956.³⁹ Poland is discussed here first and in most detail, before Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Albania and Yugoslavia, which could mean that Japan wanted to reestablish the relations with Poland promptly in view of very good pre-war contacts.

³⁶ Note from 24 October 1956 in *Department V Division III, Japonia 08...*, p. 7, AAN.

³⁷ *Department V Division III, Japonia 074. Wizyta w Polsce japońskiego Ambasadora w Hadze S. Okamoto* [Japan 074. Visit to Poland of the Japanese Ambassador to Hague, S. Okamoto], collection 12, file 362, bundle 15, pp. 1–7, AAN.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁹ *Waga kuni to Tōō shokoku to no kankei* [Our Country's Relations with Eastern European Countries] and *Tōō shokoku to no kokkō kaifuku mondai ni kansuru keii* [Details Concerning the Issue of Reestablishing National Relations with Eastern European Countries] in: A*1.3.3.5-1, Part 1, pp. 81–94, GGS.

Ultimately the negotiations were underway presumably until the end of May 1956 in New York, and the role of the negotiator on the Japanese side concerning the case of reestablishing relations with Poland fell to the first Japanese Ambassador to the UN, Kase Toshikazu (1903–2004).⁴⁰ According to Polish documents from 5 and 12 October, he proposed beginning such talks to Jerzy Michałowski (1909–1993), PRP Ambassador to the UN.⁴¹ He referred to the arrangements of the Japanese representative in Paris and Ambassador Gajewski, where it was decided, that there was no need to wait for signing the peace treaty between Japan and the USSR. On 18 October Michałowski received official instructions from his authorities reaffirming what was already written about two years before: essentially stating that Poland was ready to establish diplomatic relations, the declarations of termination of the state of war were to be exchanged without deciding the issue of the peace treaty, diplomatic representatives from the rank of ambassadors were to be exchanged and trade relations established.

Kase was writing in detail about his talks with Michałowski in his addresses to Minister Shigemitsu (1896–1987; in December 1956 he was succeeded by Kishi Nobusuke), stressing among other entries the positive attitude of the Polish representative.⁴² He also reported on the course of talks with representatives from other countries like Czechoslovakia and Hungary.⁴³ Description of all the documents from the Diplomatic Archives of the MOFA in Tokyo is far exceeding the frame of this article but it should be pointed out that many of those documents were issued in December 1956, which shows the developing drive to finalize the talks and sign the official agreement.⁴⁴ By the end of that month the first drafts of an agreement with Poland emerged, addressed at first to Japanese Chargé d'affaires in Paris, Matsui Akira, who most likely discussed them with the PRP Ambassador.⁴⁵ From January 1957 Ambassador Kase was additionally forwarding the notes on this topic, addressed already to the new Minister of Foreign Affairs,

⁴⁰ Note from 24.10.1956 in *Department V Division III, Japonia 08...*, p. 7, AAN.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

⁴² For example see note from 22 October 1956, *Pōrando no kokkō kaifuku mōshiire no ken* [Case of Proposal of Reestablishing National Relations with Poland] in A'1.3.3.5-1, Part 1, pp. 95–97, GGS.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 118–119 and 120.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 109–128.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 128–139.

Kishi Nobusuke.⁴⁶ In the beginning of February he informed the minister in detail about amendments that were applied with mutual consent to the official version of the agreement – in French.⁴⁷

A confidential note to the PRP Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marian Naszkowski (1912–1996), issued by the director of Department V, Edward Słuczański, in the beginning of 1957 (precise date unknown) clarified that the point of dispute was Article 4 of the agreement, whose wording according to the Japanese side was supposed to be:

“The People’s Republic of Poland and Japan mutually waive all claims of the representative State and its organizations and nationals against the other State and its organizations and nationals arising out of the war between the two countries”.⁴⁸

At first the Polish side, most of all the Ministry of Finance, was against including this clause, but finally, on 8 February, Naszkowski, after receiving the acceptance of the MOFA, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Trade, sent an address with the full text of the agreement between the PRP and Japan (containing the above article) asking for the approbation of the President of the Council of Ministers, Józef Cyrankiewicz.⁴⁹

Finally on 8 February 1957 in New York, the Japanese Ambassador to the UN, Kase Toshikazu, and the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and also President of the Polish delegation to the XI session of the UN General Assembly, Józef Winiewicz (1905–1984), having authorization from their superiors, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Kishi Nobusuke and Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz,⁵⁰ signed the *Agreement Relating to the Restoration of Normal Relations Between the People’s Republic of Poland and Japan* [*Nihonkoku to Pōrando Jinmin Kyōwakoku to no aida no kokkō kaifuku ni kansuru kyōtei*].⁵¹

The joint announcement of 9 February stated:

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 144–150, 167–170, 177–182 and 190–194.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 220–227.

⁴⁸ A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 2, p. 80.

⁴⁹ „Departament V Wydział III, Japonia 08....”, pp. 18–20, AAN.

⁵⁰ A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 1, pp. 291 and 302, GGS.

⁵¹ Japanese version in A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 2, pp. 19–22; English version pp. 79–81, GGS; Polish version in *Department V Division III, Japonia 08....*, pp. 19–20, AAN.

“The restoration of normal relations between the People’s Republic of Poland and Japan has been a pending problem of the two countries. The governments of both countries prompted by a desire to settle this question without further delay, instructed Ambassador Jerzy Michalowski of Poland and Ambassador Toshikazu Kase of Japan, both permanent representatives to the United Nations respectively to hold talks to this effect. As a result of their negotiations complete agreement has been reached between the two Governments and the Agreement relative to the Restoration of Normal Relations between the People’s Republic of Poland and Japan was signed today, 8 February 1957, by Deputy Foreign Minister Jozef Winiewicz on behalf of Poland and Ambassador Kase on behalf of Japan”.

Upon the coming into effect of thos Agreement, Poland and Japan will terminate the state of war, reestablish diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadors between them. The two nations will thus resume their traditional relationship of amity and friendliness. This will redound not only to the well-being of both peoples but to the promotion of world peace through easing international tensions.⁵²

The exchange of ratification documents took place on 18 May 1957 in the building of the MOFA in Warsaw⁵³. The Polish side was represented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Rapacki (1909–1970), and the Japanese side by the Ambassador Extraordinary at Large, Sonoda Sunao (1913–1984).⁵⁴ Minister Rapacki expressed the belief that the Agreement marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Poland-Japan relations, in which political, economical and cultural relations would prosper. Ambassador Sonoda made statements including:

“Our countries were connected in the past by ties of cordial friendship that were broken during World War II bringing great harm to both nations [...] Our nation and government [...] are convinced

⁵² See: *Press Office, Embassy of the Polish People’s Republic, „Press Release”* in A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 2, p. 79, GGS; Japanese version in A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 1, p. 289, GGS; Polish version in *Trybuna Ludu*, 09 February 1957, p. 1.

⁵³ About the course of preparations see various documents in A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 2, pp. 17–66, GGS.

⁵⁴ *Department V Division III, Japonia 08...*, p. 23, AAN.

that our friendship will tighten in the best interests of Japan and Poland”.

After the ratification Sonoda was received by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Worker’s Party, Władysław Gomułka (1905–1982), and the Prime Minister, Józef Cyrankiewicz. The same day Sonoda in his address to Minister Kishi reported that the ratification of the Agreement went as planned. He also informed his superior about the meeting with Gomułka and the Prime Minister.⁵⁵

Conclusion

Soon after the Agreement was signed, both parties embarked on the preparations necessary in order to open their diplomatic posts in Tokyo and Warsaw as well as selecting candidates for their ambassadors. Polish documents show that those works were already started on 9 February 1957.⁵⁶ Finally, the first Ambassadors became Tadeusz Żebrowski (from November 1957) and Ōta Saburō (from January 1958). The official relations between two countries began. But the still ongoing Cold War did not help to facilitate this development, the political and diplomatic relations were not so easy and did develop very slowly. Fortunately, owing to the mutual sympathy between the two nations, which has existed since the beginning of the twentieth century, cultural, academic and economic cooperation has been developing steadily.

⁵⁵ A’ 1.3.3.5-1, Part 2, p. 71, GGS.

⁵⁶ Note for Minister Naszkowski, Director of Department V Słuczański in *Department V Division III, Japan 091. Organizational and human resource matters of the planned embassy of the PRP in Tokyo, 1957*, p. 23, AAN.