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The Second World War and the Political-System Status of European Monarchs

Druga wojna światowa a pozycja ustrojowa europejskich monarchów

SUMMARY

The Second World War brought significant political changes to European monarchies. Immediately after the war, six kingdoms ceased to exist and became republics. This concerned Eastern European countries in the Soviet sphere of influence, as well as Italy, where Victor Emmanuel III had to pay for years of cooperation with the fascist regime. Before the outbreak of the war, at least three European monarchies had considerable power, holding the most important prerogatives in their hands: this was the case in Romania, Bulgaria and Albania. Such a political model failed to survive the war, as after 1945 the kings and princes of the Old Continent only "reigned, but did not rule" (only Louis II, Prince of Monaco kept a stronger position until the end of the 1950s). It used to happen during the war that in countries with an established parliamentary system the monarch played a greater role than during the years of peace (the most prominent example being Wilhelmina, the Queen of the Netherlands). The article also presents other issues important to the royal authority – the functioning of monarchs in exile, the threat to their lives, the exercise of sovereignty (usually only in a ceremonial capacity) over the armed forces, and abdications forced by the circumstances.

Keywords: the Second World War; political changes; European monarchies; kingdoms; republics

INTRODUCTION

The Second World War is one of the most important events of the recent centuries. It was of particular importance for the European continent. It affected the demographics, economy, national borders, and political systems of the countries of the Old Continent. There were seventeen monarchies in Europe before the war,

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although two of them (Andorra and Hungary) were deprived of rulers[1]. Fourteen of these monarchies took part in the war. Only one of these countries, the United Kingdom, has avoided occupation by foreign troops. It is apparent at first sight that the Second World War brought major changes to the political systems in European monarchies.

The study is intended to present this impact and to identify the factors that were decisive for the progressive change in political systems. It is not easy to grasp them, the influence of many events was only indirect, and historians do not always agree on the facts and the relationships between them. It is, therefore, even more appropriate to attempt a synthetic comparison between the processes and phenomena taking place in various countries.

For the purpose of this study, we approach World War a little more broadly than would be the result of a widely accepted time frame. Such an approach is necessary in order to include the Italian aggression against Albania and, above all, to address the effects of the war that emerged after the surrender of Germany (and even Japan). It should be kept in mind that it is not for every European country that the war began on 1 September 1939. Many countries had been affected by it yet before they became a party to the conflict.

As the starting point, it is worthwhile to name the rulers in power during the war years, combined with the brief characteristics of their political position. We further pointed to external factors affecting the monarchs: forced exile and direct threat to their lives. In the following paragraphs, we discussed cases in which the position of the ruler has been strengthened or weakened, or there have been no significant changes in their authority. We further pointed to abdications (usually forced) and presented the circumstances of the liquidation of several monarchies of the Old Continent.

EUROPEAN MONARCHS WHO RULED IN THE PERIOD 1939–1945 AND THEIR PRE-WAR POSITION IN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Pre-war European monarchies can be divided into two groups. The first one is made up of countries to the west and north of the continent, which, at least since the First World War, had parliamentary system. In these systems, the monarch no longer had any significant influence on the current politics and the composition of the government, which was a result of the balance of power in the parliament.

[1] The study does not include Tomislav II, King of Croatia (Duke Aimone di Spoleto, a relative of Victor Emmanuel), who was only a German puppet ruler. See W. Felczak, T. Wasilewski, *Historia Jugosławii*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1985, p. 483; M. Tanty, *Bałkany w XX wieku. Dzieje polityczne*, Warszawa 2003, p. 238.

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This was usually due to political practice, as the constitutions still did not provide for the political responsibility of ministers before the parliament[2]. The second group includes the countries of Eastern and Southern Europe (including Monaco), where the position of the ruler usually remained strong or very strong. We begin the presentation with the first group.

George VI was born in 1895, and sat on the British throne on 14 December 1936 after the abdication of his brother, Edward VIII. For nearly a century the English monarchs had "reigned, but did not rule", so his role basically boiled down to representational functions. George became the monarch of a country participating in the war as early as 3 September 1939, when the United Kingdom declared war on Germany[3]. However, when discussing the monarch's attitude, one must not forget how enthusiastically he greeted Neville Chamberlain returning from the Munich conference, to whose policy he gave his full support[4].

From 1934, Belgium was ruled by Leopold III (born 1901) of the Coburg dynasty, who took the throne after the death of his father, Albert I. He reigned in a country where the parliamentary system was already established and the ruler had no significant influence on internal politics (although Leopold himself tried to strengthen the position of the ruler). Before the war broke out, he was a supporter (in particular at the government meeting of 14 October 1936) of sufficiently high spending on national defence in order to "dissuade each of the […] neighbours from using Belgian territory to attack another country"[5]. He was committed to defending peace: on 23 August 1939, on behalf of the countries of the so-called Oslo Group (formed by the Scandinavian and Benelux countries), he appealed to world public opinion to preserve peace and respect the rights of all nations. Five days later, together with the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina, he declared their readiness for so-called good offices towards the governments of Germany, Poland, France, Great Britain and Italy[6].

When the Second World War broke out, the Dutch ruler Wilhelmina was the longest reigning of European monarchs. She inherited the crown in 1890 after the death of her father, William III. She was only 10 years old at that time, so the

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[2] M. Rakowski, *System parlamentarno-gabinetowy do I wojny światowej*, Warszawa 2016, p. 402.

[3] P. Howarth, *George VI: A New Biography*, London 1987, pp. 65–71; S. Bradford, *The Reluctant King: The Life & Reign of George VI 1895–1952*, New York 1989, pp. 153–204. As George VI was the head of state for the British Dominions, the war on Germany was also declared by Australia, New Zealand, India, the Union of South Africa and Canada. See P. Townsend, *The Last Emperor: Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, London 1975, pp. 103–116.

[4] P. Howarth, *op. cit.*, pp. 83–84; R. Rhodes James, *A Spirit Undaunted: The Political Role of George VI*, London 1998, pp. 143–149.

[5] As cited in: J. Łaptos, *Historia Belgii*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1995, p. 216. See also K. Biskupski, *Ustrój polityczny Belgii. Studium o różnicach między ustrojem konstytucyjnym a rzeczywistością*, Toruń 1964, pp. 40–54; M. Rakowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 217–221.

[6] J. Łaptos, *Historia Belgii*, p. 230.

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regency of her mother, Queen Emma, was necessary. During the First World War, the Netherlands maintained its neutrality, but Wilhelmina became known as a ruler with a strong commitment to military affairs and to ensuring the state's ability to defend itself. Amendments to the constitution introduced in 1922 limited the monarch's powers (among other things, by depriving the monarch of the right to declare war without the consent of the States General)[7].

Until 1890, Luxembourg was united with the Netherlands by a personal union. From 1919, the ruler of the Principality was Duchess Charlotte (born 1896). She took over the crown after the abdication of her sister, Maria Adelaide, who was made to resign by accusing her of being too friendly towards the Germans occupying the country during the First World War[8].

Norway, since 1905, i.e. gaining the independence, had been ruled by Haakon VII (born 1872) from the Danish royal family. He accepted the restrictions in royal authority resulting from the functioning of the parliamentary system and did not actively participate in the political life of the state[9]. The position of the Swedish King Gustav V was similar (born in 1858, reigning since 1907), who at the end of the First World War lost his decisive influence on public affairs, including the composition of the government[10].

When the German army crossed the borders of Denmark, the country had been under the rule of Christian X (born 1870) since 1912. After the end of the First World War, he became a symbol of Danish territorial acquisitions, when part of Schlezwig was incorporated into the kingdom. On 10 July 1920, the ruler on a white horse crossed the former border. In the interwar period, he was, like other Scandinavian monarchs, a monarch under the parliamentary system, with no significant impact on current politics[11].

Victor Emmanuel III of the House of Savoy belonged to those kings who had also ruled during the First World War, and he can be considered the most "military" of the monarchs cited in this study. Born in 1869, he was enthroned in 1900, as the son of Umberto I shot by an anarchist. Under the conditions of the parliamentary system, the Italian monarch had a moderate effect on domestic policy. According to Józef A. Gierowski, Victor Emmanuel was reluctant towards parliament, but,

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[7] J. Balicki, M. Bogucka, *Historia Holandii*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1989, pp. 329, 345–346, 365–367; A. Głowacki, *Konstytucja Królestwa Holandii*, Warszawa 1977, pp. 11–14.

[8] J. Łaptos, *Historia Luksemburga*, [in:] *Historia małych krajów Europy: Andora, Liechtenstein, Luksemburg, Malta, Monako, San Marino*, ed. J. Łaptos, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 2002, pp. 207–211; J. Balicki, M. Bogucka, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

[9] A. Bereza-Jarociński, *Zarys dziejów Norwegii*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 232–235; M. Rakowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 255–263.

[10] I. Andersson, *Dzieje Szwecji*, Warszawa 1967, pp. 312–315; M. Rakowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 270–275.

[11] W. Czapliński, K. Górski, *Historia Danii*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1965, pp. 345–348, 356–361, 367–369; M. Rakowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 263–269.

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unlike his father, he hardly interfered in current politics, although it was important for him to maintain control over the arms[12].

The Italian ruler took an active part in preparing the invasion of Libya, and during the First World War he exercised the nominal command of the army, although the troops were actually managed by generals. After the defeat in the Battle of Caporetto in November 1917, he was supposedly even considering abdication. Victor Emmanuel's attitude facilitated, and perhaps enabled, the success of the fascist march on Rome. He rejected the request of Prime Minister Luigi Facta to declare a state of siege and use the Roman garrison against the coups. As a result, the government resigned, and on 30 October 1922 the King entrusted Benito Mussolini with the mission to establish a new cabinet[13]. During the years of fascist rule, the Italian monarch did not oppose the dictatorship and seemed resigned to the fact that he was overshadowed by the *duce*, who became the actual head of state. As a kind of "consolation prize", the ruler received from Mussolini two another crowns: of the Emperor of Ethiopia and the King of Albania[14].

In Romania, Charles II Hohenzollern (born 1893) had ruled since 1930. Due to his lifestyle, numerous scandals and love affairs, and above all the failure to follow the call for return to the country, at the beginning of 1926 he was deprived of the right to the throne and forced to stay outside the country by the combined houses of the Parliament. He was replaced by Ferdinand, and after his death in 1927, Charles's 5-year-old son Michael became the King of Romania. In 1930, Charles returned from forced emigration, removed his son from power, and sat on the throne. He had a strong position, he decided about the composition of the government and built the cult of the person of the monarch. He exercised power with the participation of an informal group called *camarilla*. On 27 February 1938, Charles repealed the Constitution of 1923 and proclaimed a constitution that vested the King with almost absolute authority. It was approved by the people in an undemocratic referendum, and the political parties were dissolved under a royal decree[15].

Bulgaria was ruled by Boris III of the Coburg dynasty (born 1894). His assumption of the throne was a consequence of the World War: after the defeat of the Central States on which side Bulgaria had fought, Ferdinand abdicated on 3 October 1918, and the crown of the Tsar was taken over by his son Boris, who

[12] J.A. Gierowski, *Historia Włoch*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1985, pp. 515–517.

[13] *Ibidem*, pp. 530–532, 546–552, 571–572; M. Clark, *Współczesne Włochy 1871–2006*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 253–258, 352–354.

[14] J.A. Gierowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 573–611.

[15] *History of Romania: Compendium*, eds. I.-A. Pop, I. Bolovan, Cluj-Napoca 2006, pp. 594–597, 602–604; D. Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania 1940–44*, New York 2006, pp. 34–48; *Kratkaya istoriya Rumynii. C drevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dney*, ed. B.H. Binogradov, Moskva 1987, pp. 354–369.

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gathered his military experience while serving on the Serbian and Romanian fronts. In the interwar period, Boris managed to definitely consolidate the royal power, although the first years after the coronation were difficult for him. The rule of Prime Minister Aleksandar Stamboliyski ended the coup of 8/9 June 1923 supported by the Tsar, which was followed by the dictatorship of Aleksandar Tsankov. Since the coup of 18/19 May 1934, the country had been led by the military organization Zveno (Bell), which managed to deprive the Tsar of real power (the lawmaking was taken over by the Kimon Georgiev's government, and political parties were outlawed). As early as on January 22 the following year, the ruler conducted another *coup d'état* by taking control of political life. The semblance of parliamentary life was retained, but without political parties. From then on, Boris decided on the composition of the government, actually exercising power with an informal group of closest associates. The Tsar led the foreign policy, conducting a policy of rapprochement with Germany (as soon as in the summer of 1936 he paid a visit to Hitler), although during the September campaign Bulgaria declared neutrality[16].

On 9 October 1934, Alexander Karađorđević, the King of Yugoslavia, the real ruler of the state, was shot dead in Marseille. He was succeeded by 11-year-old Peter, who, at least because of his age, could not continue the rule of a strong hand. Three regents were appointed, including Alexander's nephew, Prince Paul. Since June 1935, Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović (called the Leader and greeted with a fascist salute) had gathered power in his hand. In February 1939, after the general elections, he was dismissed by Prince Paul, which was interpreted as a rebuilding of the position of the King, though not by Peter himself, still a minor[17].

Prime Minister Cvetković was reluctant about Yugoslavia's accession to the Tripartite Pact, and this position was upheld by Prince Paul during the meeting with Hitler in Berchtesgaden (4 March 1941). However, having obtained the expected guarantees from Hitler, the Crown Council decided at its meetings on 17 and 20 March to accede to the Pact. The act of accession was signed on 25 March in Vienna, and the next day the government was overthrown by pro-Allied conspirators. At the same time, the regency was overthrown, and the royal authority passed into the hands of King Peter. As soon as on April 6, German troops crossed the border, and in nine days Yugoslavia was conquered, so the sovereign Peter's rule (before his evacuation) was only an episode[18].

The Greek monarchy was repeatedly the arena of turbulent events in the interwar period. In September 1922, George II assumed the throne, but as early as

[16] T. Wasilewski, *Historia Bułgarii*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1988, pp. 236, 240–267.

[17] W. Felczak, T. Wasilewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 447–454, 458–467.

[18] *Ibidem*, pp. 470–472, 482; M. Tanty, *op. cit.*, pp. 227–233.

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March 1924, after the plebiscite, the republic was proclaimed, and the ruler went on exile (in Romania, and later in England). After General Georgios Kondylis took over dictatorial rule, a referendum was held on 3 November 1935 in which the people voted in favour of the restoration of the monarchy. In August 1936, the dictatorship of the "father of the nation" Ioannis Metaxas (the so-called dictatorship of August 4) began, supported by the monarch. The constitution was suspended, the parliament was dissolved, political parties were banned[19]. The scholars who research the history of Greece, when discussing the course of the war with Italy and later with Germany, do not mention the role of the king, limiting themselves to mentioning his evacuation from Greece[20].

Albania was ruled by Zog I, i.e. Ahmed bey Zogu. He was the leader of one of the Muslim clans. Since December 1922 he had served as Prime Minister for fourteen months. He lost power after parliamentary elections, a failed attempt of assassination on him and an armed unrest by the opposition. In December 1924, he held a *coup d'état* and on 6 January 1925 he was again Prime Minister of Albania. By Resolution of 1 September 1928, the Constituent Assembly subordinate to the head of the government offered him the royal title (*mbret*). Zog I was, therefore, a usurper who eliminated the opposition and introduced authoritarian rule. At the same time, Albania became dependent on Italy, which on the one hand supported its economy and weak finances, and on the other hand, with the help of military advisers, took control of the Albanian army[21].

During the war, the throne of Liechtenstein was assumed by Francis Joseph II, born in 1906 and reigning since July 1938. Prior to that, this Alpine country was ruled by John II and from 1929 onwards Francis I. They both resided outside the Principality and visited it sporadically, once every few years. Francis Joseph, who moved to Vaduz in March 1939, turned out to be the first ruler to live in Liechtenstein. The Principality was governed by the Constitution of 1921, which, in comparison with the previous one of 1862, was weakening the position of the ruler[22].

Monaco was ruled by Louis II (born 1870), who took the throne in 1922. Because of his service in the French army, he was called the "prince-soldier". He paid little attention to his royal duties, staying in the Principality for two or three months a year. Nevertheless, the ruler's position was strong, on 26 December 1930 Louis suspended the constitution, dissolved the National Council and the Council

[19] J. Bonarek, T. Czekalski, S. Sprawski, S. Turlej, *Historia Grecji*, Kraków 2005, pp. 552–559.

[20] *Ibidem*, pp. 573–579.

[21] T. Czekalski, J. Hauziński, J. Leśny, *Historia Albanii*, Wrocław 2009, pp. 202–207, 211–218; B. Koszel, *Albania w polityce międzynarodowej w latach 1922–1939*, „Balcanica Posnaniensia. Acta et studia" 1999, vol. 9/10, pp. 204–216.

[22] A. Jureczko, E. Wac, *Historia Liechtensteinu*, [in:] *Historia małych krajów Europy…*, pp. 121–123, 125–126; M. Śmigasiewicz, *System polityczny Księstwa Liechtenstein*, „Studia nad Polityką" 1999, vol. 8, pp. 30–40.

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of Ministers, and ruled by decrees. The members of the Assembly established in 1931 were elected by the ruler himself and it still rejected the draft budget. In 1933 the Constitution was reinstated[23].

THREAT TO THE LIFE AND FREEDOM OF RULERS DURING WAR

It is worth noting the events which prove that during the Second World War several monarchs found themselves in immediate danger. Of course, this was not a novelty, European rulers have lost their lives in wars and assassinations since the Middle Age, regicide occurred also in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Second World War (Alexander I of Yugoslavia).

After the German invasion of Norway, King Haakon found himself in danger. As early as 9 April 1940 he left Oslo, retreating north together with the Storting (Norwegian parliament). The Germans were twice close to capturing the Norwegian ruler: already on 9 April in Oscarborg Fortress and a day later, in Mitskogen near Hamar, where the paratroopers were stopped by an improvised unit. The Germans also made attempts to physically eliminate the King by bombing the places of his stay: Elverum and Nybergsund (in the latter settlement, attacked shortly after the meeting between the ruler and Ambassador Bräuer, Haakon survived because he took refuge in the forest with his relatives and members of the government)[24].

During the invasion of the Netherlands, a German unit of paratroopers attempted to capture Wilhelmina, but she managed to leave the country. While in the United Kingdom, the Queen may have lost her life in one air raid when her property was bombed. The building was damaged and a few people lost their lives[25]. Despite the German bombings, George VI stayed in London also during the Battle of Britain. During an air raid on 13 September 1940, bombs exploded in the courtyard of Buckingham Palace when the ruler and his wife were present there. In August 1942, the King's brother, Prince George of Kent, was killed at the front[26]. Victor Emmanuel was also at risk of capturing by the Germans. After the

[23] A.M. Brzeziński, *Historia Monako*, [in:] *Historia małych krajów Europy*..., pp. 443–446; K. Wojtyczek, *Wstęp*, [in:] *Konstytucja Księstwa Monako. Constitution de la Principauté de Monaco*, ed. L. Garlicki, Warszawa 2012, p. 18.

[24] M. Tamelander, N. Zetterling, *Inwazja na Norwegię 1940*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 109–110; H.O. Lunde, *Bitwa o Norwegię 1940. Wyprzedzające uderzenie Hitlera*, Wrocław 2011, pp. 222–224.

[25] S. Bradford, *The Reluctant King*..., p. 317.

[26] P. Howarth, *op. cit.*, p. 116; S. Bradford, *The Reluctant King*..., p. 323–325, 344–346. The British Royal Family was protected during the wartime by a special military unit. See idem, *George VI*, London 1989, pp. 425, 428–429.

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overthrow of Mussolini, Hitler intended to kidnap the King and members of the government and free the *duce*, but this plan was not implemented[27].

The circumstances of the death of the Bulgarian Tsar Boris were peculiar. They give rise to formulating the thesis that he was subject to a German assassination, although there is no convincing evidence. Having been called to Hitler, he met him in Berlin on 14 August 1943. The *Führer* demanded that two divisions be deployed on the eastern front, which Boris refused to agree to. Tadeusz Wasilewski states that the refusal cost Boris III his life, because when the Tsar arrived in Sofia on 28 August he was unconscious and died shortly afterwards. The author suggests that pointing to heart attack as the cause of death is only the official version[28]. A different version is presented by Bulgarian author Ivan Paunovsky. He claims that the Tsar returned to Bulgaria the next day after his meeting with Hitler, i.e. on 15 August (and clearly denies that he would have died three days after his return or that he would have fallen ill as soon as he got to Sofia). He also takes the view that there is no evidence that the Germans demanded in Berlin that Bulgaria join the war. After this journey, the monarch was still active, among other things he received the Croatian ambassador, he supposedly was hiking in mountains on 19 August, and two days later he was on a hunt. It is said that during the trip he actually complained about his condition, and the deterioration of his health occurred on 23 August. He died on 28 August 1943[29].

During the years of the Second World War, several rulers found themselves in a situation where their lives, or at least freedom, were endangered. It seems that for European monarchs, the period of several hundred years of relative security (at least from external enemies), lasting since the Middle Ages (when the ruler fought on the battlefield) has ended. The real risk of killing the ruler meant that the throne could be inherited at any time. However, there would be a greater risk associated with the monarch being imprisoned by the enemy, who could, firstly, prevent the king from exercising his constitutional powers, and secondly, force him to make decisions or statements contrary to the interests of the kingdom. During the war, two rulers were in the German captivity: Leopold of Belgium and Christian of Denmark, but their countries did not play an important military role.

[27] A.N. Garland, H. McGaw Smyth, *Inwazja na Sycylię i kapitulacja Włoch*, Oświęcim 2016, pp. 329–330. See also M. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 472.

[28] T. Wasilewski, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

[29] I. Paunowski, *Monarchia przed sądem*, Warszawa 1974, pp. 481–505.

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MONARCHS IN EXILE

Several European rulers were forced by the war to leave their countries under occupation by foreign troops. It can be easily noted that such a situation must have had an impact on the change in the political position of the ruler, which was, firstly, due to the inability of the authorities in exile to manage the functioning of the state, and secondly, the fact that there was no parliament in exile which could control the government and exercise legislative power.

The first European ruler to have such a fate was the Albanian King Zog. Assuming that the Resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 12 April 1939 – after Italian aggression and under the pressure of the invader – did not legally dethrone him, we consider that Zog remained the ruler of Albania after leaving. The King and his family (and the state's money as well) crossed the border with Greece already on the day of the landing of Italian troops (April 7). In July 1939, Zog, while heading to London, stayed in Poland for several days, as Jan Meysztowicz described in his memoirs[30].

After the Germans seized most of Norway, and after the Allies decided to evacuate their expedition corps, Haakon VII with the government and family (including the heir to the throne, Prince Olaf), left the country on board the British ship HMS Devonshire. He went to the United Kingdom, where he first stayed at Buckingham Palace in London and then in the county of Berkshire. In exile, Haakon attended weekly meetings of the Norwegian government in exile; he got back to Norway on 7 June 1945[31].

The story of Queen Wilhelmina turned out to be similar. Just three days after the German attack, on 13 May 1940, she arrived in the United Kingdom aboard HMS Hereward. Choosing a place of refuge (and previously asking George VI for help during a phone call) she had to rise above the reluctance towards the British she had had since the Boer Wars. When in exile, the Queen proved to be a person who exercised real power, including political oversight of the government. She returned to her homeland on 2 May 1945. Due to her deteriorating health, she abdicated in favour of her daughter, Juliana, three years later[32].

After the German army crossed the borders of neutral Luxembourg (10 May 1940), the Grand Duchess Charlotte, after a meeting with members of the government, left to France. Then, together with the ministers, through Spain, Portugal and

[30] J. Meysztowicz, *Czas przeszły dokonany. Wspomnienia ze służby w Ministerstwie Spraw Zagranicznych w latach 1932–1939*, Kraków 1939, pp. 226–232.

[31] M. Tamelander, N. Zetterling, *op. cit*., pp. 262–266; H.O. Lunde, *op. cit*., pp. 514–519; S. Bradford, *The Reluctant King*..., p. 322; A. Bereza-Jarociński, *op. cit*., p. 275.

[32] J. Balicki, M. Bogucka, *op. cit.*, p. 390, 394, 404, 426; S. Bradford, *The Reluctant King*..., p. 315.

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the United Kingdom she arrived in Montreal, while her family went to the US. The evacuation of the monarch was not an obvious and widely approved step. Numerous pro-German Luxembourgers expected the return of Charlotte, and according to Józef Łaptos, in the summer of 1940, the ruler considered such an option with some ministers. Fortunately for the Duchess's image, Germany was not interested in agreeing on the terms of her return. As the invader's policy became more restrictive, it was pointless to consider this issue, and the Grand Duchess returned to her homeland only after the liberation of Luxembourg[33].

After the attack on Yugoslavia (6 April 1941), German troops made rapid advances, and just six days after the invasion captured Belgrade. The decision to surrender was taken on 14 April, and the next day King Peter left the country with the government, making his way through Greece to Palestine and later to London. Once in exile, Peter has retained some influence on the course of events in Yugoslavia. The government's sovereignty was recognized by the troops led by Dragoljub Mihailovic, who was later appointed Minister of War of the London Government. However, the Communists of Tito became stronger and they were to decide the future of Yugoslavia and the fate of its ruler[34].

The Greek monarch George II stayed in the country during the war with Italy, but after the entry of German troops (6 April 1941) and a twelve-day campaign, he was forced to leave his homeland. He went to Crete (on 23 April), and due to concerns about his security (since 13 May the island had been bombed by the Germans), he was evacuated to Egypt and then to Great Britain. His return to Greece was not obvious, the Greek communists were striving for power, but in this case Stalin recognized the domination of British interests. During the Lebanese conference held in May 1944, the main Greek political forces (initially excluding the communists) agreed that the fate of the ruler would be decided by the people in a referendum. In January 1945, George appointed Archbishop of Damaskinos the regent. In the election of 31 March 1946, the monarchists won the parliamentary majority, and the referendum held on 1 September was successful for the ruler (68% of votes were in favour of his return). At the end of September, the ruler returned to Greece, but there can be no doubt that making his return dependent on the result of the popular vote – and forcing the ruler to wait for the nation's decision outside the country – must have resulted in the impairment of the monarchy's authority. The George's reign did not last long. He died of a heart attack on 1 April 1947, and his younger brother Paul assumed the throne[35].

[33] J. Łaptos, *Historia Luksemburga*, pp. 215–220.

[34] W. Felczak, T. Wasilewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 482–493. See also P. Howarth, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–126.

[35] J. Bonarek, T. Czekalski, S. Sprawski, S. Turlej, *op. cit.*, pp. 578–579, 589–590, 595–597; M. Tanty, *op. cit.*, pp. 232–233.

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As a result of hostilities, a peculiar situation emerged. Not only were six European monarchs forced to emigrate, but five of them found themselves in Great Britain. This fate was also shared by the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, who also until 1941 stayed in London[36]. Mutual contacts between rulers in exile are undoubtedly a subject that deserves a separate study, as does the problem of their participation in foreign policy making.

The monarchs in exile could not know how long they would remain outside their home countries. Three of them, the rulers of Albania, Greece and Yugoslavia, found themselves in an exceptional situation, as their rights to the throne were challenged by an important part of society. Of these, only George II managed to retain power.

THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE WAR

For several European monarchies, the consequences of the World War were extremely serious, as they were overthrown and a republican form of government was established. This was especially true for the countries that were in the Soviet sphere of influence in 1945, namely Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Albania, but also Italy. There were also monarchies in this group that became victims of aggression by the "Axis" states (Yugoslavia and Albania).

The Italian aggression against Albania took place a few months before the outbreak of the Second World War. On 25 March 1939, Mussolini issued an ultimatum in which he demanded from Albania to actually submit to Italy. The ultimatum was not immediately accepted by King Zog, so on Good Friday, April 7, Albania was invaded by the Italian army, which, without encountering significant resistance, quickly took over the country. Zog left Albania the same day. The invaders won the support of the majority of the members of the Parliament in Tirana, who convened the session of the Constituent Assembly as early as on 12 April. It passed a resolution to dethrone Zog I and entrust the crown to Victor Emmanuel III, and the government that had been formed was quickly recognized by Germany, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Greece and Spain[37].

Ultimately, the future of the Albanian monarchy was to be decided by the communists, although there was also a royalist resistance movement in the occupied country led by Abaz Kupi, which advocated the return of King Zog and the establishment of a democratic monarchy. The National Liberation Movement (LNÇ), which was dominated by Enver Hoxha's communists, at its first congress in May

[36] A. Bartnicki, J. Mantel-Niećko, *Historia Etiopii*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1987, pp. 387–388, 400–401.

[37] T. Czekalski, J. Hauziński, J. Leśny, *op. cit.*, pp. 215–216, 224–225; B. Koszel, *op. cit.*, pp. 217–221.

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1944, opposed King Zog's return to the country. In the parliamentary elections held on 2 December 1945, the Communist Democratic Front reportedly won 97% of the vote. The resulting Legislative Assembly on 11 January 1946, i.e. the first day of the meeting, resolved to abolish the monarchy and proclaimed the creation of the Albanian People's Republic[38].

King Michael reigning in Romania since 1940 was unable to prevent the establishment of the republic, despite the fact that on 23 August 1944 he carried out a *coup d'état*, as a result of which Marshal Antonescu was overthrown. General Constantin Sănătescu became the new Prime Minister, Romania capitulated to the Red Army, and in March 1945 the ruler was forced to establish a pro-Soviet government led by Petru Groza. Romania – with the consent of the allied powers – found itself in the Soviet sphere of influence, so the fate of the monarchy was already sealed. The power in the country was taken over by communists, who considered the king as an obstacle that should be removed as soon as possible. However, they had to take into account the social support for the ruler. It was not until 30 December 1947 that Michael, subject to brutal extortion, signed the abdication act. The communists allowed him to leave the country, so on 3 January he took advantage of this opportunity (which Juliusz Demel calls "a decent and elegant divorce with the monarchy"[39]).

When the Red Army crossed the borders of Bulgaria (8 September 1944), the Boris's son and successor, 8-year-old Simeon II already sat on the throne. The very next day, all three regents were arrested and on the same day they resigned, and the communists took the power. In the referendum held on 15 September 1946, as many as 97% of voters were in favour of establishing the republic. The fate of the Bulgarian monarchy was sealed, so the next day the royal family left the country for Alexandria. In 1951, Simeon settled in Frankist Spain[40].

The Second World War also brought an end to the Kingdom of Italy. The authority of the Savoy dynasty was greatly weakened by the cooperation of Victor Emmanuel with the fascist government. The fate of the dynasty could no longer be averted by the abdication of the ruler in favor of his son Umberto II, carried out on 9 May 1945. Shortly afterwards, on 2 June, a referendum was held in which the Italians decided to adopt the republican system (by 12.7 million votes for vs. 10.7 million against). Umberto, who questioned the validity of the plebiscite, left the country and settled in Portugal[41].

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[38] T. Czekalski, J. Hauziński, J. Leśny, *op. cit.*, pp. 231, 238–239, 242.

[39] J. Demel, *Historia Rumunii*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1986, pp. 403–414. See also M. Tanty, *op. cit.*, p. 267; D. Deletant, *op. cit.*, pp. 240–244; A. Koryn, *Rumunia w polityce wielkich mocarstw 1944–1947*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1983, pp. 71–104.

[40] M. Tanty, *op. cit.*, pp. 268–269.

[41] J.A. Gierowski, *op. cit.*, p. 635; G. Procacci, *Historia Włochów*, Warszawa 1983, p. 497.

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A special case was Yugoslavia, which despite being in the winners' camp, the ruling of Karađorđević dynasty was overthrown. This was an obvious consequence of the takeover of power by the communists led by Josip Broz Tito, with whom the Antifascist National Liberation Council established in November 1942 was associated. During the meeting held on 29 November 1943 in the Bosnian city of Jajce, the Council adopted a resolution according to which the Assembly became the supreme body of legislative and executive power, which was an obvious negation of the rights of King Peter, who was explicitly denied the right to return to the country. The support from Great Britain and efforts to create a government of national unity did not save the Yugoslav monarchy (Tito rejected cooperation with the ruler, while even Stalin advised him, temporarily of course, to reach an agreement with Peter II). The Tito's agreement with Ivan Šubašic (Prime Minister of the government in exile) of 16 June 1944, did not determine the future of the monarchy, it only dealt with mutual recognition of the authorities in exile and communist ones[42].

Another agreement between Tito and Šubašic, signed on 1 November 1944, called the Belgrade Agreement, provided that until the settlement of the political system by the Yugoslavian nation, Peter was to remain outside the country and be substituted by the Regency Council. The ruler refused to approve these arrangements, and only after the Yalta Agreements of 5 March 1945 he appointed three regents. In early April, they entrusted Marshal Tito with the leadership of the coalition's Provisional Government of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (recognized by three powers). In the election held on 11 November 1945, the Communist-dominated National Front "won" over 90% of the vote. On 29 November, the Constituent Assembly proclaimed the establishment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which entailed the dethronement of Peter Karađorđević[43].

Hungary, a special case of kingdom without a king, who was permanently replaced by Admiral Miklós Horthy acting as the regent, also ceased to be a monarchy immediately after the war. The republic was declared on 1 February 1946 and the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic was adopted in August 1949[44].

Although none of the European monarchies ended their existence during the Second World War, there is no doubt that the armed conflict turned several important countries of the Old Continent into republics a few years after its end. Apart from Italy (in which the referendum result reflected the assessment of Victor Emmanuel disgraced by the cooperation with the fascists), the reason for the overthrow of the monarchy was the takeover of power by Stalin-backed communists.

[42] W. Felczak, T. Wasilewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 489, 492–496; M. Tanty, *op. cit.*, pp. 258–260.
[43] W. Felczak, T. Wasilewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 489, 492–496; M. Tanty, *op. cit.*, pp. 259–261.
[44] W. Felczak, *Historia Węgier*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1966, p. 349.

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ABDICATIONS OF THE RULERS

Apart from the aforementioned cases in which the dethronement of the ruler was associated with the establishment of a republic, there were also situations when there was a change of monarch, more or less forced.

The year 1940 was disastrous for King Charles II of Romania. The Allies, with whom he initially sympathized, suffered a defeat, but much more painful were territorial losses to his neighbours. As a result of the Soviet ultimatum of June Besarabia was lost, in August – during the so-called second Viennese arbitration, it was decided to transfer part of Transylvania to Hungary. In September, an accord was agreed with Bulgaria in Craiova, under which southern Dobruja was ceded to Romania's southern neighbour. Romania lost a third of its territory and a third of its population, which of course involved the collapse of the King's authority. At the turn of September, crowds of supporters of the Iron Guard demonstrated on the streets of the capital and other cities against the King; on 4 September Prime Minister Gigantu refused to perform the order to execute fifteen arrested Iron Guard members and at the same time resigned. Despite his personal reluctance, Charles was forced to entrust General Antonescu with the mission to form a new government. He became Prime Minister on 4 September and, having been granted extraordinary powers, demanded the King abdicate. He argued that he could not form a government because the candidates for ministers refuse to cooperate with the monarch. At the same time, Antonescu rejected the King's idea to shoot at the demonstrators in front of the palace. As early as on 6 September, in the morning, Charles complied with the ultimatum presented to him, abdicating in favour of his son Michael. He left Romania, thus avoiding being imprisoned by the Iron Guard[45].

The abdication of Victor Emmanuel took place less than a month before the referendum on preserving the monarchy to be held on 2 June 1946, combined with elections to the Legislative Assembly. The ruler was not forced to step down before the popular vote, but he hoped that the takeover of the throne by his son Umberto II would allow a favourable outcome of the plebiscite[46].

Leopold III of Belgium also suffered negative consequences during the war years. It was alleged that he remained in the German-occupied country, and before that, on 27 May 1940, acting on his own, decided to surrender Belgian troops, surprising the government and the Allies. He put himself in the hands of the Germans, persuading the Belgians to go back to work. The image of the ruler was not even improved by his deportation to the Reich (7 June 1944). Leopold, when liberated by the US troops, was denied the right to return to Belgium, so he spent the next

[45] J. Demel, *op. cit.*, pp. 392–394; *History of Romania…*, pp. 604–606; M. Tanty, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–226; D. Deletant, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–25, 48–53.

[46] J.A. Gierowski, *op. cit.*, p. 635.

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six years in Switzerland. Based on a Resolution adopted on 21 September 1944, both houses of parliament, at the request of Prime Minister Hubert Pierlot, declared the ruler unfit for the exercise of power. Prince Charles, Leopold's brother, was to exercise royal power as regent, which Leopold himself approved on 16 July 1945[47].

In March 1950, a referendum was held in which the Belgians were to decide the future of their King. With a vote of 58% vs. 42%, it was decided that Leopold could return to the country, although opponents of the ruler saw him as a symbol of cooperation with the invader. Once the Parliament adopted a relevant resolution (20 July), Leopold returned to the country the next day. Immediately after his return, there was a general strike and clashes between demonstrators and police, and Belgium faced the risk of disintegration. On 1 August 1950, Leopold announced his abdication in favour of his 20-year-old son Baudouin. The formal transfer of power took place on 16 July 1951[48].

STRONG ROYAL POWER DURING WARTIME

The country in which the monarch could enjoy the strongest position during the Second World War was undoubtedly Bulgaria, but such a situation lasted only until the death of Boris III, i.e. mid-1943. Since the ruler had actual power concentrated in his hands even before the outbreak of the war, it is difficult to speak about its strengthening during the war years, rather about maintaining his previous strong position. The Tsar decided on the dissolution of parliament (October 1939) and on who would head the government (since February 1940, the Prime Minister had been the pro-German Bogdan Filov). The decision on Bulgaria's accession to the axis Berlin–Rome–Tokyo was actually made by Boris, he also postponed the signing of the agreement (this happened on 1 March 1941). On the next day, the German army entered Bulgaria to invade Yugoslavia and Greece on 6 April. As the Bulgarian policy depended on the decision of the monarch, he was subjected to pressure from Germany, which expected greater involvement of its ally in the war (all the more so as after the defeats on the eastern front the King and the Prime Minister tried to reach an agreement with the Allies)[49].

The Dutch Queen Wilhelmina played a significant role during the war. In exile, the monarch became an actual centre of power. After the capitulation, Prime Minister Dirk Jan de Geer sought to make peace with the Germans. Wilhelmina dismissed him as head of government and appointed Pieter Gerbrandy as the new Prime Minister. She was personally involved in the work of the government and

[47] J. Łaptos, *Historia Belgii*, p. 234–236, 243, 246–247.
[48] *Ibidem*, pp. 247–248.
[49] T. Wasilewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 271–275; I. Paunowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–430.

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even received emissaries coming from the occupied country. In the summer of 1942, she traveled to the USA and in 1943 she stayed in Canada[50].

Two other rulers of the states attacked in 1940, Leopold III and Haakon VII, also had a quite strong position in the structure of governance, but this situation was short-lived. During the short defensive war, the King of the Belgians had a real influence on the most important decisions. Already on 18 May, he considered surrendering the country when talking with members of the government. Three days later, in his quarters in Ypres, he represented Belgium during a meeting with the French and British commanders, when the decision on the attempt of a counter-attack was made. When the situation of the Belgian army became hopeless, he decided on 27 May, without the Allies' agreement, to surrender, which happened the next day[51].

During the April campaign in Norway, German demands were addressed directly to the Norwegian ruler (although first, almost simultaneously with the morning attack, they were addressed to the Cabinet, through the Foreign Minister Haldvan Koht). The day after the attack, on 10 April 1940, German ambassador Curt Bräuer, during a meeting with Haakon, unsuccessfully demanded that Vidkun Quisling be recognized as the new Prime Minister. The King presented the content of the ultimatum to the Cabinet, but immediately declared that he could not accept it and announced that he would abdicate if the ministers were of a different opinion (he thus gained the unanimous support of the government members)[52].

The strengthening of Michael I's position in Romania was also temporary. It took place after the overthrow of Antonescu and only lasted until the truce of 12 September 1944, under which the country fell under Soviet control. From 20 September onwards, the Allied Control Commission was operating under the leadership of Marshal Rodion Malinovsky. The August coup entailed the transition of Romania to the Soviet sphere of influence[53]. The King was one of the most serious obstacles on the communists' way to power. At the end of February 1945, the communists organized demonstrations in the capital and several cities, after which the Russians demanded that the King change his government (which could not have controlled the situation). Under Soviet pressure on, the ruler appointed 6 March the Cabinet of Petro Groza[54].

Until July 1943, Victor Emmanuel of Italy remained overshadowed by Mussolini (who had been in charge of the Armed Forces since June 1940), and his impor-

[50] J. Balicki, M. Bogucka, *op. cit.*, p. 394, 404.

[51] J. Łaptos, *Historia Belgii*, pp. 232–234.

[52] H.O. Lunde, *op. cit.*, pp. 221–222. The ruler did not play a significant role in representing the state when in exile. See A. Witt, *Wybrane aspekty współpracy emigracyjnego rządu norweskiego z Wielką Brytanią w latach 1940–1943*, [in:] E. Denkiewicz-Szczepaniak, *Norwegia w pierwszej połowie XX wieku*, Toruń 2004, pp. 45–83.

[53] M. Tanty, *op. cit.*, pp. 267–268; *History of Romania…*, pp. 609–611.

[54] *History of Romania…*, pp. 611–613.

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tance increased significantly after the *duce* was removed from power. The landing of Americans in Sicily on 9 July 1943 had an obvious impact on the ruler's actions. Even before, the ruler was considering a change in the prime minister's seat, i.e. Mussolini's removal, although – as Albert N. Garland and Howard McGaw Smyth report – he was rather striving towards gradual political changes and was not ready to overthrow fascism, nor to immediately break the alliance with Hitler. During the meeting with Marshal Pietro Badoglio on 15 July, he presented his expectations as to the composition of the new government, and on 22 July he tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to persuade the *duce* to resign. The breakthrough came on 24 July when, by a clear majority (19 out of 28), the Grand Fascist Council called on Mussolini to resign and restore the constitutional rights of the ruler and the parliament. The next day, the *duce* met with the King, who called for his resignation and announced that Badoglio would take his place. Immediately after the meeting, Mussolini was arrested, and the next day the King appointed Badoglio as the Prime Minister[55].

The new head of government almost unconditionally recognized the authority of Victor Emmanuel and did not want to take essential action without his clear order. Entrusting him with the position of prime minister meant *de facto* taking over the decision making regarding the state's policy, which gave the king a much stronger position than he had in the pre-fascist parliamentary system. The circumstances of the formation of the cabinet were significant: the ruler handed the prime minister a list of members of the government, unrelated to the fascist party. Badoglio had repeatedly stressed that his decisions were merely an extension of the royal will[56].

Western powers were ready to negotiate the terms of Italy's surrender with the King and Badoglio, and the main ruler's directive for the government was to avoid confrontation with Germany. The King's power was then under a threat from the German army, which was attempted to avoid by assuring the former ally about the desire to continue the alliance. The Italian ruler and his government became a *de facto* hostage to the Germans[57].

Having regained influence on state affairs, Victor Emmanuel took over the leadership of foreign policy. It was up to him to negotiate with the Allies; on 10 August, he decided to send an emissary, although the latter was neither provided with credentials nor written instructions. Faced with the growing threat from Germany, the King decided on 31 August to enter into a truce with the Allies, which occurred three days later[58].

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[55] A.N. Garland, H. McGaw Smyth, *op. cit.*, pp. 307–313, 327; M. Clark, *op. cit*., pp. 464–465; J.A. Gierowski, *op. cit.*, p. 619.

[56] A.N. Garland, H. McGaw Smyth, *op. cit.*, pp. 311, 327–328, 494; J.A. Gierowski, *op. cit.*, p. 620.

[57] A.N. Garland, H. McGaw Smyth, *op. cit.*, pp. 318–320, 328, 330–334, 353–355, 422–425; M. Clark, *op. cit*., pp. 470–471.

[58] A.N. Garland, H. McGaw Smyth, *op. cit.*, pp. 494, 536–541; M. Clark, *op. cit*., pp. 471–472.

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The conclusion of the truce resulted in an attack by German troops, received by the Italian forces in a passive manner. When the Germans were about to enter Rome, the monarch and his family and the government left the capital on 9 September, thus losing control of the events in the Eternal City and leaving the military without clear orders (Martin Clark put it quite bluntly that the King not only abandoned the army, but also the capital city, and this escape meant the end of his dynasty three years later[59]). He stopped in Brindisi, trying to remain in contact with the Allied command. At that time, the Badoglio government was only in control of Puglia. Victor Emmanuel still refused to declare war on the Germans (which he did as late as on 13 October). However, he agreed that Badoglio would sign the instrument on unconditional surrender; this happened on 29 September aboard the battleship HMS Nelson in the port of La Valetta[60]. In June 1944, Victor Emmanuel was forced to change the prime minister: Marshal Badoglio was replaced by Ivanoe Bonomi, the president of the National Liberation Committee[61].

The events described above show that the power of the monarch in Italy was clearly strengthened, as he liberated himself from Mussolini's domination and exercised real sovereignty over the Badoglio government and the army. The possibility of the ruler's action was restricted due to the continued threat from the German troops, and having left Rome, the King lost influence over the developments taking place in Italy. After the delegation of powers to Prince Umberto (which was not provided for in the Statuto Albertino) and the appointment of the Bonomi government, he found itself without real power.

The British ruler gained great authority among the subjects during the war (see below). However, this did not entail a strengthening of his political position, especially since he had to cooperate with a prime minister with an extremely strong personality. George VI had no influence on the composition of the cabinet, as evidenced by the circumstances of the establishment of the government of Winston Churchill. The King leaned towards the candidacy of Lord Halifax, but he did not decide on the election of the prime minister. He also had to come to terms with the appointment of Lord Beaverbrook as member of the government and of Brendan Bracken as member of the Privy Council, although he opposed both candidates. As is well known, the ruler remained in close relationship with both Prime Ministers – Chamberlain and Churchill – meeting with each of them at weekly meetings. The ruler's participation in the daily work of the government was a departure from the more than a century-old practice that the King did not participate in the day-to-day

[59] M. Clark, *op. cit*., p. 472.

[60] A.N. Garland, H. McGaw Smyth, *op. cit.*, pp. 575–581, 614–617; J.A. Gierowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 620–622 (this author claims that the war on the Germans was not declared on 13 October but on 14 October).

[61] J.A. Gierowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 626–627.

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activities of ministries, although his activity was understood to be the exercise of the right to advise ministers rather than to decide on government policy. The monarch was informed of activities of a confidential nature and took an active part in the conduct of foreign policy, including contacts (especially through correspondence) with President Roosevelt and his wife Eleonore, but also in relations with the State of Vichy and the USSR (by receiving Molotov on 22 May 1942)[62].

The years of war can be associated with the strengthening of the Prince of Liechtenstein. This country, as the only member of the former German Confederation, remained was outside the Third Reich, so even for this reason its sovereignty was at risk. The Germans did not decide to carry out an *Anschluss*, but made an unsuccessful attempt of a Nazi coup in March 1938 (Andrzej Jureczko and Ewa Wac, unlike other authors, state that it happened a year later). In the face of the threat, the ruler settled on the territory of his country, and on 28 May 1939 the people of the country took an oath of allegiance to him. The Constitution of 1921 stipulated that in the event of a threat to the security or prosperity of the country, the ruler could make the necessary decisions on his own, without the consent of the parliament. In 1943, the Prince extended the term of parliament for an indefinite period of time, as he was afraid that the elections would increase German influence. During the war, the police force was strengthened, which already consisted of fifty officers, not seven as before[63].

After the war, the position of the Prince of Liechtenstein remained quite strong, although its strengthening resulting mainly from factual circumstances, i.e. the fact that since 1939 he had resided at Vaduz Castle, not in Austria. The ruler could dissolve parliament (as in 1957) or carry out a change of government (as in 1945), although he was not always effective in doing this (as in 1992)[64].

The Second World War did not bring about any significant changes in the position of the Prince of Monaco, which remained quite strong. The state was in trouble when in September 1939 the tourist traffic collapsed and after the Italian attack on France the defence of the country began to be prepared. Once the Vichy State was established, Louis II became essentially subordinated to Marshal Philippe Pétain. On 11 November 1942, Italian troops entered the town, but Mussolini assured Louis that he would retain his ducal power. The Italians were replaced by Germans (10 September 1943), who planned to establish a recreation and entertainment centre for soldiers in Monaco. The occupation lasted until 3 September 1944. The Prince

[62] R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, pp. 194–196; S. Bradford, *The Reluctant King…*, pp. 305, 310–315, 331–339, 343–344, 349; idem, *George VI*, pp. 403–404, 410–418, 438–451, 462–463; P. Howarth, *op. cit.*, pp. 118–120.

[63] A. Jureczko, E. Wac, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–126; M. Śmigasiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–41; K. Koźbiał, *System polityczny Księstwa Liechtensteinu*, Kraków 2013, pp. 48–49, 100.

[64] K. Koźbiał, *op. cit.*, pp. 102–103.

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saved his throne, and on 17 October 1944 he partially restored the application of the constitution, and on 29 October elections to the Assembly were held. At the same time, he decided that there would be no proceedings conducted against the collaborators[65]. After the war, Prince Louis had more influence on the politics of the state than most of the monarchs of that time. In 1959, he suspended some of the provisions of the constitution once again and replaced the General Council with the National Council with members nominated by him[66].

THE WEAKENING OF THE RULER'S POSITION AS A RESULT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The most noticeable weakening of royal power occurred in those countries where the monarch's position before the outbreak of the war was strongest, namely Romania and Bulgaria.

In Romania, the clear decline in the importance of the monarch resulted from the overthrow of Charles II (6 September 1940) and the assumption of the throne by his 19-year-old son Michael. The monarch's power was radically weakened immediately before Charles's abdication. The first act of this process was the appointment of Antonescu to the post of Prime Minister, forced by circumstances, and it is not certain whether this was due to pressure from Germany. Dennis Deletant argues that Hitler did not interfere with the events in Romania, one can only assume that he stopped supporting Charles, which undoubtedly contributed to his downfall. The ruler fulfilled the Antonescu's demand by repealing the Constitution of 1938, dissolving parliament and granting the prime minister extraordinary powers, *de facto* vesting him with full authority. King Michael, who assumed the Romanian throne on 6 September, retained only representative functions, and Antonescu exercised actual power as the "leader of the state" (*Conducătorul Statului Român*). His powers were based on two Michael's decrees issued on 6 and 8 September. It did not matter that the formal prerogative of the ruler was still the appointment of the prime minister and the authority over the armed forces. The ruler did not participate in making the most important decisions for the state. It was Antonescu, and not King Michael, who paid a visit to Hitler in January 1941. A similar meeting took place in August 1941 in Ukraine, when it was decided that Romania would participate in the war against the USSR. According to Deletant, the ruler was not even informed about the decision to join the attack on the USSR (as he commented ironically in a telegram to Antonescu), which did not prevent him from promoting the dictator to the rank of marshal a month later, after regaining Bessarabia. King

[65] A.M. Brzeziński, *op. cit.*, pp. 447–449.
[66] K. Wojtyczek, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

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Michael had no influence on the decision to reorganize the government (on 27 January 1941 the people of the Iron Guard were dismissed and replaced with officers subordinated to Antonescu)[67].

In Bulgaria, the radical weakening of the ruler's position was the result of the death of Tsar Boris (28 August 1943), after whom 6-year-old Simeon assumed the throne. The royal powers were exercised on his behalf by the Regency Council appointed by the National Assembly, which included Prime Minister Filov, Minister of Military Affairs, General Nikola Michov, and brother of the late Tsar, Prince Cyril. The ruling minor had no effect whatsoever on the events of September 1944, when the Soviet army entered Bulgaria, and during the 8/9 September coup, the regents' rule was overthrown[68].

In Belgium, until the day of surrender, Leopold III had had a significant impact on the functioning of the state. However, immediately after surrendering the country, there were serious disagreements between the ruler and the government, as a result of which the monarch first lost his ability to influence the work of the cabinet, and secondly, the authority among his subjects. The government led by Hubert Pierlot intended to emigrate, while Leopold wanted to stay in the country. He did so by surrendering himself to the Germans, while in the proclamation addressed to soldiers invoked honour and willingness to care about his subjects. French Prime Minister Paul Reynaud publicly accused him of treason, while the Belgian Prime Minister in an address broadcast by radio (on 28 May) limited himself to disavowing the ruler's decision and claiming that the King had lost power by surrendering the country to the invader. Against Leopold's will, the Prime Minister announced his intention to continue the fight together with the Allies. The members of parliament who managed to meet in Limoges took the side of the government. On the other hand, the monarch's side was taken by Cardinal Jozef Van Roey, who called on his countrymen to solidarity with the ruler. After the surrender of France, the government softened its stance, and the Prime Minister called for seeking national unification around the King. At that time, some ministers tried to return to Belgium, but the Germans opposed. Perhaps thanks to the ruler's attitude, the occupation of Belgium, especially in the early months, was relatively mild, and the Belgian ministries were still staffed by the same personnel operating under German oversight[69].

On 28 May 1940, the Belgian Council of Ministers adopted a resolution stating that the King was "in a state of inability to exercise power". As the Parliament was inactive, there were no conditions to use Article 80 of the Constitution of 1831, according to which when the monarch was unable to exercise power, the government was required to convene chambers to establish care and regency. The Belgian

[67] *History of Romania…*, pp. 606–607; D. Deletant, *op. cit.*, pp. 53, 69–71, 82–83, 99–100.
[68] T. Wasilewski, *op. cit.*, p. 275; M. Tanty, *op. cit.*, p. 243.
[69] J. Łaptos, *Historia Belgii*, pp. 234–237.

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government in exile explicitly refused the ruler the right to dismiss the cabinet (although in accordance with Article 65 ministers were appointed and dismissed by the ruler). If this had happened, a government would have been formed alongside the king in the occupied country, for whom, as Józef Łaptos points out, it would be difficult to avoid being recognized as an authority collaborating with Germany. Interestingly, the government in exile had consistently stated that it was fighting to free the King captured by the Germans[70]. The Émigré Council of Ministers issued decrees, invoking Articles 26 and 82 of the Constitution, the will of the people and the inability to convene legislative chambers[71].

As J. Łaptos mentions, the assessment of Leopold's attitude towards the Germans is varied in the historiography. His critics recall the King's meeting with Hitler, which took place in Berchtesgaden on 19 November 1940. During the talks, the Belgian monarch was to present proposals for cooperation, while maintaining the widest autonomy possible, however the *Führer* was not interested in making such arrangements. After the Allied landing in Normandy on 7 June 1944, the Germans deported Leopold deep into the Reich. After the liberation of the country, the so-called King's political testament of January 1944 was made public, in which he condemned the government's conduct during the war. Since the ruler was still in German hands, in view of the impossibility of reigning, a regent was elected on September 21 at the meeting of both houses of parliament; the chosen regent was Leopold's brother, Prince Charles[72].

Christian X stayed in Denmark during the German occupation. His influence on politics, already insignificant before, was minimized, although the government operated in the country, and parliamentary elections were held on 29 March. It is not difficult to notice that the occupation of Denmark clearly differed from the fate of other conquered countries. The dispute between the King and Germany arose in connection with the royal birthday on 26 September 1942. The Christian's response to the telegram with Hitler's greetings was laconic, which caused protests by the occupation authorities. Eventually, the Germans forced the resignation of the Vilhelm Buhl's government, and Erik Scavenius was appointed the Prime Minister[73].

We can assume that in Sweden, which remained neutral during the Second World War, there were no significant changes to the already weak position of the ruler. The continuous threat from Germany forced the army to be mobilized and arms production increased. Important statements on behalf of the state were made not by the ruler, but by the government (which was supported by a broad coalition). An exception was the declaration of Gustav V, made in early 1940, in

[70] *Ibidem*, pp. 235–239; K. Biskupski, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
[71] K. Biskupski, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
[72] J. Łaptos, *Historia Belgii*, pp. 236–237, 243.
[73] W. Czapliński, K. Górski, *op. cit.*, pp. 369–375.

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which he supported the government's position as regards non-intervention in the Soviet-Finnish war. There is no indication that the changes in the composition of the cabinet in the years of war were a result of the will of the monarch. It is worth noting that already in 1939, Gustav V was an elderly man (81 years of age), which also may have influenced his ability to act[74]. Sarah Bradford claims that during the German invasion of Norway, Gustav allegedly consulted with Germany to replace the Norwegian ruler with his grandson[75], while Adam Kersten draws attention to the King's pro-German attitude and his contacts with Hitler and Göring[76].

THE KING AS THE CHIEF COMMANDER

It is difficult to answer the question to which extent the European monarchs actually exercised their authority over the armed forces under constitutional provisions. The literature consulted does not contain information to formulate categorical conclusions. It can be assumed that in most cases the rulers did not take part in the command of the army, which may be confirmed indirectly by the lack of information on their actions in this field. One can only point to a few moments in which the monarch's influence on the developments on the front was noticeable.

After the German attack on Belgium on 10 May 1940, Leopold took command of the army, as Józef Łaptos put it, "according to the constitution and tradition". As indicated above, he represented Belgium during military staff meetings with the Allies[77]. Even before the overthrow of Mussolini, the Grand Fascist Council adopted, as a result of Grandi's actions, a resolution urging the King to take command of the armed forces[78]. After the formation of the Badoglio's government, the prime minister was to be responsible only for civilian matters, and the king kept for himself the authority over the army, with orders being issued to the army resulting from clear decisions of the ruler. In August, the orders of the ruler manifested the will to actively respond to German violence, defend command posts and important infrastructure installations[79].

The short-term takeover by the Italian ruler of the real authority over the army must be considered an unusual situation (as does the significant role of Leopold III). Much more often, the ruler had no real influence on military operations and, like George VI, was limited to formally acting as the head of the army. He used to pub-

[74] I. Andersson, *op. cit.*, pp. 334–339; A. Kersten, *Historia Szwecji*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1973, p. 383.

[75] S. Bradford, *George VI*, p. 426.

[76] A. Kersten, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

[77] J. Łaptos, *Historia Belgii*, p. 232.

[78] A.N. Garland, H. McGaw Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

[79] *Ibidem*, pp. 327–328, 425.

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licly appear dressed in a military uniform, although, as Sara Bradford aptly noted, when acting as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Great Britain and the Empire, the King was aware that there he had no greater influence on the course of the war than in 1914 when he served on one of the ships. As the chief commander, he mainly held representative functions. As recently as in December 1939, George visited ships sent to France, then (June 1943) visited soldiers in North Africa and Malta, and in June 1944 in Normandy, a month later in northern Italy, and in October in the Netherlands. He also inspected the troops deployed on the islands. The ruler remembered then that he was the head of state not only in the United Kingdom, so during the battles for France he also met with Canadian soldiers[80].

THE KING AS A SYMBOL OF THE STATE

In the years of the Second World War, the ruler could become an extremely useful icon of the state and the nation, a symbol of struggle and resistance, not only for soldiers on the front, but for society as a whole. This is nothing new, except that in the middle of the 20th century the image of the monarch was also built with the use of the achievements of technology. This role of the rulers has become particularly important in a situation where in many countries the monarchy no longer had an impact on the work of the government and the activities of the army.

English King George VI enjoyed great popularity and respect due to the fact that he shared the dangers and nuisances of war with them. He, too, was subject to the food and water rationing system. He and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, visited the villages that suffered from air raids[81].

A symbol of Dutch resistance became Wilhelmina, who made regular speeches to the nation broadcast by Radio Oranje[82]. Christian X was also an icon of opposition to the occupation, although it was "Danish-style". Every day he used to go for a horseback ride in Copenhagen, and the subjects greeted him enthusiastically, taking the attitude of the ruler as an expression of resistance to the Germans[83].

The monarchs were eager to address their subjects using radio broadcasting. This was done by George VI, who inaugurated this way of contact with the people with his famous Christmas address in 1939. These speeches were a huge challenge

[80] S. Bradford, *The Reluctant King…*, pp. 309, 355–363; idem, *George VI*, pp. 418, 432–433, 462–483; P. Howarth, *op. cit.*, pp. 148–150, 168–169.

[81] S. Bradford, *The Reluctant King…*, pp. 321–329; idem, *George VI*, pp. 427–433; P. Howarth, *op. cit.*, pp. 121–122, 128–129.

[82] J. Balicki, M. Bogucka, *op. cit.*, p. 394, 404.

[83] W. Czapliński, K. Górski, *op. cit.*, pp. 369–375.

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for him, because when young, stuttering had prevented him speaking publicly[84]. The radio also allowed other rulers to contact the population of the occupied countries, such as the above-mentioned Wilhelmina.

The King of Romania also appeared on the radio. In January 1940, Charles was convincing his subjects that neutrality guaranteed Romania's safety, announced the construction of a fortification line around the country and the necessary taxes[85]. After the coup that took place in Yugoslavia on 26 March 1941, the 18-year-old King Peter delivered a radio speech in which he announced that he was taking over power by dismissing the government and regents[86].

Francis Joseph, who ruled in Liechtenstein, used traditional forms of communication (and the size of the state did not force him to take advantage of technological innovations). He was reinforcing the will of resistance and national solidarity in letters to his subjects and in throne speeches. During and after the war, the Prince enjoyed great respect from his subjects[87]. Of course, such addresses were delivered by other rulers as well, one can recall the speech made by George VI on 11 November 1941 on the occasion of the postponement of Parliament[88].

CONCLUSION

The Second World War had very serious consequences for many of the European monarchies. Those which would fall in the Soviet sphere of influence (Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary) had to become people's democratic republics. Thus, the monarchies in which the rulers managed to maintain a strong political position before the outbreak of war, ceased to exist. Italy also became a republic, as the Italian King discredited himself with his cooperation with Mussolini.

An important factor for the rulers' position was the fact that several of them, for a longer period of time, acted outside the occupied home country, having chosen Great Britain as a place of refuge. This inevitably meant a radical change in the way the royal power was exercised. It was up to the personality of the ruler whether he became a symbol of the struggle for independence, while at the same time replacing the parliament in exercising political control over the government (like the Dutch

[84] R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, pp. 176–178; S. Bradford, *The Reluctant King*..., p. 309, 317; idem, *George VI*, p. 429.

[85] Also, upon the takeover of power by King Michael (23 August 1944), the ruler's proclamation was broadcast by radio. See A. Koryn, *op. cit*., p. 55.

[86] M. Tanty, *op. cit.*, pp. 228–229.

[87] A. Jureczko, E. Wac, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–126; M. Śmigasiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–41; K. Koźbiał, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–49, 100.

[88] P. Howarth, *op. cit.*, pp. 131–132.

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Queen Wilhelmina), or whether the representation of the state and conducting politics was delegated to ministers (like the Norwegian King Haakon VII).

In the countries of Western and Northern Europe, the war did not bring about any significant changes in the ruler's political position. It had been weak already before 1939, and the monarchs functioned under the conditions of a parliamentary system. Even in the Netherlands, where the war brought about a clear strengthening of the role of Queen Wilhelmina, the changes were of a temporary nature. The abdication of the Queen, which took place in 1948, sealed the return to the pre-war status.

Probably the only country where the ruler's position was strengthened was Liechtenstein, where the changes were of a factual rather than formal nature. The Prince, who had visited the Principality before the war every few years, settled there permanently in 1939, which had to increase his participation in governance.

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STRESZCZENIE

Druga wojna światowa przyniosła europejskim monarchiom poważne zmiany ustrojowe. Bezpośrednio po wojnie sześć królestw przestało istnieć, stały się republikami. Dotyczyło to państw Europy Wschodniej, które znalazły się w radzieckiej strefie wpływów, a także Włoch, gdzie Wiktorowi Emanuelowi III przyszło zapłacić za lata współpracy z faszystami. Przed wybuchem wojny przynajmniej w trzech europejskich monarchiach władca posiadał istotną władzę, skupiając w swych rękach najważniejsze uprawnienia – tak było w Rumunii, Bułgarii i Albanii. Taki model ustrojowy nie przetrwał wojny, po 1945 r. królowie i książęta Starego Kontynentu jedynie „panowali, ale nie rządzili" (silniejszą pozycję do końca lat 50. zachował tylko panujący w Monako Ludwik II). W okresie wojny zdarzało się, że w państwach o ugruntowanym już systemie parlamentarnym władca odgrywał rolę większą niż w latach pokoju (najlepszym przykładem może być holenderska Wilhelmina). W artykule przedstawiono też inne zagadnienia ważne dla władzy królewskiej: funkcjonowanie monarchów na uchodźstwie, zagrożenie ich życia, wykonywanie – zazwyczaj jedynie reprezentacyjne – zwierzchnictwa nad siłami zbrojnymi, a także wymuszone okolicznościami abdykacje.

Słowa kluczowe: druga wojna światowa; zmiany ustrojowe; europejskie monarchie; królestwa; republiki