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UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

THE POLISH CORRIDOR

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

Of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Of Master of Arts

Department of History

by

James Otis Kelley

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

"Definitive Aspects"

The "Polish Corridor" was a derisive designation given by the Germans, to a certain portion or sector of land, bordering on the Baltic Sea in Northern Europe. While some of the Corridor lay on the east of the Vistula River, most of it was to the west of that main Polish artery. It was situated between Pomerania on the west, and Danzig and East Prussia on the east.¹ The Corridor was wedge shaped, of varying widths, but widest at its southernmost boundary.²

It was usually assumed that the Corridor comprises approximately those parts of the former German provinces of West Prussia and Posen extending from Bomberg (Bydgoszcz) to the Baltic.³

This region was a part of the German Empire up until the close of the World War. It embodied the efforts of the Peace Conference at Versailles to give to the Poles a free and secure access to the sea.⁴

1. Dawson, William Harbutt, Germany Under the Treaty, p. 102
2. Ibid., p. 102
3. Stone, Shepard, "German Polish Disputes," Foreign Policy Reports, Vol. IX, No. 9, p. 102, July 5, 1933
4. Seymour, Charles, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, Vol. IV, p. 200

It is the purpose of this study to inquire into the history, the motive for, the justice and the expediency of this creation or allocation by the Peace Conference.

The reappearance of Poland at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 was one of the most significant and unique events in our age. A nation which had had a great and memorable past and which had undergone dissection in peace time at the hands of its greedy neighbors, came to life again, and was seeking once more a local habitation and a name. This signified something more than the mere revival of a vanished state: It stood for the triumphant righting of one of the greatest political wrongs that Europe had ever witnessed, the vindication of the principles of justice, right, and fair dealing in international relations.¹

The Treaty of Versailles has been termed by some as Carthaginian Peace.² The epithet, which implies injustice, or treachery, is misleading. The political map of Europe, as it has been drawn in the peace treaties, no doubt, compares favorably with the map

1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard, Some Problems of the Peace Conference, p. 153
2. Dyboski, Roman, Poland, p. 9

which it replaced and was more closely in accord with the wishes of the populations concerned than any previous arrangements of land areas in European history.

The real objection to the Treaties was not that they were unjust, but that they were too impractical and idealistic. The Western Slav, the universal bondsman of the early Middle Ages, is delivered from the Teuton, the Muscovite and the Magyar.¹ Will these Slav states which have been created by the Treaties, establish themselves in the esteem and confidence of Europe, will they be economically sound units, and can they successfully resist the dangers which may proceed from the valiant unreconciled aristocracies of Prussia, Russia, and Austria? These questions, the future alone can answer.

Of all the new creations by the peace treaties, Poland was the most important, the most interesting, and the most controversial. All through history the Poles, like the Irish, have been in the center of the strife; combative, adventurous, temperamental, irrepressible. Their annals have been marked by extreme vicissitudes of fortune; at one time they have been masters of a

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 9

wide Empire stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, at another time, partitioned and obliterated.¹

If one of the requisites of a sovereign state is a body of people occupying a particular territory and politically organized under one government, Poland was not a sovereign state when it appeared at Versailles, for it was not organized potentially or actually under one government, nor did it occupy a definite territory. It was merely a phantom roaming around in the northern plains somewhere between Germany and Russia; and what this disembodied spirit would look like if clothed again in flesh and blood, no one actually knew.²

It was, then, to be a part of the work of the Peace Conference to mark out and to determine its boundaries.

It may be illuminating at this point to inquire into the manner of Poland's extinction as a nation in the eighteenth century, and to rehearse the events and actions that brought about its Partitions.

Attention might be focused on the fact that at the time of Poland's exit from the family of nations, the so called, "Polish Corridor," was an undisputed part of Polish territory.

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., pp. 9-10

2. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard, Op. Cit., pp. 156-57

CHAPTER I
THE PARTITIONS

CHAPTER I
THE PARTITIONS

The Partitions of Poland by its three close neighbors: Russia, Prussia, and Austria in 1772, 1793, and 1795 have long been considered the classic example of international wrong and crime in the eighteenth century. No less a person than Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, has denounced the partitions of Poland as a "baneful precedent," a "crime," and an "atrocit^y."¹

George Clemenceau said that the partition of Poland was the greatest crime in history, also that it left an everlasting stigma on the names of Catherine, Maria Theresa, and Frederick II.

"No outrage had ever less excuse, no violence perpetrated against humanity ever cried louder for a redress that had been indefinitely postponed. The wrong was so great that no time in the life of Europe, among so many other acts of violence for which there was no expiation, could it appear less heinous. It has become a byword in history as one of the worst felonies that can be laid to the charge of our civilization."²

1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard,
Op. Cit., p. 154

2. Clemenceau, George, Grandeur and Misery of Victory,
p. 193

Some writers profess to trace the idea of the partition of Poland back for more than a century before it was an accomplished fact.¹ Certainly the idea was not new. It had been discussed as early as 1656 by Charles X of Sweden and the Great Elector, Frederick William; and for a century the idea haunted the statesmen of many European countries, emerging in the sinister half shadows of memoranda and projects, only to be buried to a troubled rest. Whether Frederick the Great was the first author of a definite scheme is disputable and irrelevant and inconsequential to the main development.

The second or third largest state in Europe with an area of 282,000 square miles, standing fourth in population with over 11,000,000 people, had been destroyed.² Its frontier had extended from the Baltic Sea and the Carpathian Mountains to the Dneiper and the Dvina Rivers. It included nearly the whole of that broad isthmus between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea which leads from Eastern Continental Europe to the peninsular Europe of the West.³ Nevertheless, it had been completely and totally obliterated from the map of

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1. Marriott, J. H. R. and Robertson, C. G., The Evolution of Prussia, pp. 151-52
 2. Temperley, H. W. V., History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. VI, p. 223
 3. Ibid., p. 223

Europe by its great land grabbing and land hungry neighbors.¹

Certain observations of Poland's historical catastrophe, namely the three Partitions, easily suggest themselves to the outside observer indifferently conversant with general European history.² Thus, some bearings of Poland's geographical position on her fate are obvious enough. That position was a "key" position at the crossing of old established and important trade routes between the northern and southern seas, and the western and eastern lands of Europe.³ As such, it was bound to make Poland a flourishing power in international trade in the Middle Ages; but it inevitably lost its advantages with the closing up of European south-east by the Turkish conquest, and then the opening up of a new world across the western seas for European trade; commercial wealth, and with it political power were fated to ebb away from Poland in the modern era quite as easy as it was fated to ebb away from the Venetian and other Italian Republics.⁴

Viewed from yet another angle, Poland's fate seems

1. Buell, Raymond Leslie, Europe, p. 197
2. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 16
3. Bowman, Isaiah, The New World, p. 271
4. Temperley, H. W. V., Op. Cit., Vol. VI, p. 219

to fall into line with certain wider developments in the European world. Those who hold it as an established truth that since the Reformation Protestant powers in Europe generally advanced in strength and importance, while Catholic nations decayed, may think of the old Poland as doomed together with Spain, and only affected more tragically than Spain itself, because much less favorably situated on the map. But even those who do not believe in Protestantism as an elixir vital for nations, will be inclined to think that Poland perished, among other reasons because she did not make the best either of Protestantism or Catholicism.¹

Poland stood aside in the great religious wars of the seventeenth century, then lapsed into a passivity which made her a prey for foreign nations. Her inactivity in the great wars of the eighteenth century and her consequent sufferings, were from that point of view but symptoms of vanishing prestige: irresolute religious tolerance was followed by the pacifism of paralysis.

But surely Poland's attitude--whatever it was--on the great religious issue of early modern times was not in itself a sufficient cause for the overthrow

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., pp. 16-17

of what was then a vast monarchy of great international power, rich resources, and a high degree of culture.

Should we then, find the seed of Poland's dissolution in the very process of her territorial growth? That growth indeed, has certain peculiarities which have an evident bearing on Poland's extraordinary fate.

An examination of the territorial growth of Poland and its later decay, shows that the impediments surrounding the construction of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy on all sides were indeed too great to allow its complete realization and continued safe existence. The rival power of the Hapsburg dynasty and Sweden, the unending preoccupation with the Diet, the extraordinary growth of Russia, and finally, the German barrier on the Baltic, fixed since the early Middle Ages, all these combining, would have taxed the strength of a state much larger, richer, and more firmly settled in its internal conditions than the Polish-Lithuanian empire ever became through the four centuries of its united existence.¹

We pass to a more intensive review of Polish history during the period of the Partitions.

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 17

Frederick II was not on friendly terms with most of his neighbors. But he determined to cultivate the friendship of Catherine II of Russia and he also aided her in bringing to the vacant Polish throne her former lover, Stanislaus Poniatowski.

At Catherine's request, Frederick sent Prussian troops into Poland and shortly before the election of the Polish king, signed a treaty with Catherine in which she secured all the advantages of the treaty for herself, Frederick promising to interfere in Poland for the sake of purely Russian interests. It was hinted however, that in case of war he might hope for compensation.

By a new treaty with Russia, 1767, Frederick agreed that under certain circumstances, he would throw an army into Austrian territory; but, in such a case, he fully intended to compensate himself at the cost of Poland.¹

Frederick recognized the danger of an Austro-Russian war in which Prussia must fight for Russia with doubtful prospects of compensation, the certainty that Catherine meant to absorb Turkish territory, and that Joseph II of Austria and Kaunits, his minister, were determined to

1. Henderson, Ernest F., A Short History of Germany, pp. 206-209

have compensation, to break up the Russo-Prussian Alliance if possible, and substitute a Russo-Austrian undertaking in its place. Intrigue sharpened every faculty of Frederick's mind and in this great game of strategy and chicanery he had the more level head, the more experienced hand, and a definite and limited object - the acquisition of West Prussia.

He held right to his alliance with Catherine and when Joseph of Austria in 1770 seized the Polish district of Zips to satisfy an old claim, he flung his troops into Elbing. On January 28, 1772, the secret treaty with Russia riveted Catherine and Frederick in an agreement to partition Poland, and there was nothing for Joseph to do but to fight Prussia and Russia, or join the agreement on the best terms he could make. War, as Frederick had foreseen, was unnecessary if the three despots of eastern Europe would aggrandize themselves at the expense of a defenseless neighbor.

By the treaty of February 19, 1772, Austria joined in, and after five months spent in settling details the Partition was an accomplished fact.¹ A previous agreement between Prussia and Russia had been made in

1. Lewinski-Corwin, Edgar H., The Political History of Poland, p. 311

St. Petersburg on February 6, 1772. Joseph acquired Galicia and Lodomeria, Catherine a large strip of Lithuania, and Frederick, West Prussia, with Pomerellen and Ermeland, but without Danzig or Thorn. On September 13, the proclamation of annexation was made.¹

Frederick II had been the chief instigator of the first partition. By this partition Poland lost one-third of her territory, but the great fortresses of Danzig and Thorn, very much coveted by Frederick, remained in the possession of Poland. Three years later (1775) the Poles accepted a revised constitution which, though making for more orderly and more economical administration, left Poland entirely dependent upon Russia. But when in 1788 Russia became involved in war both with Turkey and Sweden, the anti-Russian party among the Poles led by Adam Cosimer Czartoruski and Ignatius Potocki, seized the opportunity of electing a Diet pledged to secure a liberal and independent constitution for their unhappy country. The Diet, which met at Warsaw in October, 1788, lasted four years, secured the withdrawal of Russian troops and entered into cordial relations with Frederick William II of Prussia. The latter readily concluded an offensive

1. Marriott, J. A. R. and Robertson, C. Grant, *The Evolution of Prussia*, p. 152

and defensive alliance with the Poles, and offered to recover for them Austrian Galicia, provided they were willing to hand over Danzig and Thorn to him. But while they procrastinated, Prussia and Austria came to terms at Reichenbach and Poland had lost its chance. Nevertheless, the Polish patriots made a desperate effort to put what remained of their house in order.

In 1791 a new constitution inspired by British practice and the French Revolution was adopted that gave prospects of making the country strong and united. It represented a sincere effort to convert the country into a constitutional monarchy. The elective monarchy, the liberum veto, and the right of confederation were swept away; the executive was vested in a hereditary king, assisted by a responsible ministry; there was to be a bi-cameral legislature, including representatives of the cities; the caste system was abolished and a large installment of social reform was effected.¹

The adoption of this model constitution came as a surprise to Europe. The new constitution was an act of defiance to Catherine, who was pledged to maintain

1. Buell, Raymond Leslie, Poland, p. 47

the anarchy enshrined in the Constitution of 1775. The other partitioners, however, looked more kindly upon it. To Austria, a Poland strengthened and renovated would have been an undoubted advantage. Frederick William of Prussia cordially congratulated the Poles on the Constitution of 1791.

In 1792 the situation was again in several ways more favorable to Russia, not least by reason of the fact that the Austrians were involved in war with France. With Austria out of the field, Russia no longer feared Prussia, consequently a small group of pre-Russian Poles formed the Confederation of Targowica, denounced the new constitution as despotic, and demanded their ancient liberties. When they appealed to Catherine for help, only too willingly Catherine complied. A Russian force was sent into Poland and before the end of June Poland was once more in the grip of Russia.¹

The notable reforms devised in 1791 were swept away, the old archaic constitution was restored, and Catherine, despite a strong protest from Austria, took toll from her Polish friends in the shape of some 98,000 square miles of territory and three million

1. Buell, Raymond Leslie, Op. Cit., p. 48-49

people. Prussia, admitted to a share of the spoil, got Danzig and Thorn with the provinces of Great Poland, Gnesen, Kalisch, and Posen, including in all about a million and a half of people and 22,000 square miles of territory.¹ The partitioners promised to use their good offices to secure the Bavarian exchange for Austria, a concession which did little to please the emperor. Austria, however, was deeply engaged in the west, and her protests against the second partition could therefore be safely disregarded.

The Polish patriots did everything in their power to avert the loss of another part of their country, but they struggled in vain, and on September 23, 1793, the Diet at Grodno gave silent assent to the cession of Posen, Danzig, and Thorn to Prussia, and at the same time revoked all the proceedings of 1791 and entered into a formal alliance with Russia.

As a crime against the principles of nationality and independence the partition of 1793 was even worse than that of 1772. The two really responsible partitioners, Frederick of Prussia and Catherine of Russia, might in 1772 have sensibly pleaded that Poland had shown herself incapable of reform; that, as she

1. Marriott, J. A. R., and Robertson, C. Grant,
Op. Cit., p. 187

then stood, she was a perpetual menace to the security of her neighbors and to the peace of Europe, and that Prussia and Russia were merely recovering lands which in the past Poland had taken from them.

But no similar plea could avail to excuse the partition of 1793. The Poles had manifested not merely the desire but the ability to set their house in order. In the eyes of the Partitioners the crime of the reformers of 1791 was that they did their work too well; that they might have given a new and vigorous life to Poland and thus have interposed a fatal and final barrier to the aggressions of her powerful neighbors.¹

The Polish patriots did not acquiesce tamely in the second dismemberment. After it had been consummated in 1793, the Russians were virtually in military occupation of what still remained of independent Poland.

In March, 1794, however, the Polish army rose under their former leader Tadeusz Kosciuszko. This valiant hero after the partition of 1793 had undertaken a mission to Paris. He returned to Poland, called upon his countrymen to throw off the yoke of Russia and Prussia,

1. Marriott, J. A. R. and Robertson, C. Grant,
Op. Cit., p. 188

and expelled the Russian garrison from Cracow, Warsaw, and Vilna. For some months Kosciusko was practically master of Poland; but his triumph was short lived. In May, 1794, Frederick William placed himself at the head of a Prussian army and marched into Poland. In June the Prussians won a decisive victory at Rawka. The Russians then inflicted a crushing defeat upon Kosciusko. Kosciusko's defeat was soon followed by the extinction of his country.

In January, 1795, Catherine II came to a secret arrangement with the Emperor, to which Prussia was to be subsequently invited to adhere. The Russian frontier was advanced up to the river Bug, and an addition of territory which brought with it about 1,200,000 inhabitants was made. Austria obtained Cracow with the Palatinates of Sandomir and Lubelsk, with about 1,000,000 people. Prussia was to have Warsaw with the district between the Oder, the Bug, and the Niemen, but only on condition that she acquiesced in further accession of territory both to Russia and Austria at the expense of Turkey.

Frederick William was highly indignant, as well he might be at the treatment accorded to him by Russia.¹

1. Buell, Raymond Leslie, Op. Cit., p. 53

As things were he had no option but to acquiesce in the terms offered to him, and so in 1795, New East Prussia was added to his dominions with another million of Poles. The partitioners thus destroyed the Polish State; they did not and could not, however, destroy or exterminate the Polish nation.

The partitioners' actions and especially Frederick's actions in the first partition have been defended; first, because Poland was a dying kingdom which the surgery of partition restored to a new life in the march of Prussian civilization and progress; second, because the partitioners had taken back territory which had once been their own and again, because the Prussian acquisitions were reclaimed with marvellous labor, and had conferred on it the blessings of an enlightened autocracy and an efficient administration; fourth, because if Frederick had not interfered, Catherine and Joseph would have made the partitions, and Frederick would have obtained nothing; fifth, because the geographical, political, and military needs of Prussia required that the gap between East Prussia and Prussian Pomerania should be filled in; and lastly, because without the annexation, Prussia could never have played the part in German and European

history that she has subsequently played to the indisputable benefits of Germany, Europe, and herself.¹

These arguments are simply illuminated angles and variants of the central doctrine that ends justify means and that reason of state and law of dynastic needs backed by bayonets are superior to all other considerations. They would apply to and justify any and every aggressive conquest. The Partitions were and remain a crime.²

This brings us to the consideration of the question of how far Poland's internal conditions contributed to the decay of her political power and to her final undoing. It is on this great problem that the opinions of historians and scholars are most sharply divided, and stand out most glaringly against each other.

Poland had a fully developed Parliamentary system, while the monarchies which dismembered her were more or less absolute. Hence the verdict of some modernists that Poland's parliamentary institutions were too far advanced for the age, and Poland perished as a martyr

1. Marriott, J. A. R. and Robertson, C; Grant,
Op. Cit., pp. 152-53

2. Ibid., p. 153

for progressive ideas to be realized generally only in a somewhat later period.

This interpretation is opposed to the older doctrine of the so-called "Cracow school" of historians, a doctrine dominant in Polish scholarship for a long time, and largely consonant with the views of foreign -- especially German -- students of Polish history.

According to this doctrine -- which had its origin in the depressed mood of the nation after the failure of the insurrection of 1863, Poland fell from internal weakness and not from outside interference; had she deserved to live Europe would have prevented the partitions by some concerted effort; her past was only a sham greatness covered with a tinsel of glory that concealed the rotten core; there was no possible future for such a nation.¹ The old Poland brought her catastrophe upon herself through ill use made of Parliamentary liberties: freedom degenerating into license, the rights of the individual being unduly extolled and his duty to the State neglected, all attempts at administrative or social reform baffled by this archaic individualism and by the class egoism of the nobility and gentry.

1. Humphrey, Grace, Poland the Unexplored, pp. 320-21

Poland perished through lack of a strong central government authority, and ensuing lack of enforcement in all matters vital to the life of the State -- justice, finance, military organization, and consistency in foreign policy.¹

This fatalistic view which certainly had a large body of facts in Polish history to support it, suffered from limitations proper to all such general theories; it often overlooked positive achievements, or minimized their relative importance, which in some cases only became apparent in our own days.

To combine a great measure of popular liberty with the necessary strength of central state authority seems today next to impossible. Yet this was the task which Poland faced at the time when her territorial growth and international prestige were at their height, and her political and moral responsibilities accordingly the gravest and the greatest.

We have examined now in a brief survey, the possible causes of old Poland's decay and fall and some explanations of her mysterious survival after political death, and we arrive at the deep truth, that the forces of the spirit are the true sources of life.

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., pp. 24-25

Never extinguished in the social organism of Poland, and more active than ever in the last stages of her material decay, they were to tide that nation across the dark abyss of captivity and subjection into a renewed fullness of existence in a later period.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE PARTITIONS TO THE PEACE CONFERENCE

CHAPTER II

FROM THE PARTITIONS TO THE PEACE CONFERENCE

The century and more of Poland's division between her three neighboring empires and of the government of the nation by foreign rulers might at present, with Poland reunited and free, appear to be but a dark interval which it would be best to pass unnoticed in surveying the history of Poland with regard to its bearings on the present.

Yet the century during which modern Poland was deprived of unity and freedom, was no other than the great nineteenth century, the era of the growth of democracy, of gigantic achievements in science and technology, of the awakening of nations long submerged in darkness and tyranny, and of the developments in Empire-building, and in international trade which led up to the greatest convulsion and revolution in recorded history.

The record of the nineteenth century Poland was one of ceaseless, untiring, and active resistance to foreign domination by every possible means and on every occasion which the course of international affairs seemed to offer. Hence the reputation which the Poles in the nineteenth century acquired all over Europe of

being the most persistent and the most romantic military adventurers in the world.¹ Thus, for twenty years they followed Napoleon's eagles and shed their blood on all his battle fields in the unflagging hope that out of his drastic rearrangement of the map of Europe a new and complete Poland would ultimately arise, and the spirit of those years did bear fruit again and again.

Wherever a nation struggled for liberty, Polish knights-errant were sure to be found on its front ranks.

In the nineteenth century, the partial and half-hearted concessions by which the partitioning powers at various times met the insatiable desire of the Poles for complete political freedom did not hinder the nation, through two-thirds of the nineteenth century, from rising in rebellion again and again.

Two insurrectionary wars against Russia, in 1830-31 and 1863-64, each taxed Russia's huge military strength to the utmost; and the "springtime of nations" in 1848, sweeping the whole of Europe with gusts of revolutionary movements, had its stormy reverberations both in the Austrian and the German division of Poland.

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 38

If, however, the cause of Poland failed to receive active support from Western European Powers at critical and crucial moments, the risings, nevertheless, achieved one end: They kept the Polish issue alive in Europe's international politics, and did not allow it to sink to the insignificance of a merely local and provincial matter.

Poland's greatest poet, Adam Mickiewicz, writing for the comfort and pleasure of his fellow exiles in Paris a book of parables, admonitions, and prophecies in Biblical prose, called The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage (1833), had ended it with a Pilgrims' Litany containing a prayer to God, "for a great war which would bring deliverance to oppressed nations."¹ And, indeed, as the nineteenth century was drawing towards its close, it seemed that little short of the terrible fulfillment of Mickiewicz' inspired prayer could bring the Polish cause back to life. Forty years after Poland's last armed rising, the Polish problem, as an issue of international politics, seemed thoroughly dead and buried.

France, which had often manifested a sympathetic and friendly interest in Polish national aspirations,

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 70

now, after her defeat of 1870-71, had sought security in an alliance with Tsarist Russia, which implied the tacit abandonment of the largest section of Poland to Russian oppression. Austria, which for cogent reasons had allowed self-government to its Poles, was drifting into greater dependence on her powerful German ally. Germany, herself, was as determined as ever to suppress Polish nationality within her borders. Her endeavors in that respect went exactly parallel to Russia's and it seemed that whatever other differences might arise between them, Berlin and St. Petersburg would always see alike on the question of Poland.

In Poland itself, not only had the interests of the three divisions of the country come to diverge widely from each other, but the generation growing up since the last armed struggle of 1863, had become too absorbed in the pursuit of the material ends of modern economic effort to retain a vivid sense of the reality of national aims.

The land-owning gentry, which had been the backbone of resistance to foreign rule in previous uprisings, now professed acquiescence, and actually evolved a political programme of reconciliation and threefold

loyalty; even under Prussia, where it was engaged in a struggle for the land, that class never thought of any but legal weapons in the contest.

The manufacturing and commercial communities in all three sections, but particularly under Russia, had excellent reasons to cling to the connection with large imperial organisms.

The peasantry, for the most part nationally unawakened, always essentially conservative, and now bent with might and main upon the acquisition of more and more land, naturally could not be expected to pursue what seemed the chimera of national reunion and freedom.

Under the circumstances it was only the professional intelligentsia of the towns -- that class of determining importance for all spiritual movements in latter-day continental Europe -- which kept the torch of national aspirations burning.¹

In spite of all preparatory activities, the declaration of war in August, 1914, opened up for the Poles a gloomy and agonizing prospect. They saw themselves herded together in the ranks of the German, Austrian, and Russian armies, about to be hurled against

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 71

each other in fratricidal strife, brother pitted against brother, and both against their mother country. Four years of varied horrors followed. Four years of invasions and counter-invasions, of armies moving back and forth and systematically ravaging or robbing as they moved; four years of terrible isolation from all friends and four years of ignorance of what was going on in the outside world.

What hope was there for the Poles in such a war? What could they see but continued subjection to others? If the Central Powers should win, Russia might be compelled to give up her Poles, but who would get them, if not the Austrians and the Germans? If Austria and Germany should lose, would not the outcome be merely the reverse, subjection to Russia instead of to Austria and Germany?

To be sure, throughout the war, the one side or the other tried, as its fortunes waned or waxed for the moment, to lure the Poles to hearty cooperation against its enemies by promising them a restored and united Poland in the end, but these promises were always vague and fleeting, always qualified by some ambiguity or reservation that rendered them null, or nearly so, in the eyes of the Poles whose experience in the past

with the triple bank of oppressors did not lead them to repose an unlimited confidence in them now.

But unanimous as was the opinion of the public generally regarding the justice of the Polish cause among statesmen and politicians, the idea was scarcely less general that from a practical standpoint the cause was hopeless. The only hope for the Poles in the great war was that both sides, Russia on the one hand, and Germany and Austria on the other, should come out of it defeated. But such a hope could not be reasonably entertained, so preposterous it seemed. Nevertheless, the preposterous happened.

Russia was defeated by the Central Powers and was compelled to sign the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The Central Powers were defeated by the Allies and compelled to sign the Versailles and other treaties. The ground was cleared for a new structure, and one more substantial and more comfortable for its occupants than that whose uncertain and shadowy plan had, during the war, been dangled before them at various times by their oppressors.

It was, however, the Russian Revolution which was to exercise a decisive influence on the counsels of the Allies and on the destinies of Poland. It did so

even in its first stage, while it still seemed that changes would be moderate and Russia would hold out in the ranks of the Allies. The Provisional Government of the revolutionary period issued on March 30, 1917, a manifesto to the Polish nation, recognizing its right to political independence.¹ Although this contained an allusion to some sort of union between the new Poland and Russia, it was justly hailed by Polish opinion as a highly important and further step in the direction of deliverance.² A beginning had been made by Russia herself with a thorough readjustment of age-old relations established by conquest.

Even before the manifesto of revolutionary Russia, the voice of America, a power still neutral at that time, but soon to be a determining factor in the European struggle, had rung out clearly on the subject of Poland. President Wilson, in a message to Congress foreshadowing America's possible share in the conclusion of the peace, had declared that a reunited and free Poland was one of the war aims admitted on all sides.³

It was also before the Russian manifesto that

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1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 76
 2. Fisher, H. H., America and the New Poland, p. 96
 3. George, David Lloyd, Memoirs of the Peace Conference, p. 630

M. Dmowski had submitted to Balfour a memoir embodying his own and his fellow workers' ideas on the territorial composition of a reconstructed Polish State -- ideas which essentially remained his programme when he afterwards represented Poland at the Peace Conference.

It was, on the other hand, under the encouraging impression produced by President Wilson's utterances and by revolutionary Russia's recognition of Polish claims that the Austrian Poles on their part, now ventured to state national aims more frankly than had ever been done before in the Central Empire. A resolution passed by the Austro-Polish Parliamentary Deputies assembled at Cracow in May 1917, expressly defined a complete and independent Poland as the goal of national aspirations. It was also in this resolution that Austria was for the first time treated by her Polish subjects not as a protecting Power, but as an Ally, whose services were only welcome if helpful for the attainment of the clearly defined national aims.

That such an unprecedented note should have been struck, was rendered possible not only by the turn which affairs had taken in Russia, but also by a recent happening under the Austro-German occupation. The

question of drawing upon the occupied territory of former Russian Poland for recruits was becoming an acute one for the Central Powers. It was cautiously proposed to widen the framework of Pilsudski's Legions (Poles organized by Joseph Pilsudski to aid Austria) so as to create a larger Polish armed force which, however, would at the same time be more unreservedly at the disposal of the Central Powers for their war aims.

Pilsudski, at this critical point, parted company with the Central Powers to whom he had always professed only conditional allegiance. He forbade his loyal followers to take the new military oath required of them and refused it himself. His faithful legionaries were disbanded and interned and he himself imprisoned in the fortress of Magdeburg. This imprisonment added considerably to his prestige in the eyes of the nation; it raised him to the dignity of a symbol of national resistance to foreign rule.¹

France now at last saw her way to authorize and assist the formation of a Polish army for the Allied side, and shortly before the close of the War on

1. Fisher, H. H., Op. Cit., p. 100

July 3, 1918, Poland was raised by a decision of the Allied statesmen at Versailles to the rank of a belligerent Allied nation. The Polish National Committee in Paris was thereby recognized in the Allied camp as an official representation of the Polish people.

While the War yet raged, long before the Peace Conference opened, the problem of Poland had been envisaged from a very different angle by the Allies to that of the Partitioning Powers.

As early as May, 1917, as we have observed, the attitude of the Poles themselves was defined by the Polish members of the Austrian Parliament who declared that "the desire of the Polish nation was to have restored an independent and united Poland with access to the sea."¹

More important, because it had more force behind it, was the opinion of the Entente Powers, whose timidity in this matter, as in many others, had been pronounced but was now beginning to catch up with the possibilities and requirements of the situation. Russia's western Allies had always observed diplomatic silence on the Polish question,

1. Fisher, H. H., Op. Cit., p. 101

and censored all unofficial allusions to it. In 1915, Italy was the first among the Allied Powers to raise its voice in behalf of the free Poland.¹

On November 15, 1916, the Czar of all Russia himself, announced his intention of establishing Poland, including Russian Poland, Galicia and Pos-
mania, as an autonomous and united kingdom within the Russian Empire.

On January 5, 1918, David Lloyd George, stating that he was speaking "for the nation and Empire as a whole," declared that "an independent Poland, comprising all those genuinely Polish elements who desire to form part of it, is an urgent necessity for the stability of Western Europe."²

But, perhaps, the best and clearest statement of the aspirations and determination of the Allied and Associated nations at war was given by Woodrow Wilson in an address to a joint session of Congress on January 8, 1918. In this discourse, the President enunciated his famous "Fourteen Points." The thirteenth point stated that, "An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish

1. Fisher, H. H., Op. Cit., p. 96

2. George, David Lloyd, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 630

populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant."¹ Several times throughout the year of 1918, President Wilson reiterated in one form or another the main views expressed in this program.

In the two months between the middle of September and the middle of November, 1918, the two Empires which, since 1915, had held all the Polish lands, toppled in defeat and revolution.

The events and negotiations which signaled the defeat of the Central Powers and their recognition of Polish independence may now be briefly enumerated.

On September 15, 1918, the Government of the Dual Monarchy asked the President of the United States for a statement of terms of peace. On October 4, the newly appointed German Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, proposed the conclusion of a general armistice. In his note, Prince Max requested the President of the United States to take steps relative to the restoration of peace, to notify all belligerents of the request, and to invite them to delegate plenipotentiaries for

1. Seymour, Charles, Op. Cit., Vol. IV, p. 200

the purpose of taking up negotiations.

The note further stated that the German Government accepted as a basis for the peace negotiations, the program laid down by the President of the United States in his message to Congress of January 8, 1918, and in his subsequent pronouncements, particularly in his address of September 27, 1918. In order to avoid further bloodshed, the German Government requested the President to bring about the immediate conclusion of a general armistice on land, on water, and in the air.¹

The note also stated that the German Government believed that the governments of the powers associated with the United States likewise accepted the position taken by President Wilson in his address.

We may thus observe that Germany and Austria Hungary agreed to the resurrection of the independent Poland with a free and secure access to the sea, in her preliminary negotiations for an armistice.

The Poles interpreted these requests for an armistice on Wilson's terms as recognition of their independence and proceeded to set up their own temporary government in the place of those of the

1. Fisher, H. H., Op. Cit., p. 114

Central Powers.

On October 8, the Regency Council at Warsaw issued a manifesto dissolving the Council of State that had been elected under German auspices and prepared to summon a popularly elected diet as the Constitutional Assembly. About the same time the authority which the Central Powers had exercised since 1915 in the Congress Kingdom was relinquished.

On November 3, 1918 at Warsaw, Poland was declared a Republic. No improvised government set up in Poland was recognized by the Allies, but in Paris, the Polish National Committee, which controlled no Polish territory, enjoyed Allied recognition as the representatives of the Polish nation.¹

Fortunately for Poland the German revolution released from the fortress of Magdeburg the man who through the exigencies of the war had become the most popular leader of the soldiers and the masses of the people. Joseph Pilsudski arrived in Warsaw on November 10, and his arrival marked the beginning of a centralization of authority. On the day of Pilsudski's arrival in Warsaw the Regency Council solemnly declared the German occupation at an end.

1. Fisher, H. H., Op. Cit., pp. 116-17

On the day the Armistice was signed Polish officials took over the executive functions in Warsaw, and the Regency Council placed the supreme military authority in the hands of Pilsudski. The Regency Council did not long survive the German authority which had created it, and on November 14, it submitted to popular demand and resigned. The Commander in Chief of the Army became Chief of the Polish State.

By this time the Poles were divided into two groups of almost equal strength, neither of which was willing to submit to the other, nor strong enough to force its will on the nation. The Polish National Committee in Paris, was headed by M. Dmowski and dominated by the National Democrats. This Committee controlled the Polish Army in France, now commanded by Haller, and it also enjoyed the confidence of the Great Powers whose representatives were gathering in Paris to redraw the frontiers of Europe.

On the other side, Pilsudski, the hero of the masses was installed in Warsaw. His personal prestige with the masses was greater than that of any leader on the other side and at his back was an army rapidly growing in numbers and organization and intensely loyal to him. But Pilsudski's position was weak where that

of his rivals was strong. His service in the forces of the Central Powers had not been forgotten by the Allies and more damaging, perhaps at this time, were his socialist opinions and his long revolutionary career. Bolshevism had succeeded Teutonism as the great bogey of Western opinion, and Bolshevism was an inclusive term making Socialists of all complexions suspects.

Foreign rule had been broken, but Poland was still divided. Division meant weakness; union, strength. Weakness and division were not the right kind of wares to display before the all-powerful Allies, who were then assembling at Paris to fashion among other things a new Polish world. To escape disaster, and to profit by the independence won at such cost as Poland had paid, it was necessary and imperative for the Poles to patch up a political unity which would make it possible to utilize the prestige and ability of Pilsudski in Poland and of Dmowski and Paderewski in Paris. Under these circumstances, a compromise was made by which the Moraczewski Cabinet resigned and Paderewski became Premier and Foreign Minister on January 16, 1919, with a cabinet representing the different parties and also the different divisions.

Paderewski's assumption of Premiership is a

landmark in the history and restoration of Poland. The new state was able to present a united front at the Peace Conference, which had its first session in Paris two days after the new cabinet assumed office, and was represented by her Prime Minister -- one of the most notable and influential personalities at that historical gathering.

CHAPTER III
THE PEACE CONFERENCE

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The Treaties of Paris constitute the greatest measure of national liberation of subject nations ever achieved by any war settlement on record. The Peace settlement meant the bringing of freedom to many million of Poles. It was by no means a simple task to determine the borders of the new state. The difficulty of applying the idea of nationality was increased because the boundaries of "historic Poland" fluctuated from generation to generation and often included large areas where the population was not Polish by race and language.

The Peace Conference summoned the representatives of Poland before it on January 18, 1919, and by so doing formally recognized the new Polish State. Poland was given two votes in the Conference. Poland was represented by M. Dmowski and I. J. Paderewski with Casimir Dluski, a Pilsudski appointee as an alternate.

However, the recognition of the Polish State did not determine the very important matter of what territory the new state was to contain. These memories of a Greater Poland were destined to give

trouble to those who sought to settle national boundaries on ethnological and traditional principles. When the Poles presented their claims to the Conference, their claims were by every canon of self-determination extravagant and inadmissible.

M. Dmowski's conceptions of the reconstruction of Poland were known to the Allies from his memorandum addressed to Balfour in 1917. True to his pre-war view that Germany was the most dangerous enemy of Poland, Dmowski laid stress on a maximum of territorial acquisitions on the western side of Poland, which would insure Poland's economic and strategical independence as against Germany.¹ Not content accordingly with the recovery of the province of the Posnania, lost through the Partitions, he desired to see Poland's historical access to the sea by Danzig safeguarded through the possession of a wide stretch of territory on both banks of the lower Vistula, including if possible, Poland's sometime vassal state, the province of East Prussia.

He wished to see Poland's economic development in the direction of industrialization placed on a firm basis by the incorporation of Silesia, which

1. Buell, Raymond Leslie, Op. Cit., p. 63

had been separated from Poland since the fourteenth century, and included in Prussia since the middle of the eighteenth century.¹ On the eastern side, on the other hand, he was prepared to sacrifice a large portion of the borderland possessions included in Poland before the Partitions partly because they were inhabited by non-Polish population which had since reached a troublesome degree of national consciousness of their own, and partly also because he wished to leave the door open for a future understanding with Russia.²

M. Dmowski's views in this, as on most other points, were fundamentally different from those of Joseph Pilsudski's and his political allies who continued to see in Russia the principal danger to Poland's existence.

Pilsudski inherited with the blood of the eastern borderland gentry from which he had sprung, a vivid sense of the great historical tradition of Poland's imperial union with her eastern neighbor, Lithuania, and of Poland's civilizing mission in the Lithuanian and Ruthenian border countries. His

1. Temperley, H. W. V., Op. Cit., p. 221

2. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 83

programme was, accordingly, more extensive and ambitious on the eastern than on the western side. Pilsudski imagined the eastern borderlands constituting a series of small buffer states between Russia and Poland, which would be a superior civilization if Poland gradually could be drawn into some sort of federative union with them.

On the western side he would have remained satisfied with the restitution of her Polish-German frontier as it existed before the first partition in 1772.¹ If, now, we compare the settlement actually effected by the Peace Treaties with these two different Polish conceptions of it, we observe that the solution given to the Polish problem by the peacemakers of Versailles was, like their solution of many other European questions, necessarily somewhat hasty and accordingly unsatisfactory.

On January 29, 1919, M. Dmowski presented the territorial claims of Poland. In settling the boundaries of Poland, he said Poland would not be satisfied with the historical boundaries of 1772 in the West. For example, Silesia had been lost to

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 83

Poland since the fourteenth century, but today ninety per cent of the population, owing to the national revival, had kept its language and was strongly Polish. He remarked that the whole territory of Eastern Germany was not naturally German but was Germanised. He quoted Bulow as saying that what Germany had lost in the west in the breaking up of Charlemagne's empire, she had gained in the east. Summing up the question of what is, or what is not, Polish territory, he suggested that a rough definition would be that such territory as had been oppressed by Anti-Polish laws was Polish territory.¹

He went on to say that if the coast belonged to one nation and the land to another, there would be mutual tendencies to conquest, and quoted Herr Bebel as saying that Germany's task was not to colonize Africa, but to colonize the Vistula region. He maintained that it would be more just to expose a small Germanized country to infiltration by Poles, than to deprive all Poland of economic independence and to expose it to German aggression.

The Conference at Paris manifested so far as

1. George, David Lloyd, Op. Cit., p. 632

the boundary between Germany and Poland was concerned two main tendencies in the discussions according to its official historian.

The first tendency was based on the idea that friends should be strengthened at the expense of enemies, and that the innocent should be strengthened at the expense of the guilty. It showed a leaning in all doubtful cases to give the benefit of the doubt to Poland.

The second tendency rested on the principle of doing justice to enemies as well as friends. On the whole, the second tendency in most instances prevailed, Mr. Temperley maintains, and especially so in dealing with Danzig and the Polish Corridor.¹ So far as the frontiers with Germany were concerned, strategic considerations were for the most part completely ignored.

It may be added that in regard to regions which had been taken away from Poland by great international wrong and crime and Germanized by unique and shamefully political methods, it was neither unreasonable nor unjust to give Poland the benefit of the doubt in

1. Temperley, H. W. V., Op. Cit., p. 241

cases where doubt really existed.

In the attempt to secure justice as between nation and nation, it was agreed that nationality must be the chief basis of settlement. It was equally agreed that economic factors might override the factor of nationality. History was not and could not be ignored altogether. Religion was taken into account, but mainly in a negative way. The Poles demanded that the ethnographic criterion should be the determining factor, and that where it was necessary to modify the ethnographic frontier because of economic, historical, or other considerations that modification should be to the advantage of Poland.¹ They interpreted the ethnographic frontier strictly as including all regions in which Poles by race and language were in a majority, and they were inclined to assume that Polish race and language implied in all cases a wish to be united to the new Polish state.

In addition they went considerably further than the Entente Powers in their desire to modify the ethnographic frontier to their own advantage for

1. Temperley, H. W. V., Op. Cit., p. 236

economic and other reasons.

Perhaps in certain cases they asked for more than they really expected to receive and sometimes damaged their position by asking too much.

The decisions lay with the Peace Conference as a whole, but primarily with the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, the United States, France, Italy, Japan, and Great Britain. The decisions were in all cases unanimous.

On the central point all the Powers were agreed that it was necessary to establish a Polish State and with it a real chance of existence, that is a state with the greatest possible stability and strength. Opinions differed only in the manner in which Poland could be made most strong and most stable.

The French aim at the Peace Conference was a peace of security. France was conscious of a German menace which threatened both her and Poland alike. She was not, however, unconscious of the difficulties involved nor did she wish to go as far as the Poles themselves.¹

The Commission which the Conference appointed on Polish affairs, headed by M. Jules Cambon, a Frenchman,

1. Temperley, H. W. V., Op. Cit., p. 238

leaned strongly toward the Franco-Polish view on disputed points. In the report which it submitted to the Supreme Council toward the end of March, it recommended that Poland be given the greater part of Posen and Upper Silesia, a broad corridor to the sea along both banks of the Vistula River, and the city of Danzig.

It was indicated in the first report of the Cambon Commission that the drawing of a frontier line on a purely ethnological basis was almost an insuperable difficulty. Economic and strategic requirements had also to be taken into account in drawing boundaries in order that the new state thus delimited should have a fair chance of surviving.

The real cause of the death of Poland, said M. Cambon, was not merely its faulty political organization, but principally its lack of communication with the sea. The real end of Poland did not come in 1772, but in 1743, when Danzig was lost.¹ Without that port Poland could not live. By it alone could Poland have access to liberal Powers in the west. It was no use setting up a Poland deprived of access to the sea, as it would inevitably be the

1. George, David Lloyd, Op. Cit., p. 639

prey of Germany or of a reconstituted Russia. Poland must have not only a sea-board, but also full and free communication with Danzig. If he had to choose between protecting German populations largely imported since the eighteenth century, and protecting Poles, he unquestionably preferred the latter alternative.

The American aim at the Peace Conference, as was shaped by her President and voiced in his public addresses was for a peace of final world conciliation. He held up the banner of the ideal.

President Wilson was enthusiastically pro-Polish. In the Peace Conference he sympathized strongly with Polish aspirations. But he told Ray Stannard Baker on April 7 that, "the only real interest of France in Poland is in weakening Germany by giving Poland territory to which she has no right."¹

American delegates had displayed very early marked interest in the matter of Polish independence, and, like France, had historic ties with Poland. As regards the frontier with Germany, the Americans

1. Baker, Ray Stannard, Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement, Vol. II, p. 60

were, like the British, conscious of the hazard of including too many Germans in Poland.

In the later stages of the negotiations, the Americans displayed more reluctance before accepting further modifications introduced by the British. The British aim lay somewhere between the other two, a practical peace combining conciliation and security, punishing Germany without crushing her, improving the world, but not seeking all at once to achieve the millennium.¹

The British were most conscious of the inexpediency of including large numbers of Germans within the Polish frontiers and were the prime movers in the direction of diminishing the number of Germans in the new Polish nation.²

Lloyd George was against Poland annexing a city of Germans -- against it also for the sake of Poland. "We must set up a Poland that can live," he said. "If swollen by enemy populations she will explode from within, Danzig is outside the real orbit of Poland, make it international." President Wilson supported him; M. Clemenceau was persuaded; and Mr. Lloyd George

1. Spender, Harold, The Prime Minister, p. 291

2. Temperley, H. W. V., Op. Cit., p. 239

got his way.¹

Mr. Lloyd George wished Poland to flourish as a self-governing State, but not to enter on its existence by inflicting on others the crime of the Partitions from which it had so deeply suffered. For this reason, in the last stages of the Conference, he took a strong solitary stand on the demand for a plebiscite that came up for Silesia. The whole British Cabinet supported him, and in the end he achieved his purpose.

Such were the main lines of agreement and divergence where divergence existed, but it must be strongly emphasized that only after full discussion of the principles involved, did the Conference arrive at its final decision.

1. Spender, Harold, Op. Cit., p. 293

CHAPTER IV

WHAT TERRITORY SHOULD POLAND INCLUDE?

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Why should Poland be restored to life, - and to a position in the galaxy of nations? She had been dead so long, why should the political fabric of today be disturbed by cutting out another nation by a very old pattern?

It had been argued with some potency that Poland should be resurrected because the equilibrium of Central Europe would be restored thereby, and a sure and certain basis for a lasting European peace secured! It was alleged that Central Europe had been unstable and unbalanced since the disappearance of Poland; again, Poland should be restored to life, said the Allies, because German expansion to the East would be retarded or even stopped, and further, that Poland should be given a new lease of existence because it was right. Even the ground cried out against the injustices suffered by Poland.

Between 1864, the date of the last Polish insurrection, and 1914, Europe as far as possible avoided allusion to the skeleton in the closet; not every state had been guilty of murder, but all had

known of it, and none intervened. When the first guns were fired in 1914, the closet door was shattered and Poland was found to be alive -- gagged.

The main factors which have preserved Polish consciousness were: the peasants' attachment to the soil, the peoples' stubborn decision to cling to their language, and their faith in God, their ultra-religious spirit.

Poles, they were, and Poles they had remained; they had lived through years of religious and national persecution on the part of Russia and Prussia, and withstood victoriously Austria's demoralizing policy of assimilation. Through years of torture, of exile, imprisonment, years of punishment, years of expropriation for speaking their own language and teaching it to their own children, they have prayed and hoped. The very persecutions of their oppressors made them strong, and during the days of this war these very oppressors had to admit that their policy of forcible assimilation had not only failed, but had had the opposite result from the one they desired.

All knew that Poland had fought a hundred wars, but not one for conquest. All of her wars had been in self defense, in defense of justice, of right, or of Christianity. In 1241 at the battle of Lignia, she threw back the Tartar invaders, and thereby saved Germany. In 1683, John Sobieski saved Europe from the Ottoman dominion. The Polish Revolution of 1794 prevented the coalition of the autocrats from accomplishing the defeat of France. Through five centuries Poland bore the brunt of Turkish arms, until she won the appellation of "the Buckler of Christendom."

She has warred often for the liberty of others. Poland has been the cradle of the world's liberalism. She concluded in 1413, a political union with Lithuania, an act of free union proclaiming for the first time in a document of almost evangelical beauty, the brotherhood of man.¹ She was the first to provide that, unless legally convicted, no man should be imprisoned.

In 1208, Poland first applied the elective franchise, the Polish Statute of Wislica. In 1573

1. Gorski, Waclaw D., "The Aspirations of Poland," Outlook, 120, pp. 628-31, September-December, 1918

Poland inaugurated a virtual republic; its chief magistrate was elected for life, and called a king but forbidden to lead the militia across the frontiers except with the consent of the senate. And in that very same year, the year of St. Bartholomew's night, the Polish Senate provided freedom for all creeds, the right of every man within its jurisdiction to worship as he chose.

The Polish executives, the kings, were limited in their power by an excessively liberal constitution. They were lacking in authority while the nation was deprived of a permanent standing army, and thus an easy prey to their rapacious neighbors; her fertile plains known in ancient times as the granary of Europe, afforded them an added temptation.¹

The friendly democratic Entente nations: the United States, England, and France favored the restoration of Poland to life and gave her again a chance to hold aloft once more the torch of liberalism and to become a bulwark against Bolsheviks and the Germans.

And last, but not least, from 25,000,000 to 35,000,000 Poles, speaking the Polish language, in

1. Gorski, Waclaw D., "The Aspirations of Poland," Outlook, 120, pp. 628-31, September-December, 1918

every decade of history wanted Poland restored. The Poles regarded themselves as the chosen people, chosen not for victory, but for suffering. "Poland was the Messiah among the nations, by whose broken body and shed blood salvation was to be wrought for all the nations of the world."¹ As the partitions of Poland had been the greatest crime of the old regime, so her resurrection was to usher in a new era of peace. From 1770, when a cattle plague afforded an excuse for the invasions by foreigners, until Poland was restored to a position among the self-governing nations of the earth by the treaty of Versailles, there were always efforts being made by some of the Poles to throw off the yoke placed on them by the Russians, the Austrians, and the Prussians.

But granted that Poland was to be restored and should be restored and to be given a free and secure access to the sea, what was Poland? What territory should it have included and what were its proper boundaries? What criterion should be used in determining its boundaries? Should the boundaries be linguistic, cultural, economic, geographic, or historical? Poland had been erased from the map so

1. Temperley, H. W. V., Op. Cit., p. 234

long that it had come to be regarded as a name, a memory, a cause rather than a country.¹

Now it is clear that the most elementary justice demanded the setting up of a Polish state with some reasonable chance of life, nor was any other alternative possible to the Peace Conference, even if it had been desired.

In determining the territorial allotment of Poland, the Peace Conference considered first the principle of viability, that is, that a State must have resources, size, and access to markets to enable it to avoid economic shipwreck.²

In the second place, there had been general agreement on the Wilson postulates that the new Polish state must (1) include territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, (2) be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and (3) be guaranteed political and economic independence and territorial integrity. As interpreted by the Polish leaders, this meant a return to the boundaries of the eighteenth century.³

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1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard, Op. Cit., p. 156
 2. Bowman, Isaiah, The New World, p. 410
 3. Ibid., p. 410

Many even wished to see East Prussia included. It was taken for granted that Danzig would become a Polish port. All of eastern Galacia was assumed to be Polish territory, though inhabited largely by Ruthenians. All of Upper Silesia was considered essential, in order that the vast resources of that region might be available for rebuilding of Poland's industrial life.

On the northeast lay Lithuania, and the Poles could not forget that it was once part of the greater Poland with a long Baltic coast line. Like other states of central Europe in post-war years of chaos and uncertainty in both domestic and foreign affairs, Poland feared her neighbors and felt that the more extensive her territory and larger her population, the greater would be her future security.¹

Geographically, Poland is one of the hardest countries in the world to define. Clearly marked natural frontiers are somewhat lacking or else, when they can be discerned they do not coincide with the historic political boundaries or with present ethnographic boundaries. The Carpathians for instance, seem to offer an admirable natural frontier on the

1. Bowman, Isaiah, Op. Cit., pp. 411-412

south; nevertheless, the boundaries of the old Polish state overlapped this mountain range for a considerable distance, and so does the Polish linguistic frontier today.

On the north, the Baltic should form the natural limit of Poland, but historically Poland had seldom ever held more than a narrow frontage upon that sea, and today the area of Polish-speaking population touches the Baltic only along a short stretch of coast, the region of the so-called "Polish Corridor," the subject of this study.

On the east and west no natural barriers whatever are to be found in the vast unbroken plain which stretches across northern Europe from the Low Countries to the Urals and across Asia to the Pacific.¹

It is true that Polish geographers are accustomed to treat the whole region between the Baltic, the Carpathians, the Dvina, and the Dnieper as a country; to claim for it a high degree of physical unity with respect to its structure, climate, productions, river systems, and other features; and to argue that this entire area ought likewise to form a political unit, Poland. Geographic Poland thus defined is practically

1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard,
Op. Cit., p. 157

identical with historical Poland as it was in its later periods.¹

Ethnographic Poland includes nearly the whole of the so-called "Congress Kingdom" of Poland, most of the former Prussian province of Posen, parts of the Prussian provinces of East and West Prussia and Silesia, and the western part of Galicia.²

In addition, there are many Polish enclaves scattered about in Eastern Galicia and in the Russian provinces to the east of the Congress Kingdom. There is much reason to suppose, however, that if ever an honest census is taken here, the eastern limits of the Polish ethnographic area would be extended considerably beyond the boundaries of the Congress Kingdom. Historically the name "Poland" has been applied to a state with very widely fluctuating frontiers.³

The hundred years of Russian rule since the Partitions and violent attempts at Russification have by no means destroyed, although they have in part

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1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard, Op. Cit., pp. 157-58
 2. Ibid., p. 158
 3. Ibid., p. 159

nullified the results of four centuries of Polonization in the eastern territories. Even today in Lithuania proper and in large areas of white Russis and the Western Ukraine, the country gentry and the non-Jewish population of the towns are predominantly Polish.¹

It would probably be true that the average Pole has, at the back of his head, the feeling that his country is not merely the modest area of ethnographic Poland, but the whole wide expanse of historic Poland; Poland as it was in 1772, just before the Partitions. This conception is based partly upon the principle that the Partitions, as lawless acts of usurpations, could have no legal validity, so that real Poland still exists within her frontiers of 1772; partly upon the view that the lands between the Carpathians, the Baltic, the Dnieper, and the Dvina possess so high a degree of geographical, economic, and cultural unity that they deserve to be considered as one country.

The wide dispersion of the Polish race, the divergence between what is ethnically Polish today, and what was historically, and still is in part

1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard,
Op. Cit., p. 163

culturally, Polish, the lack of adequate data as to the ethnic makeup and political gravitation of so many of the border populations, the lack of clear cut, natural frontiers, such are some of the difficulties in the way of defining Poland's proper boundaries or in deciding what is Poland or what territory Poland should include.¹

We now pass to more specific consideration of the so-called Polish Corridor, the creation of the Peace Conference of Paris for the purpose of giving Poland a safe and secure outlet to the sea.

1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard,
Op. Cit., p. 170

CHAPTER V
THE POLISH CORRIDOR

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The wedge-shaped sector of land called the Polish Corridor runs inland from the Baltic Sea for a distance of 45 miles across territory which at the close of the World War was a part of the German Empire. At the coast it is merely 20 miles wide, increasing in width to 60 miles at the center and 160 miles at the extreme south.

Geographically, the limits of the Corridor are hard to fix, for the simple reason that the Germans themselves have never set a definite limit to the territory which they claim as the Corridor. In practice, however, it is generally understood to include the present Polish province of Pomerelia and the Netze district belonging to the adjoining province of Posen, that is, the territory taken by Prussia in the first Partition of Poland, together with the district now included in the Danzig Free State. Thus delimited, it has an area roughly equal to that of Massachusetts and Connecticut combined, and a population of somewhat less than a million and a half.

Historically, the region of the Corridor has been the battle ground of Slav and Teuton for more than seven centuries. The struggle began when a Polish Duke of Mazovia invited the Teutonic Knights to establish themselves on the east bank of the Vistula River and to undertake the task of conquering and converting the pagan Prussians who were troubling his borders. This was in the year 1225 and during the next hundred years the Teutonic Knights established themselves in all the regions between the Nieman and Vistula Rivers. Their capital was at Marienburg on the Nogat. Once established, however, the Teutonic Order waged war equally with Pole and Prussian. The latter were presently either assimilated or annihilated, and thousands of colonists were brought from South Germany to settle this wilderness.

In the fourteenth century, the Order crossed the Vistula and repeated its exploits. Here again, conquest was followed by colonization. Henceforth, therefore, the population on this left bank of the Vistula was mixed, while Danzig became what it has always remained, a purely Teutonic town. In the fifteenth century, the Poles defeated the Teutonic

Knights at Tannenberg, on the same field where five hundred years later Von Hindenburg won his great victory over the Russians.

Thereafter, the disintegration of the Order was rapid and the Second Treaty of Thorn in 1466 not only restored the west bank of the Vistula to Poland, along with Danzig, but transformed the Grand Master of the Order into a vassal of the Polish throne for the East Prussian Duchy.

In the eighteenth century, Frederick the Great found himself possessed of this Prussian Duchy which had passed to the Electors of Brandenburg, and had thus escaped from Polish suzerainty, but was still separated from his other dominions by the Polish Corridor, erected by the Treaty of Thorn.

To abolish this Corridor and establish territorial unity for his kingdom, he engineered the First Partition of Poland.

The Second and Third Partitions extended Prussian holdings of Polish territory, and even Napoleon -- great friend as he was supposed to be to the Poles -- in creating his shortlived Grand Duchy of Warsaw, refrained from restoring the Corridor. Finally the Congress of Vienna confirmed Prussian title to the

Corridor which now became West Prussia, and title to Posen as well, and this condition endured thereafter until the close of the World War.

From an historical standpoint, the Poles base their claim to the Corridor upon original possession and three centuries of undisturbed occupancy between 1466, the date of signing the Second Treaty of Thorn, and 1772, the time of the first Partition of Poland. The Germans rest their claim and title to the Corridor upon the conquest and colonization by the Teutonic Knights and upon the century and a half of possession between 1772, the time of the first Partition, and 1919 which is the date of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

Ethnically, the situation as respects the Corridor is even more intricate as a consequence of the long centuries of intermingling. That the territory was originally inhabited by Slavs before the advent of the Teutonic Order now seems certain. That before the World War, East Prussia was largely Germanized and West Prussia partially, is equally true.

In 1919, that is, at the moment of the making of the Treaty of Versailles, the situation was confused; in fact, all depended upon the area chosen for

a test. Thus in the whole province of Prussia and the Netze district, there was an undoubted German majority. In the region actually taken from Germany, that is, the Corridor and the Danzig Free State, while the margin was much narrower, the German advantage was still probably conclusive.

On the other hand, in the area actually transferred to Poland, the Slavs, quite as certainly, outnumbered the Teutons. But even here, the Germans claim, with justice, that not all the Slavs are Poles, and with far less warrant, that the Cassubians, living in the Tuchola Heath and farther north cannot be fairly credited to their rivals.

These claims and counter claims remain somewhat hazy and uncertain because they are based on the German side on Prussian statistics which were notoriously partial, and no plebiscite was ever conducted.

The Poles had an indecisive majority according to Prussian statistics. On the eve of the World War there were 990,000 inhabitants. 437,412 were Germans, 448,773 were Poles and 104,000 were Cashubes, a people affiliated closely with the Poles, ethnographically speaking.

Moreover, Poland maintained that the ethnographic

principle could not be followed too minutely, because the Corridor was the scene of intensive concentration by German colonists aided by the Prussian government. The German Imperial Colonization Commission in thirty years, spent 500,000,000 marks in buying up property in the eastern provinces and settling German colonists upon it, thus dispossessing the Poles of a land which had been theirs for a thousand years.

Half a dozen other official and semi-official organizations have been at work for the same purpose. Over 100,000 Germans have been brought in in this way. In addition, a host of government functionaries and servants estimated to be from one-fifth to one-third of the German population have been brought in from the outside for the purpose of impressing an artificial German character upon a Polish land.¹

The substantial preference which the German farmer enjoyed gradually forced out Polish settlers. It is difficult for even the Germans to deny these patent facts.

The absence of a vote was explained by Wilson's decision to bestow upon Poland access to the sea over

1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard,
Op. Cit., pp. 174-75

her own territory. To give effect to this decision involved restoring the Corridor as it had existed before the First Partition. President Wilson's decision was based upon the obvious fact that the new Poland would have an area greater than that of Italy and a population in excess of Spain, and without free access to the sea, this large area and its great population would be economically at the mercy of Germany, which would hold its natural sea gates. President Wilson, too, was profoundly influenced by what he conceived to be the moral issues involved in undoing the work of the Partitioners.

But the case of Poland is unique, moreover, in that it has an ethnic group of indisputable Polish people, straight through to the sea.¹ This was the first and the principal reason for the establishment of this now famous Polish Corridor by the Peace Conference. Poland needed territorial access to the sea. No one would seriously dispute that. But it is doubtful that the Peace Conference would have granted her an outlet to the sea where it

1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard, Op. Cit., p. 178

was granted had the Conference not been justified in its opinion in doing so on ethnographic, as well as historical and economic grounds.

Thus there existed at the time the treaty was made, on the west bank of the Vistula River an unbroken corridor of Polish-speaking territory extending through well nigh to the sea. The Germans have never bridged successfully this gap between the old German lands in the West and the isolated German colony in East Prussia.

Apparently, wisdom and justice guided the hands that created the Polish Corridor. If there had been any good way around it, it might have been an undesirable arrangement. It seemed the only solution to the problem that had any ethnographic reasons for its creation. We shall later observe some suggestions that have been proposed for a different outlet to the sea for Poland. But each of these proposals has as many or more objections as has the present outlet.

The solution merely restores the territorial situation that existed here for three hundred years down to the time of the First Partition in 1772. Nor can the continuity of German territory be maintained without denying Poland access to the sea.

In reality, what we now call the Polish Corridor appears today to have been in some fashion a German dam stretched across the Pomeranian plains, holding back the Slav tide from the age of Frederick the Great to that of William II. But once the dam had been abolished by the Treaty of Versailles, the Slav tidal wave swept down the Corridor to the sea in a vast and irresistible drive which has all but wiped out the last vestiges of German construction as today there is a great preponderance of Poles in this region.

Poland was given then a minimum direct access to the sea. The Polish Corridor was intended to promote favorable commercial contacts between Poland and the industrial and commercial centers of Western Europe. Post war developments have made this irreducible minimum of access even more vital to Poland than ever before. Placed between a Communist Russia with whom normal trade is impossible and a Germany who will not buy what Poland has to offer, Poland has been compelled to reorient the direction of her entire foreign trade.

The main currents of that trade no longer run between the east and west, but from south to north.

Polish imports and exports follow the Vistula river and show a tendency to develop towards the Baltic nations and the great Western Powers, i. e., England, France, Italy and the United States, by virtue of her sea coast and the possibility of communication by sea. Poland is a quasi neighbor of these countries, whereas, according to the thesis suggested by German propaganda, she should be only a State shut in by the territories of Germany and Russia. Britain has become an important purchaser of Poland's agricultural produce, the Scandinavian countries of her coal, and more distant oversea lands buy in increasing quantities what cannot be sold to Poland's continental neighbors. Poland once more, as in the sixteenth century, must be a Baltic Power, or not be at all.

One has then to face the simple fact that here are two nations, one of 65,000,000 (more now in view of recent annexation), the other of 32,000,000 facing each other over a more or less imaginary line, mutually resolved to carry out purposes which are irreconcilable. They are actually engaged upon this front in a struggle which differs from real war only in the fact that it is conducted, not by armies,

but by all the forces of public opinion and propaganda. What is most disturbing is that this struggle steadily inflames public feeling, exacerbates national passion, promotes despair. But the trouble with the situation is that there can be no answer as long as Europe and the world remain dominated by nationalistic sentiments. For the problem of the Polish Corridor there are two solutions: A German and a Polish, but there is no disposition to compromise at present. Poland insists upon retaining an outlet to the sea over her own land, while Germany refuses to endure the isolation of East Prussia from the Reich. Without discussing more fully such purely domestic German problems, it must plainly be stated that, in the last resort, the issue lies between greater or less economic inconvenience for one German province on the one hand, and the existence or non-existence of the entire thirty-two million Polish State on the other.

Poland can point to her historical experience in the partition period which showed that the annexation of her sea-side lands by Prussia at the Second Partition in 1793 meant the cutting of the jugular artery of her political-economic organism. Under the existing

circumstances, German communication with East Prussia by land is at the mercy of Poland save for treaty guaranty; after revision, Polish access to the sea would be at the mercy of Germany.

In this situation it is clear that questions of economic right, race, language and history are relatively subordinate. Yet, both the Germans and Poles can fortify their claims by such details.

The Polish state as it exists today, combines in its larger bulk a number of requirements for an existence economically sound as well as politically independent.¹ But it was this very creation of a "greater Poland" which not only entangled the new republic in inevitable conflicts with almost all her neighbors, but also called forth remonstrances from among the western European authors of her restoration.

There were writers and publicists of standing and renown who frequently expressed the opinion that it was a mistake that Poland was re-established in somewhat like her wide eighteenth-century frontiers, which once already had been the cause of international complications and of disaster to the country.

When the treaty was still in draft General Smuts

1. Temperley, H. W. V., Op. Cit., Vol. VI, p. 218

of South Africa warned the Paris Conference that it had made Poland too strong for the peace of Europe, and advised its curtailment as a measure of precaution while there was still time.

A letter of General J. J. C. Smuts to the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, May 22, 1919, criticized the terms as drawn and suggested changes.

May 22, 1919

The Prime Minister

In re Germany's Eastern Frontier

I am convinced that in the undue enlargement of Poland we are not only reversing the verdict of history, but committing a cardinal error in policy which history will yet avenge. The new Poland will include millions of Germans and Russians and territories which have a German or Russian population, or which have for very long periods been part of Germany or Russia. It is reasonably certain that both Germany and Russia will again be great powers, and that sandwiched between them the new Poland could only be a success with their good will. How, under these circumstances, can we expect Poland to be other than a failure, even if she had that ruling and administrative capacity which history has proved that she has not? Even now while the conference is sitting, the Poles are defying the Great Powers. What is going to happen in the

future with the Great Powers divided and at loggerheads? I think we are building a house of sand. And in view of these and many other considerations, I would revise the boundaries of Poland as provisionally settled in the Treaty, leave Upper Silesia and all real German territory to Germany, contract the boundaries of the Free City of Danzig, and instead of placing her under the suzerainty of Poland as we propose doing leave her under the suzerainty of Germany with an administration under the League of Nations. I think the two cardinal errors in policy of this treaty are the long occupation of the Rhine, and the enlargement of Poland beyond anything which we had contemplated during the war. These two errors are full of menace for the future peace of Europe, and I urge that every means be taken to remove them before it is too late. There is no doubt that the German Delegates are going to make a stiff fight, perhaps a condition for signature of the Treaty, that the settlement of their Eastern frontiers in Silesia, East and West Prussia, should be revised. I would advise that we consider the case to be put forward by them more carefully on its merits.

J. C. Smuts¹

The danger which General Smuts pointed out had been anticipated more than seventy years before by Otto Von Bismark, who saw further than most statesmen of his century. As early as 1848, long before he

1. Baker, Ray Stannard, Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement, Vol. III, Document No. 66, pp. 458-465

entered official life, Bismark accurately predicted the territorial ambitions in which Poland would indulge if it were ever to be reconstituted with the province of Posen as a jumping-board. Then, he wrote, "She would not rest until it had reconquered from us the Vistula mouth and every Polish village in West and East Prussia, Pomerania, and Silesia."¹

Germany cannot become reconciled to the loss of several large provinces into which, since she took them from Poland, she has put a great amount of organizing effort and also of capital.

It appears that the Corridor is too narrow to be successfully defended against Germany or other bordering enemies both in the east and the west.² It was the wish and hope of the Polish leaders at the Peace Conference, that they would be given a broader stretch of land than that occupied indisputably by Polish populations.

Their hope was based upon the relation of the Polish State to the Vistula River. For the relation of the Vistula River to all Poland is that of the

1. Dawson, William Harbutt, Germany Under the Treaty, p. 387

2. Buell, Raymond Leslie, Op. Cit., pp. 320-321

Mississippi River to the great central region of the United States. Since the earliest time this river has been associated with Polish nationality. They have inhabited its plains for ages. From the Carpathian Mountains to the Sea, its banks have long been bordered by Polish populations. They have possessed its shores, even if the sovereignty of the river belonged to someone else.

Poland derived economic as well as cultural and psychological strength from the Vistula in a higher degree than, for instance, Germany does from the Rhine, the source and mouth of which are outside of German territory, and the upper parts of which constitutes the boundary line between Germany and Switzerland, and Germany and France. The Vistula is in fact, the backbone of Poland, her old capital, Cracow, her new capital, Warsaw, and once her only port, Danzig, are all situated on the banks of the Vistula.

The arrangement of the Corridor has been denounced by the critics of the Treaty of Versailles on the ground that this Corridor cuts off Germany from their East Prussian Province, and that it is something that the Germans will never stand for permanently.

It is alleged that the isolation of East Prussia effected by the Peace Treaty is unnatural, unique in the modern world, and ruinous to the province so separated from the body of Germany. As against this, it must be emphasized that similar "Corridors" are not unknown elsewhere; the Canadian "Corridor" to Vancouver, to mention only the instance most familiar to British and American readers, has never been an obstacle to the development of Alaska as part of the United States, nor as a cause of enmity has it ever come between the two nations.

With regard to East Prussia, it is a well established fact that German transit across the Corridor, as safeguarded by international conventions and often checked both by official authorities and private foreign observers,¹ was facilitated in every way, and Poland has never declined to discuss further extensions of these facilities. But it is pleaded that East Prussia has suffered gravely in her economic life through her detachment, and a movement of emigrations from that province into the interior of Germany has actually set in. The German budget is burdened with large expenditure on "relief to the East," which as a matter of fact was largely used for the

1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard,
Op. Cit., p. 180

political end of promoting and strengthening Germanism along the Polish border.

The complaints regarding the economic situation of East Prussia are not altogether unfounded, but are certainly exaggerated. The conditions, described as effects of the isolation of the province, are part of the general economic situation of Germany which is due to a great many factors other than the territorial settlement. They are also part of the economic relations of commercial diffidence or open "tariff war" now unfortunately so general between European States. It is East Prussia which stands in the way of favorable trade treaties with Poland; the agrarian class-interest of her large landowners -- a thoroughly reactionary and fanatically nationalist group -- being allowed to carry undue weight in the councils of Germany's rulers.

Should a million and a half or two million of Germans have rights that outweigh 27,000,000 to 32,000,000 Poles in the Hinterland to a secure access to the Baltic Sea?¹ Clearly the Polish interest is incomparably the greater and ought to take precedence.

1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard, Op. Cit., p. 180

Therefore, very properly, the Conference created the "Corridor" for the access of Poland to the sea.

Poland once again, as in the eighteenth century, may be an obstacle in the way of German aspirations, and if Germany so strongly resents the existence of the Polish Corridor, it is certainly not only because the Corridor cuts off East Prussia from Germany, but because it is a barrier between Germany and Russia. What Germany wants to effect by the removal of the Polish Corridor is the creation of a new and much broader "Corridor" over the head of Poland, uniting Germany with Russia. The small Baltic States, particularly Lithuania, would then serve but as a continuation of a German "Corridor" so conceived.

It is plain, then, that it is not against the Polish Corridor as it exists today, but against a Polish Corridor, in fact, against any and every corridor to the Baltic that the efforts of Germany are and will be directed.

It would be dangerous to the whole European system for Germany and Russia to be so closely united. If this danger is to be avoided, the maintenance of not only Poland as a whole, but of her outstretched territorial arm to the sea, appears

to be a truly wise and far sighted European policy. If Poland and Europe are to be safe and remain safe, the Baltic must become neither a German nor a Russian nor a Russo-German lake, but remain a European and a world lake.

The Corridor was constructed at a moment when the principle of nationality dominated any other consideration. Whether one judges according to the principles established by the Versailles Treaty, or according to some personal standard, there is one point upon which all have agreed: as a result of the interdependence of nations so generally discussed today, no corridor can remain a trouble maker for Poles and Germans alone. Danger of war between two nations is a danger of war to the world. This is a very good reason everyone should be interested in the solution of this international problem.

Suggested alternatives to the Corridor may be mentioned to show how unacceptable they are for Poland. The absorption of the Corridor together with Danzig and East Prussia into the body of a reunited Germany could, it is said, be compensated to Poland by the right to use all northeastern

German harbors from Stettin to Konigsberg. But those who have a knowledge of present day international conditions must realize that any guarantees which could be given for the inviolability of such commercial "rights of way" are worthless in a Europe deprived of a strong international executive.¹

The same objection is made to the idea of erecting Dansig together with the Corridor, and possibly East Prussia, into a neutral political unit under international administration.

The "Free City" of Danzig alone has caused more than enough trouble to the League of Nations in the last twelve years; a larger territory under international control in that part of the world would prove much more unmanageable and would only be a source of constant quarrels and anxieties.²

There is a third proposal which has been tentatively broached and is favored by some British statesmen. It proposes to return the Corridor and the access to the sea at Danzig to Germany, in return for which, Poland should receive access to the sea further east, by way of Memel, through territory

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 399

2. Ibid., p. 399

which is now German. But this would cause a violent, unnatural and entirely impracticable twist to Poland's whole system of communications by 45 degrees, a twist that is wasteful and difficult because the portions of the country that need a direct outlet to the sea such as the Silesian coal fields would be then farthest away from the outlet to the sea. Then too, the Memel plan would involve a thorough change in Poland's relations with Lithuania, the re-establishment in fact, of the historical union between the two countries.¹

Lithuania, at present, shrinks at the thought of a renewal of the union, because she fears that in such a union her national distinctness would be endangered through weight of numbers and through Polish cultural influence.

The Paris Peace Conference saw fit to make a most complicated and artificial arrangement for Poland's outlet to the sea. It took Danzig from Germany but did not give it to Poland. However, the control of the Corridor to the sea would be of little or no advantage without the control of its natural terminus, the port of Danzig. Danzig is

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 400

the end of the Corridor, the port of entry and the port of exit for the Vistula River, the great river of Poland. Danzig had belonged to the former Polish State and had greatly prospered as all the ocean commerce of the country had passed through its harbor. Prussia had acquired it in 1793 in the Second Partition, and as late as 1813, the City Council of Danzig besought the Powers of Europe to reunite Danzig to Poland and not to incorporate it with Prussia.¹ Very prosperous and contented under Polish rule, Danzig largely lost its prosperity under the Germans. The Poles, because they regarded the city as rightfully theirs and also because it was their only outlet to the sea, expected that it would be included in the new State.

The so-called "Cambon" Commission, the Commission appointed by the Conference to make boundary recommendations, decided on two occasions after impartial local investigation that Danzig should be unconditionally allotted to Poland. That it was not, was due to the opposition of Lloyd George, with whom President Wilson was persuaded to agree, Clemenceau acquiescing, though unwillingly.

1. Haskins, Charles Homer and Lord, Robert Howard, Op. Cit., p. 181

The reason for not giving Danzig to the Poles was that Danzig and the region around about, with a population of about 350,000, was overwhelmingly German in stock, speech and sympathy, thus it was undesirable to incorporate into Poland so large a body of persons who would necessarily be a discontented and therefore a weakening element in the new state.

The reason is not impressive coming from men who lapsed easily from the principle here involved in their settlement of other questions that came before them. Three hundred thousand Germans of the Austrian Tyrol were handed over to Italy on strategic grounds and three million to Czecho-Slovakia on historical grounds. The same arguments might have been made or applied to Danzig with greater force from the point of view of Polish national deference and with equal force from that of historical right.

Although Germany had accepted President Wilson's fourteen points, the German delegation protested against the proposal which would give Poland access to the sea, and insisted that the sea coast, Danzig, and the mouth of the Vistula River, should remain in German hands.

The German protest was rejected in the well-known

letter of Clemenceau, President of the Peace Conference, dated June 16, 1919, and in the enclosed note:

"The reply of the Allied and Associated Powers to the observations of the German Delegation on the Conditions of Peace.¹

"Poland will be given certain economic rights in Danzig and the city itself has been severed from Germany because in no other way was it possible to provide for that free and secure access to the sea which Germany has promised to concede.

"The German counter-proposals -- deny secure access to the sea to a nation of over thirty-two million people, whose nationals are in the majority all the way to the coast, in order to maintain territorial connection between East and West Prussia, whose trade has always been mainly sea borne. They cannot, therefore, be accepted by the Allied and Associated Powers."

The relevant passages in the Allies' reply read as follows: "Section IX -- East Prussia -- for Poland -- For Poland to have immediate and unbroken communication with Danzig and the remainder of the coast by railways

1. Slowski, Dr. Stanislaw, Poland's Access to the Sea,
p. 5

which are entirely under the control of the Polish State is essential. The inconvenience caused to East Prussia by the new frontier is negligible compared to that which would be caused to Poland by any other arrangement.

"Section XI, Danzig, -- The economic interests of Danzig and Poland are identical. For Danzig as the great part of the Valley of the Vistula, the most intimate connection with Poland is essential. The annexation of West Prussia, including Danzig, to Germany, deprived Poland of that direct access to the sea which was hers by right. The Allied and Associated Powers propose that this direct access shall be restored.

"It is not enough that Poland should be allowed the use of German ports; the coast, short as it is, which is Polish, must be restored to her. Poland claims, and justly claims that the control and development of the port which is her sole opening to the sea shall be in her hands and that the communications between it and Poland shall not be subjected to any foreign control, so that in this, one of the most important aspects of national life, Poland should be put on an equality with the other states

of Europe."¹

A clause in Article 89 provides that Poland should guarantee free transit between Germany and East Prussia. In accordance with this provision and in execution of Article 98 of the Treaty of Versailles, a Polish-German Convention was concluded in Paris on April 21, 1921. The said convention came into force as from June 1922, and is being carried out by Poland to the complete satisfaction of Germany's transport and economic needs.

Poland's access to the sea, in a geographical and territorial sense, is formed by the Polish coastal territory.

The principal stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles and the Paris Convention concluded between Poland and Danzig and dated November 9, 1920 are the following:

- (a) Danzig is a Free City under the protection of the League of Nations.
- (b) Danzig is included in the Polish frontier, in so far as customs and duties are concerned.
- (c) Poland conducts Danzig's foreign relations.
- (d) The railway system and its control are given to Poland.

1. Slowski, Dr. Stanislaw, Op. Cit., p. 6

(e) Poland has the right to establish in the port postal, telegraphic, and telephonic communication with Poland on the one hand and with foreign countries on the other.

(f) Besides the above mentioned convention, the juridical basis of the Free City of Danzig is to be found in its constitution, elaborated in conjunction with the High Commissioner of the League of Nations, who permanently holds office in Danzig, and who, in the first instance arbitrates in all disputes which may arise between Poland and the Free City of Danzig.

(g) The Polish minority in Danzig shall enjoy the same protection as national minorities enjoy in Poland.

(h) The exploration and management of the port, that part of the Vistula which flows through the territory of Danzig, the canals and immovable property formerly belonging to Germany and Prussia, come under the administration of a mixed governing body consisting of representatives of Poland and of Danzig, i. e., "the Harbor and Waterways Board." At

the head of this Board are a Polish Commissioner who represents the Polish Government on the one side, and a Danzig Commissioner, representing the Free City, on the other. The Harbor Board must guarantee to Poland the free use and service of the port and means of Communication, as stipulated in Article 20, without any restrictions.

(1) The Constitution voted by the Constituent Assembly of Danzig in May 1920 was accepted and adopted by the Council of the League of Nations after certain modifications had been made. According to this constitution the Free City is governed by the Senate which is vested with executive power.

Seven senators are elected every four years by the Lower Chamber, while the other fourteen are parliamentary senators. In 1922 a new constitution was approved by the League. The Senate consisted of ten members containing a president and a vice-president.

In order that a Statute may become law, both the Senate and the Chamber must agree. The Chamber now consists of 72 deputies.¹

1. Slowski, Dr. Stanislaw, Op. Cit., p. 9

The Free City of Danzig did not come into existence from the time of the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles but only by virtue of an additional declaration dated October 27, 1920, made by England, France, Italy and Japan, on the strength of Article 102 of the Treaty of Versailles. Accordingly the Free City of Danzig came into existence on November 15, 1920, and simultaneously the Polish-Danzig Convention, which embodies the principal Polish laws concerning the access to the sea through the territory of the Free City of Danzig, came into effect.

The only reason why Danzig was detached from Germany and made a Free City was the desire to secure free access to the sea for Poland. The fact that the original decision was to assign Danzig to Poland is authentic proof of this desire. Danzig is infinitely more alive and prosperous today than she was before the war, when Hamburg overshadowed her. This Baltic trade accomplished within a few short years, could now be reversed only at the cost of complete economic ruin, and consequently of political destruction, to the entire fabric of the

new Polish State. It is an axiom of Polish public opinion regardless of the party, that unimpeded access to the Baltic is a fundamental condition of Poland's continued existence.

In accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, Poland received coastal territory without a port, as well as certain rights in the port of Danzig without territory. Owing to the fact that Poland is only part owner of Danzig port and that she has to cope with great difficulties connected with the complicated administrative system of the port, she has seen fit to build with the assistance of French capital, her own port at Gdynia. Of which fact, the Germans constantly complained to the League of Nations and to others that the new port is and will be an everlasting menace to Danzig's prosperity.

The compelling reason for building this new sea port at Gdynia for Poland was due to the persistent disloyalty of Danzig to Poland, to her constant evasions of treaty obligations, her organized encouragement of smuggling on a large scale, and her enmity to Polish interest.¹ Because of the deadlock in economic

1. Dyboski, Roman, Op. Cit., p. 398

relations with Germany, it was necessary that the sea-born trade of Poland should be forcibly developed. It soon was very evident that Poland had enough trade to make Gdynia and Danzig prosperous and in 1933 Poland agreed that 45% of its imports and exports should pass through Danzig.

It is a favorite Polish story that in 1920 Herr Sohm who is now Lord Mayor of Berlin, but who was at that time President of the Danzig Senate, had, after refusing to let the Poles import arms for their Russian war in 1920, derisively told them to build their own port on the quick sands of the fishing village of Gdynia. So they did. By 1926 Gdynia was able to function and in 1932 its harbor traffic reached and passed the Danzig level. In 1936 it handled more commerce than any other city on the Baltic Sea.¹ With the help of French capital, a railway was built from the Kattowitz coal mine up to Gdynia, and the coal traffic easily diverted from Danzig.²

The location chosen by the Government for the

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1. Wolfe, Henry C., "The Ghost of the Corridor," New Republic, 92:240, 1937
 2. Wiskemann, Elizabeth, "Poland and Germany Today," Fortnightly, 144 (NS 138): 304-13 S. 1935

erection of the port is ideal; it is located on the Bay of Puck, a bay which could hold all the navies of the world today. The depth of the bay near the shore is thirty to sixty feet, the bed of the harbor is very good for anchorage and the entrance is sheltered by the Peninsula of Hel. All foreign experts have agreed that Gdynia is by nature fitted for a port.

Does Poland really need a port of her own? Does she need to own in fee simple her own sea board? Does she need or require special rights in Danzig? Could she not use some of the other ports of Germany also? Is not Gdynia sufficient for her needs? Are there not many countries which do not possess sea coasts or ports and yet manage to exist very well? Poland does and no doubt wants to use some German ports. She is directing a considerable part of her exports and imports through Stettin and Konigsberg because of their communicational and geographical location and position.

As owner of the port of Gdynia and part owner of a port at Danzig, Poland can also be a customer in the ports of Stettin and Konigsberg. But Poland's needs cannot be satisfied by the use of German ports.

Neither can Poland's existence nor her political and economic independence be so reconciled. Poland could not develop her navigation and foreign trade out of German ports to the degree she could from her own ports, for there would be the German shipbuilder, forwarding agent, importer and exporter, who would step in as a middleman between the foreign merchant and the Polish producer or importer.

Germany may want Polish commerce to depend on Germany's caprice and whims. Germany would be able to fix her own port tariffs, and more important still, her own railway tariffs; Poland would be compelled to pay the tribute imposed, as Germany would have a monopoly in this respect. If Poland encounters difficulties in the small port of Danzig in obtaining her right of free access to the sea, it may easily be foreseen that, in spite of all agreements, powerful Germany would soon reduce that access to naught.

The German counter proposal of June 1919 to the Versailles treaty read, in part, that Germany was prepared to declare the ports of Memel, Konigsberg, and Danzig as free ports, and to give Poland far reaching rights in these ports. Poland would be then a client of German ports.

Some nations have no sea coast. Of the approximately sixty independent countries of the world, only a very small number have no access to the sea on account of their geographical position.

In America there are nineteen countries which are situated on the Atlantic or the Pacific Oceans. This favorable position of these countries is the source of their prosperity. Only Bolivia and Paraguay of the South American countries lack sea coast. In Africa, only Abyssinia, and in Asia, Afghanistan, -- the buffer state between India, Persia, and Russia Turkestan, have no sea coast.

Before the war Europe had three countries lacking a sea coast; two of these were of small size and unimportant. The third, Luxemburg, was up to 1914 dependent on Germany with regard to customs and railway union, and is now united to Belgium, using her ports in accordance with Article Forty of the Treaty of Versailles.

It seems, then, that a seaport owned in fee simple is indispensable to a nation as large as Poland.

CHAPTER VI

GERMAN - POLISH RELATIONS SINCE THE WAR

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Poland's position on the map of contemporary Europe makes Poland's foreign policy far more decisive than we were accustomed to realize. The principal aim of the Polish foreign policy was, on the one hand, to maintain so far as possible friendly relations with her two mighty neighbors, Germany and Russia, and on the other, to make Poland strong against any attack. It should be remembered also, that the Franco-Polish Agreement concluded January 19, 1921 as well as the Roumanian-Polish Alliance are still in existence.¹

Poland's foreign policies were based on the simple formula that Poland could rely on no nation but herself. Colonel Beck, Poland's Foreign Minister, looked with distrust upon the League of Nations, the promises of the Western democracies and the multi-lateral security pacts. He had no faith whatever in the word of the Nazis.

And now what is the attitude of Germany toward Poland looking to the future? We all know she has

1. Wolf S., "Problems of Modern Poland," The Contemporary Review, January 1939, p. 62

armed at a terrific pace. Prodigious numbers of armed men have been springing up where the dragon's teeth were sown. What was it all for? There was no doubt that German diplomacy wished to make the Peace Treaties everywhere seem intolerable, and that it will speak more loudly and less legally when backed by the full Army, Navy, and Air Forces now under construction. Wherever the status quo seems vulnerable there the opponents of Hitler have reason to be afraid.¹

As to Poland's relations with Germany since 1919 it might be said that Germany has been brought up on history as it was taught in the Bismarckian School with the idea that an independent Poland would be a calamity. The Germans could not believe in the permanence of the state of things that came into being in 1919 on their eastern frontiers.

Most of the leaders of the Weimar Republic thought of the new Poland as an accident and spoke of her as a "temporary" state. One of the main objectives of the policy launched at Rapallo was to make that temporary period as brief as possible. On assuming the ambassadorship to the Soviet Union in 1922,

1. Wiskemann, Elizabeth, "Poland and Germany Today," Fortnightly Review, 144 (NS. 138): 304-313

Count Von Brockdorff-Rantzau voiced the opinion that "it might be possible to repair at Moscow the damage that had been done at Versailles."

The Weimar Republic strove to prevent the consolidation of Poland in every way possible. It was always arousing prejudice and opinion against Poland abroad and causing as much trouble to her as it could at home. That tactic undoubtedly worried Poland, but it did not affect her firm resolve to stand her ground. In another direction it actually was a help to Poland. It stimulated her business men to take advantage of her outlet to the sea, hastening the construction of the port of Gdynia by 1930 with French capital. As the ancient bonds between Germany and Poland were severed, Poland's economic and political independence was more and more emphasized.

In a letter to the Crown Prince dated September 7, 1925, Stresemann categorically declared that "rectification of the eastern frontiers of the Reich, recovery of the Polish Corridor and of Danzig, and alterations in the boundary lines of Upper Silesia"¹

1. Stresemann, Gustav, His Diaries, Letters, & Papers, Vol. II, p. 503

were outstanding items in the list of Germany's territorial demands. In 1931 Chancellor Bruning began applying himself to the execution of that program. He sounded out Paris, London and Rome to see just how far territorial revision at the expense of Poland could be made acceptable to those capitals.¹

As the fear of Germany increased, the Polish Alliances weakened and Poland began a searching consideration of her foreign policy.

Chancellor Hitler's regime in Germany was received with marked reserve in Poland. The Poles could not guess how he would set about giving effect to the first point in his platform which called for the "re-entry of all Germans into the bosom of a Greater Germany."

The advent of Hitler resulted in a new anti-Polish agitation in Danzig. Polish soldiers guarding the military base at Westerplatte in Danzig were reinforced on the nights of March 5 and 6, 1933. Hitler saw that Poland would not tolerate any surprise seizure of Danzig, or of any other place,

1. Smogorzewski, Casimir, "Poland: Free, Peaceful, Strong," Foreign Affairs, July 1939

and that she would give an energetic answer to any German move that affected the status quo. He began to place a halt on the irritations that had isolated Germany and began to try to create a healthier atmosphere in German-Polish relations.

Speaking at Konigsberg on May 27, 1933, Hitler declared that, "National Socialism renounces those policies aiming at a modification of natural frontiers at the expense of other people."

Marshal Pilsudski was the first statesman to forecast correctly the rising powers of the new Germany and the significance of the Nazi movement. He feared that neither France nor Britain could be counted on to maintain the treaty structure of Versailles by force of arms.

On January 26, 1934, without consulting his French ally, Pilsudski negotiated the famous non-aggression agreement with Hitler. The two countries expressed their determination to "base their mutual relations on the principles contained in the Pact of Paris of August 27, 1928 ... both governments declared that it was their intention to reach direct understanding on problems concerning their mutual relations ... In no case, however, shall they

have recourse to force in order to settle such questions under dispute."

The declaration was to remain in force during a period of ten years, but if neither government gave notice of its termination six months before or after this period of time, it was to continue in effect.¹

By this move Germany made the first dent in the French Alliance system, removed the danger of attack by Poland, secured a shield from Russian aggression, and was able to concentrate its forces against Austria. The German-Polish non-aggression pact ended German isolation.

By this agreement, Poland was recognized as a great power. Having demonstrated its independence of France, it now became an object of solicitation by many European powers.

The agreement dispelled the bitterness which had existed between Poland and the German Republic. The German campaign for revision of the Polish frontier, the Polish-German tariff war, and the support hitherto given by Germany to the minorities within Poland came

1. Wheeler-Bennett, Documents on International Affairs, p. 424

to an end or were considerably moderated.

Without fear of attack, Poland could now consolidate its position in the former German provinces; momentarily Poland had turned German expansion in other directions and thereby gained time for rearmament. In view of the unwillingness of Great Britain and France to prevent treaty violation by Germany, the Polish-German agreement certainly served the immediate interest of Poland.

Poland acquiesced in the Nazification of the Free City of Danzig, subject to the retention of certain economic rights, and this contributed to the enormous strengthening of Germany.¹

Despite the 1934 understanding with Germany, Poland had no intention of breaking off from its alliance with France. When Germany reoccupied the Rhineland in March 1936, Poland offered to mobilize if France did likewise, but France declined, thus confirming Poland's diagnosis of the European situation.

When Germany annexed Austria in March 1938, Warsaw did nothing. The official view was that

1. Wertheimer, M. S., "The Nazification of Danzig," Foreign Policy Reports, June 1, 1936

Danubian areas were of secondary importance and interest to Poland. In the midst of the subsequent Czechoslovak crisis, Poland took what amounted to a pro-German attitude.

For the moment, the Munich Conference and its aftermath severely strained relations between Warsaw and Berlin. The two countries seemed to move together when they made an agreement on July 1, 1938, diverting German coal purchases from Czechoslovakia to Poland, and the more important arrangement of October 17, 1938, by which Germany agreed to grant a \$23,000,000 credit to Poland.¹

While Poland's independent foreign policy, which reached its climax with the Teschen ultimatum, alienated the west, Warsaw believed more strongly than ever that if Czechoslovakia could not depend on help from France, its own alliance with the French had become of little importance. France had acquiesced in the Polish Partitions at the end of the eighteenth century. Despite its alliance, France could do it again.

Notwithstanding the reduction of Czechoslovakia

1. Buell, Raymond Leslie, Op. Cit., p. 346

as a result of the Munich Conference, some Poles professed to believe that they could count on the unilateral promises of Hitler not to menace their own country. Others believed that German expansion would continue in the direction of the southeast rather than turn toward the Baltic or the Ukraine. In his Sportspalast speech of September 25, 1938, Hitler declared he had informed Chamberlain that Germany had no further territorial ambitions in Europe. He also declared that the non-aggression pact with Poland of 1934 would "bring about lasting and continuous pacification" a view reiterated in his speech to the Reichstag of January 30, 1939.

For a people like the Poles, who pride themselves on realism, Poland's independence must seem to rest on a very fragile basis if it depends merely on Hitler's self-restraint. The Third Reich has not postponed its efforts to realize its ambitions, and there are no indications that the Nazi regime has abandoned any of Germany's traditional designs, and these aspirations conflict with the Poles both in the Baltic and the Ukraine.

From the economic view, Poland's position with respect to Danzig is fairly strong, should Germany

annex the Free City, Poland could divert its trade to Gdynia, to the injury of Danzig. Should Hitler seize Danzig, it is problematical whether Poland could hold the Corridor on account of its short width.

In an interview of January 24, 1938, Foreign Minister Beck declared that, "the foremost principle of Polish policy is the maintaining of good relations with our neighbors, this is why the Polish Government attaches such great importance to its relations with Germany and Soviet Russia.

"The Second principle of our policy is loyal observance of the alliance of Poland to France and Roumania.

"The Third principle is to oppose any decision made in matters concerning Poland without consulting her."¹

Despite the efforts of both Germany and Italy to wean Poland away from France after Munich, Foreign Minister Beck declined to make any comments.

Confronted by Hitler's destruction of Czechoslovakia in patent violation of the Munich agreement, Poland realized that it would be the next object of German offensive, unless it showed determination to fight,

1. New York Times, January 25, 1939

could strengthen its existing alliances, and find new support.

In the first week of March, Foreign Minister Safence of Rumania visited Warsaw and as a result the Polish-Rumanian alliance was strengthened.

British public opinion was considerably aroused in the meantime, by Hitler's violation of the Munich agreement and the destruction of Czechoslovakia. Realizing finally, that unless resistance was offered Nazi Germany would soon dominate Europe and a large part of the world, Prime Minister Chamberlain made a historic statement in the House of Commons, March 31, 1939. At that time he gave a temporary and unilateral assurance that "In the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence and which the Polish government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect. I may add that the French Government have authorized me to make it plain that they stand in the same position as do His Majesty's Government."¹

1. Buell, Raymond Leslie, Op. Cit., pp. 351-352

When a London newspaper placed a restrictive interpretation upon the Chamberlain statement, a semi-official source declared that this pledge covered Danzig and the Corridor if Poland thought that its independence was threatened there. By giving this pledge Great Britain formally abandoned its refusal to accept obligations in Central Europe and in effect proclaimed its frontier was not only on the Rhine but on the Vistula.

During the next week Foreign Minister Beck paid a visit to London, and Britain and Poland agreed to enter into a permanent and reciprocal understanding to replace the assurance given by Chamberlain on March 31, 1939.

Pending completion of the permanent agreement, Colonel Beck, Poland's Foreign Minister, declared that Poland would consider itself under obligations to render assistance to Britain under the same conditions as Britain would be obligated to render assistance to Poland.

This mutual assistance pact applied to "any threat, direct or indirect, to the independence of either."¹

Reports became numerous that Danzig would be

1. New York Times, April 25, 1939

annexed by Germany on Hitler's birthday, April 20, before the Polish-British guarantee had been finished. A new factor disrupted these plans, if they existed, for on April 15, President Roosevelt addressed his dramatic appeal to Hitler and Mussolini asking a ten year pledge of non-aggression toward thirty states, and proposing a peace conference.

Although the message did not specifically mention Danzig, Roosevelt probably saved the Free City from German occupation, and thereby averted momentarily at least, a great war. Hitler spent the next two weeks preparing a reply to the Roosevelt plea. In an address to the Reichstag on April 28, the Führer not only rejected the President's offer for a multi-lateral agreement, but denounced the German-Polish non-aggression pact of January 1934.

He added, contrary to previous statements, that the treaty provisions giving Poland a corridor to the sea prevented for "all time the establishment of an understanding between Poland and Germany."

As a result of abrogation of the 1934 pact, relations between Germany and Poland became very tense, and the Nazis reiterated that Danzig must be returned to the Reich.

On March 21, 1939, Hitler asked to build a highway -- reported to be fifteen miles in width -- as well as a railroad across the so-called Corridor under German extraterritorial jurisdiction. In return Hitler would recognize Polish economic rights in Danzig, including the right to a free harbor, accept the present boundaries between the two countries, extend the non-aggression pact for twenty-five years.

Germany also demanded in the same note the return of Danzig as a "free city in the frame work of the German Reich."¹

Poland could not possibly accept these terms, because the control of the Vistula River and Poland's outlet to the sea would have been placed at the complete mercy of Germany. Once Germany had fortified Danzig, it could easily dominate Gdynia and the Corridor. The position of Poland would be particularly vulnerable if Germany should build a fifteen mile wide road across Pomorze, policed by German soldiers.

It would not be long before Germany entrenched at the mouth of the Vistula River would dominate Poland proper and eventually the whole of Eastern Europe extending to the Black Sea. As Frederick II said in

1. Hitler, Adolph, Reichstag Speech of, April 28, 1939

1772, "Whoever possesses the mouth of the Vistula and the city of Danzig will be more the master than the king who rules there."¹

On September first, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine, Germany's army began an invasion of Poland and on September third, Britain and France declared war on Germany.

On September seventeenth, Russia invaded Poland.

On September twenty-ninth, Russia and Germany signed an agreement to partition Poland.² By this agreement Germany acquired about three fifths of Poland and Russia took the remainder of the country. Germany's part was the western section of Poland, Russia's holdings lay to the east, bordering on Russia.

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1. Wolfe, Henry C., "The Ghost of the Corridor," New Republic, 92:240, 1937
 2. The Louisville Times, September 29, 1939

THE CONCLUSION

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Viewing the facts impartially, as the historian does, we come to the conclusion that the land area of the Polish Corridor in the light of history belonged to Poland, though by no great margin. Rehearsing the facts of history, we find that there was a piece of land, small in size and of irregular shape, bordering on the Baltic Sea, and of little intrinsic value, which was once nominally and actually Polish. Then the Germans took it by force and held it for a hundred and fifty years. The Peace Conference of Paris returned it to Poland, with Germany protesting, and thereby separated East Prussia from Germany proper. This was the "Corridor." The Corridor gave Poland a sea coast and control of both sides of the Vistula River to its mouth where the Free City of Danzig was situated.

We are forced to conclude then, that in the light of history, the Corridor belonged to Poland.

From the ethnical standpoint the population of the Corridor was Polish by a very small majority.

The inhabitants of the Northern districts of

Pomorze, who are known as Cashubes, are also of Polish origin. They speak a Polish dialect. In spite of policies of Germanization of this section by means of German colonists, the people have preserved their Polish character intact.

From 1871 to 1918, that is, throughout the duration of the German Empire, the Pomeranian districts were continuously represented in the German Parliament by Polish deputies and on no occasion was a German elected in fifteen elections.¹

Ethnically, then, we must conclude that the Corridor was Polish.

Finally, examination of the economic aspect of the problem convinces us that this territory is undoubtedly a part of the Polish economic unit rather than of the German; that it is needed as an outlet much more by the Poles than by the Germans; that much more inconvenience would be suffered by the Poles than by the Germans living in East Prussia; that it would be a very great economic injury not to permit the Poles to have this outlet to the sea from their country under their own control.

1. Buell, Raymond Leslie, Op. Cit., p. 359

All of these facts lead us to but one conclusion, and that is that Poland should have the "Corridor." For historical, ethnical and economic reasons, we believe that the Paris Peace Conference made proper disposition of the land of the so-called "Polish Corridor."

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