# The Paris Peace Conference and Its Consequences in Early-1920s Europe

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# Introduction

## Early-1920s European International Relations

## Sorin Arhire

This volume of studies was put together after the second edition of the conference *Treaties of the Paris Peace Conference, 1919–1920*, organized by the National Union Museum of Alba Iulia and the Alba Iulia University with the financial support of the Alba County Council. The conference proved a good opportunity for the 35 participants from 10 countries to analyse the decisions made by the leaders of the victorious states of the First World War in the French capital which – as is widely known today – was where European and world peace were organized over 100 years ago.

Opened on 18 January 1919, the Paris Conference brought together delegations of 27 states, the most important being undoubtedly the American, British and French delegations led by President Woodrow Wilson, Prime Minister David Lloyd George and Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, respectively. The victorious states and their associates signed peace treaties separately with Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey; however, the delegations of the countries which had lost the war did not attend the negotiations. Instead, only the final texts of the treaties were communicated to them, and they were then asked to sign them. Due to the start of the Bolshevik Revolution, and also to the fact that in 1918 Soviet Russia had signed a separate peace treaty with the enemy, no delegation of the Moscow government was invited to Paris; for this reason, later on the Soviet Union did not agree to the decisions of the Paris Peace Conference. The fact that Germany and Russia, Europe's two strongest nations with the most significant military potential, did not attend the conference also caused the failure of the peace established in the aftermath of the First World War. This aspect, however, was not understood back then. Moreover, the United States Congress refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles of 28 June 1919, with serious consequences for the European system set up after the war given that the balance that had been created was far too dependent on

American power and therefore unable to operate without the involvement of the US.

At the Paris Peace Conference two different visions of the world came into confrontation. On the one hand, the Americans were the supporters of democracy, collective security and national self-determination and on the other hand, the Europeans were concerned about concepts such as national interest and the balance of power. The American attitude placed the Europeans on completely new territory, as European diplomacy did not believe that the world states were peace lovers by nature; on the contrary, they considered them prone to war and believed that this tendency thus had to be either discouraged or offset. It was not an imbalance of power that had caused the First World War, as the American diplomats argued, but rather the collapse of the nineteenth-century order. Until that point the borders of Europe had always been drawn by taking into account the balance of power between the states and not the preferences of peoples which, as suggested by Woodrow Wilson, should be realised through self-determination. In the end, due to the decisive role of the US in the victory, the European states ended up accepting the American stance officially, but in reality they continued to apply principles imposed by their historical experience.

Therefore, following the Paris Peace Conference, the Americans were disappointed by the Europeans and, as a consequence, the US favoured a policy of isolation from the political problems of Europe in the inter-war period. They increasingly believed that their involvement in the First World War had been a mistake and that in the future they would be better off not taking part in the thorny, complex relations of the Old Continent. Even though the proposal to set up the League of Nations was one of the Fourteen Points drawn-up by the American president Woodrow Wilson, the US itself was never a member of the League. Thus, the "Versailles system" – the order set up in Europe and throughout the world in the aftermath of the First World War – was defended only by the two great democratic powers of western Europe – Great Britain and France.

The differences between the British and the French started to show immediately after the end of the war, with the British Foreign Office fearing that, following the absolute defeat of the Germans, France was too strong and Germany too weak. As a result, Great Britain was constantly trying to equalize the balance of power on the Continent by supporting, as it usually did, its former enemy against its former ally. The British were aware of the fact that during the next decade France would be the greatest continental power and hence took measures to make sure that the growth of French power did not exceed certain limits beyond which it would become unstoppable. The attitude in London was justified both by the military and

economic situation in France and by the not-so-distant memory of Napoleon Bonaparte.[1] The idea that France was the power that dominated the European continent from a military standpoint and Germany had been treated too harshly was undoubtedly accurate in the short term, but it proved to be disastrous in the long term, as the British leaders did not see the real source of danger for the security of the British archipelago, stemming from the fact that "Germany and the Soviet Union stood at the sidelines in sullen resentment."[2] Myths, however, have a long life and the looming possibility of a re-emergence of the former French "superpower" was causing unease in the difficultly reinstated European balance.[3]

The entire period covered by the drawing up of the Treaty of Versailles was marked by constant differences between Great Britain and France regarding the future borders of the defeated Germany. Paris wanted either to set the French-German border on the Rhine or to remove the Rhineland from Germany altogether, proposals which London did not appreciate. Nonetheless, nothing poisoned the relations between the two states more than the issue of reparations.

Against the backdrop of the arrears that Germany owed, 1921 saw relations between Great Britain and France deteriorate further as the two victors of the war had different views on how to treat the situation. The French government, led by Aristide Briand, favoured coercive measures allowing for the collection of the debt that the Germans had to pay, the so-called *main au collet* policy, while the government in London was constantly against the enforcement of sanctions.[4] As is widely known, the treaty signed in 1919 made no mention of the amount that Germany had to pay. Despite that, based on article 231, which established that guilt for starting the world war lay entirely with the Second Reich, it was clearly mentioned that the Germans were to pay for the entirety of the damage. The establishment of the final amount of 132 billion Goldmarks[5] was the cause

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[1] In the early twentieth century, German as well as Spanish mothers would still frighten naughty kids with the threat of Napoleon. Tony Judt, *Reflecţii asupra unui secol uitat. Reevaluări* [Reflections on a forgotten century: Reassessments], trans. Georgiana Perlea (Jassy: Polirom, 2011), 154.

[2] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York, London and Toronto: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 252.

[3] Lucian Boia, *Franţa, hegemonie sau declin?* [France: Hegemony or decline?] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2010), 94–95.

[4] Hines Hall III, "Lloyd George, Briand and the Failure of the Anglo-French Entente," *The Journal of Modern History* 50, no. 2, supplement (Jun., 1978): 1121.

[5] In 1921, when the amount to be paid by the Germans was decided, 132 billion Goldmarks were the equivalent of approximately 40 billion dollars, which in the early 1990s meant 323 billion dollars. Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 257.

of fierce debate between the French, the Britons and the Germans. The French wanted to raise the bill as far as possible, the Britons wanted to lower it and the Germans did not show the slightest desire to cooperate. On the contrary, in the early 1920s the Germans intentionally maintained their economy in a state of confusion, as they knew very well that economic recovery would be followed by the damage repair bill.[6]

The newly created League of Nations in Geneva was yet another cause of discontent for the two western democracies; on top of this came the dissatisfaction of the Britons as to the attempt of Quai d'Orsay to draw the Central and Eastern European states into its sphere of influence, which was seen by London as a clear indication of France's wish to instate a new European hegemony similar to that of the early nineteenth century. The differences between the British and French concepts of the League of Nations finally led to deadlock both in terms of political decisions and of the League's ability to act in the face of threats emerging against the international order as instated after the end of the First World War.[7]

Weakened and traumatized by the war, France wanted the League of Nations to be an additional source of power, a universal policeman, while the Britons saw the Geneva organization as a "compensation house," a place where politicians got together to analyse their common problems and find solutions through compromise.[8] For the French, Germany's inability to wage war was synonymous with the dominance of France over Europe, while Great Britain made no association between Germany's military weakness and its possibility to become a great power once again within limits which must not be crossed, thus recreating the balance of power. The main objective of Parisian diplomacy was to maintain the 1919 status quo and all its political efforts were subordinated to it. British diplomacy, on the contrary, tried to rebuild Europe's balance of power, and the way to do that was precisely by undermining the political configuration imposed by the Treaty of Versailles to a certain extent. This could only be achieved by weakening France.[9] As is well known, in practice it was the British viewpoint that prevailed; throughout its existence, the League of Nations was an international organization with a general mandate which was not directed against Germany, as the French politicians would have wanted it, but rather against aggression in general.

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[6] A. J. P. Taylor, *Originile celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial* [The origins of the Second World War], trans. Lucian Leuștean (Jassy: Polirom, 1999), 45.

[7] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 372.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

Although very much desired by the diplomacy of Paris, an alliance between Great Britain and France was not possible because the foreign policies of the two countries had different, entirely incompatible targets. While French diplomacy focused almost entirely on national security needs, in the years immediately following the war the policy of the government in London was dominated by economic prosperity issues. As a consequence, British foreign policy was directed towards those objectives which served the interests of rebuilding the national economy; the most important objectives of Great Britain were to reduce foreign military commitments, to reduce costly weaponry by international agreements of non-proliferation, and to create an international order which favoured the reinstatement of the traditional model of commerce and investments.[10] It went almost without saying that one of the greatest obstacles against these purposes was France, whose foreign policy seemed irrevocably committed to asking for war reparations from Germany, maintaining military supremacy in Europe and adopting a hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union, not to mention continuing the traditional rivalry with Great Britain over the Near East.[11]

The revival of the spirit of the 1904 Entente Cordiale was difficult, if not impossible, to achieve considering that the threat posed to Great Britain back then – Germany's naval arming programme – had completely disappeared. Great Britain disdained the French policy of signing deals with Eastern and Central European states, as it did not want to let itself be drawn into the defence of countries which were of no interest to it. What is more, the British policy regarding a possible alliance with France was extremely cautious due to the isolationist feeling of British public opinion, the blowback that could come from parliament and the media, and the objections which might come from the governments of the dominions.[12]

The settlement of the "German issue"[13] and the differing assessments of the likelihood of Germany's rebirth as a military power were the main causes of disagreement between the Britons and the French in the first decade following the First World War. The Britons feared that by applying too rigorous a treatment to Germany, the latter would weaken to the point

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[10] Hall III, "Lloyd George," 1130–1131.

[11] Ibid., 1131.

[12] Ibid., 1128.

[13] Until the early twentieth century, the Germans were involved in most European wars, the majority initiated by France, so they had missed the first wave of European colonization. When Germany was finally united, it proved to have very limited experience in defining its own national interest, which was to trigger the greatest tragedies of the past century. Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 65–66.

of not being able to purchase the products of British industry, while also creating a favourable climate for the spread of the "Bolshevik virus."

Without a solution to the "German issue" there could be no peace in Europe. All other "issues" lost their importance in front of the attempts to find a place for the Germans in post-1918 Europe.[14] This viewpoint in British foreign policy was also largely determined by the interest of David Lloyd George in Germany from the first decade of the twentieth century, which remained the same until the start of the Second World War. In the opinion of the "Welsh Wizard," as the British prime minister of the time was often referred to, Germany was a natural ally of Great Britain because both countries were industrialized nations with a world vision. This justified, in his opinion, the development of relaxed, harmonious relations.[15]

Signed on 19 April 1922, the Treaty of Rapallo complicated the international situation even more. The two signatory states, Germany and Soviet Russia, were resuming diplomatic relations while providing each other with mutual guarantees for the most favoured nation clause and concomitantly giving up any compensation claims in respect of the First World War. In retrospect, this Russian-German rapprochement was inevitable as both Germany and Soviet Russia were diplomatically isolated and their similar situations drew them closer to each other. However, for British and French politicians alike this came as a surprise as they had hoped to be able to set Germany and Russia against each other rather than see them cooperate. With this treaty, the Germans and the Russians did not become allies, but the former did provide Russia with some form of economic assistance while Russian territory was made available to Germany for the setting up of a military school of aviation and the testing of chemical weapons. This sidestepped the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, of which the Russians were not signatories.

The 1923 occupation of the Ruhr by French and Belgian troops proved both that France had lost its ability to act on its own and that it had remained isolated from the other two big winners of the war, since both the US and

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[14] During the first inter-war decade, especially in the early 1920s, there were other "issues" which needed fixing but none as acute as the German issue. The often-overestimated Bolshevik danger vanished with the repulsion of the Red Army from Warsaw in August 1920; after that, there was not even the slightest chance for the Soviet Union to export its regime outside its borders. Even if it caused much havoc, Hungarian revisionism could not generate anything more than a local war, while in the case of Italy and its feeling of a "mutilated victory," "the most it could do was to hit the headlines, not raise an alarm." Taylor, *Originile*, 43.

[15] Kenneth O. Morgan, "Lloyd George and Germany," *The Historical Journal* 39 (1996): 762.

Great Britain harshly criticized the penetration of the German territory by the French army. Although the French did take control over the Ruhr basin temporarily in order to extract coal as part of the compensations which Germany had not paid, the government in Berlin ordered a passive resistance to the French occupation; the German workers were still being paid, even though they were not working. Even though this decision triggered the fall of the German government and hyperinflation later on, the French action ended in resounding failure as they were forced to withdraw without fulfilling their objectives.

The Locarno Conference was held between 5 and 16 October 1925 and the treaty was signed on 1 December in London. The participants were representatives of Germany, France, Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia, plus those of Great Britain and Italy as guarantors, and its aim was to solve the serious territorial problems existing at the western and eastern borders of Germany. The United States and Soviet Union did not attend, but no one objected to their absence, as the Europeans had started to believe that things could be solved more easily without them.[16] The conference marked a watershed moment between the two world wars, as it solved the serious territorial problems of Western Europe. Germany accepted both the permanent demilitarization of the Rhineland and its borders with France and Belgium, as established in the Treaty of Versailles; this implicitly meant that the Germans saw Alsace and Lorraine as French provinces. At the same time, however, the German delegation provided no guarantee to Czechoslovakia and Poland with regard to the borders between the two states and Germany, except for the fact that the Germans undertook to peacefully settle any territorial disputes. Unlike the Treaty of Versailles, where the position of the Germans was humiliating, at the conference in the Swiss city they recognized what they wished to recognize and nothing more, thus proving that Germany was again a great power.

For these reasons, the Locarno Treaty was a turning point in interwar international relations; its signing truly ended the First World War in the western part of Europe, while the problems in the East remained without a solution. Its repudiation 11 years later in March 1936, when the Germans remilitarized the Rhineland, marked the prelude to the Second World War.

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[16] Taylor, *Originile*, 54.

CHAPTER ONE

JOSEPH PIŁSUDSKI'S FORMULATION
FOR POLAND'S *RAISON D'ÉTAT*:
A BOLD ATTEMPT TO BOLSTER
THE VERSAILLES ORDER ON EUROPE'S
EASTERN FLANK, 1918–1922

JERZY GAUL

One result of political change in Europe at the end of 1918 was Joseph Piłsudski's spectacular return to Warsaw on 10 November 1918 after his release from German custody in Magdeburg. His achievements during the war were so great that at the founding of an independent Poland it was this former brigadier and not another general or ambitious politician who was elevated to the pinnacle of power.[1] It was Joseph Piłsudski who took on the mantle of Poland's Chief of State with all the wide-ranging powers to confer upon him dictatorial authority.

After Poland regained its independence, Piłsudski, Polish head of state 1918–1922, faced a challenge: how to realize the Polish *raison d'état*, when the security of the reborn state had to be established despite being flanked by possessive neighbours – Germany and Russia. He saw the *raison d'état* from the perspective not only of national interests, but from a point of view of Western values. Poland's *raison d'état* in the east was determined by three considerations. The military consideration required secure borders with Russia. The political consideration was the establishment of a democratic state which, with neighbouring countries, would create a protective barrier against Russian expansion. Piłsudski wanted to lock in the

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[1] Jerzy Gaul, *Czarno-żółty miraż. Sprawa Józefa Piłsudskiego w monarchii habsburskiej 1896–1918* [The black-yellow illusion: The relationship of Joseph Piłsudski and the Habsburg Monarchy between 1896 and 1918] (Warsaw: Agencja Wydawnicza CB, 2018).

fate of Poland with that of Western Europe, through strengthening the
political and military alliance in order to ensure the security and
development of the reborn state. But there was also a third consideration –
Poland's *raison d'état* also had a cultural dimension. Russia was associated
with Asian civilization and values and was deemed to pose a threat to the
European way of life. Piłsudski believed that Poland should be seen as a
bastion of Western civilization, promoting its values and norms in the
eastern part of Europe.[2]

The setting of safe borders was one of the most important tasks for the
authorities of the reborn Poland.[3] Between 1918 to 1922, Piłsudski managed

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[2] Joseph Piłsudski developed his concept at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth
centuries. Jerzy Gaul, "Józef Piłsudski wobec wyborów do parlamentu austriackiego
oraz działalności polskich posłów socjalistycznych IX kadencji (1897–1900)" [Józef
Piłsudski in the face of the Austrian parliamentary elections and the activities of
Polish Socialist deputies of the ninth term, 1897–1900], *Kwartalnik Historyczny*
125, no. 4 (2018): 901–911. For the case of Poland and civilization issues, see Jerzy
Jedlicki, *Jakiej cywilizacji Polacy potrzebują? Studia z dziejów idei i wyobraźni XIX
wieku* [What civilization do Poles need? Studies on the history of ideas and
imagination of the nineteenth century] (Warsaw: PWN, 1988); Jerzy Gaul, "Czy
polskość może być przeszkodą na drodze rozwoju cywilizacyjnego?" [Can
Polishness be an obstacle to the development of civilization?], *Przegląd Powszechny*
9, (1993): 355–360; Jerzy Gaul, "Przez zaborczą Austrię do niepodległej Polski.
Militarny, polityczny i cywilizacyjny wymiar polskiej racji stanu 1867–1918"
[Through the partitioning of Austria to independent Poland: Military, political and
civilizational dimensions of the Polish *raison d'état* 1867–1918], *Przegląd
Wschodni* 15, no. 2 (2019): 259–271; Jerzy Gaul, "Józef Piłsudski a polska racja
stanu (grudzień 1922 – maj 1926)" [Józef Piłsudski and the Polish *raison d'état*
December 1922 – May 1926], *Miscellanea Historico-Archivistica* 27, (2020): 109–
146; Jerzy Gaul, "Józef Piłsudski a cywilizacyjny wymiar polskiej racji stanu na
Wschodzie 1918–1922" [Józef Piłsudski and the civilizational dimension of the
Polish *raison d'état* in the east 1918–1922], *Przegląd Wschodni* 17, no. 1–4 (2021):
57–107; Jerzy Gaul, "Józef Piłsudski a ziemie zachodnie Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej
w kontekście traktatu wersalskiego (1918–1922)" [Józef Piłsudski and the western
territories of the Second Polish Republic in the context of the Versailles Treaty
(1918–1922)], in *Czas wolności – czas przemian. Traktat Wersalski i rok 1919 w
zachodniej Polsce* [A time of freedom – a time of change: The Versailles Treaty and
1919 in Western Poland], ed. Andrzej Gulczyński (Poznań: Wydawnictwo
Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk, 2019), 233–262.
[3] According to Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, until 1918, two approaches to the issue of
future borders dominated. The first, more principled, assumed that a rebuilt Poland
would be the heir to the pre-partition Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and would
have had rights to the territory before 1772. This position was the starting point of
the Polish delegation at the Peace Conference in Paris. The second position, more
pragmatic, assumed taking what was possible at the given moment, e.g., the territory

to build a "military" Poland, which fought for secure borders in the east. Guided not only by strategic and national considerations, but also by criteria beyond ethnicity and civilization, he managed to move the Polish border far beyond the Curzon Line.[4] The Polish forces were able to repel the aggression of Soviet Russia and inflict a spectacular defeat on the Red Army during the Polish-Soviet War in 1920. The Polish borders in the east established by the Treaty of Riga, despite all reservations, based on Dźwina, Cisna, Polesie mud and Zbrucz, became the guarantor of the minimum security of the Polish state and the requirements of the reasons of state in the east set out by Piłsudski.[5] On 13 March 1923 a conference of ambassadors recognized the eastern borders of Poland.[6]

After Poland regained its independence in November 1918 the implementation of the Polish *raison d'état* would require also the construction of a new and stable order in the east. First, Piłsudski had to face the German Empire, with which Poland also bordered in the east until the spring of 1919. These borders were the consequence of the Treaty of Brest on the Bug in March 1918, which was negotiated with Bolshevik Russia by the Central Powers. Germany's imperial hopes were boosted after the conclusion of hostilities by the armies in Compiègne in November 1918 when the Entente powers' consent was extended to allow the continued

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of the Kingdom of Poland after the Act of 5 November 1916. Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, *Kresowy kalejdoskop. Wędrówki przez ziemie wschodnie Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939* [The borderland kaleidoscope: Wandering through the eastern lands of the Second Polish Commonwealth, 1918–1939] (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2018), 51–52.

[4] The Curzon Line (named after the British Foreign Minister George Curzon in the government of David Lloyd George) covered the Kingdom of Poland minus the northern part of the Suwałki Governorate, Białystok and Bielsko counties, and Western Lesser Poland up to and including Przemyśl. It left Grodno and Lithuanian Brest outside Poland.

[5] Andrzej Nowak, *Polska i trzy Rosje: studium polityki wschodniej Józefa Piłsudskiego (do kwietnia 1920 roku)* [Poland and three Russias: A study of Józef Piłsudski's eastern policy (until April 1920)] (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Arcana, 2001), 611–613.

[6] Józef Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe* [Collective letters] (Warsaw: Instytut Józefa Piłsudskiego, 1937), vol. VI, 20–21; Halina Janowska and Tadeusz Jędruszczak, eds, *Powstanie II Rzeczypospolitej. Wybór dokumentów 1866–1925* [The creation of the Second Republic: Selection of documents 1866–1925] (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1981), 694–696; Tadeusz Piszczkowski, *Anglia a Polska 1914–1939 w świetle dokumentów brytyjskich* [England and Poland 1914–1939 in the light of British documents] (Londyn: Oficyna Poetów i Malarzy, 1975), 224–229.

presence of German troops on Russian territory as an anti-Bolshevik barrier.[7] The Polish head of state played an active role in ending the German occupation and in the peaceful evacuation of Ober-Ost troops from the Ruthenian, Belarusian and Lithuanian borderlands. Their evacuation route to Germany bypassed central Poland by heading along the Kovel-Brest-Bialystok-Grajewo railway line.[8]

The construction of a new order in the east was also hindered by Tsarist generals supported by the Entente who dreamed of re-establishing the pre-war status quo in the east – with a Polish border on the Bug, and without independent Baltic states, or Belarus or Ukraine. Piłsudski believed that helping them in the fight against the Bolsheviks was incompatible with the Polish *raison d'état*. Anton I. Denikin, Aleksandr V. Kolchak and Pyotr N. Wrangel were imperialists who preferred to lose rather than make territorial concessions by joining with Piłsudski to defeat Bolshevik Russia.[9]

At around the same time as the evacuation of Ober-Ost's troops, a new danger began to emerge from Bolshevik Russia, which was seeking to

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[7] Helmut Altrichter and Walther L. Bernecker, *Geschichte Europas im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 2004), 45–56; Harold James, *Geschichte Europas im 20. Jahrhundert: Fall und Aufstieg 1914–2001* (München: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2004), 61–72; Margaret Macmillan, *Paryż 1919. Sześć miesięcy, które zmieniły świat: konferencja pokojowa w Paryżu w 1919 roku i próba zakończenia wojny* [Peacemakers: Six months that changed the world], trans. Miłosz Młynarz (Oświęcim: Wydawnictwo Napoleon V, 2018); Grzegorz Kucharczyk, *Wersal 1919. Nowa kultura bezpieczeństwa dla Polski i Europy* [Versailles 1919: A new security culture for Poland and Europe] (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 2019), 116–117, 160–161.
[8] Michał Römer, *Dzienniki* [Diaries], vol. III, *1916–1919* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, 2018), 630–634; Piotr Łossowski, *Zerwane pęta. Usunięcie okupantów z ziem polskich w listopadzie 1918 roku* [Broken tether: The removal of occupiers from Polish lands in November 1918] (Warsaw: PIW, 1986), 237; Przemysław Hauser, "Polsko-niemieckie kontrowersje w latach 1918–1919" [Polish-German controversy in 1918–1919], in *Odrodzona Polska wśród sąsiadów 1918–1921* [Reborn Poland among its neighbours 1918–1921], ed. Andrzej Koryn (Poznań: Instytut Historii PAN, 1999), 65–66; Burkhard Stenzel, *Harry Graf Kessler: Ein Leben zwischen Kultur und Politik* (Weimar, Köln and Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), 149–150; Włodzimierz Suleja, *Mundur na nim szary ... Rzecz o Józefie Piłsudskim (1867–1935)* [The uniform on him grey … The thing about Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935)] (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2018), 171–172.
[9] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. VI, 123–124; Tadeusz Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa kijowska 1920 roku* [The Kiev expedition of 1920] (Cracow: Miles, 2020), 26–27; Zbigniew Zaporowski, *Józef Piłsudski w kręgu wojska i polityki* [Józef Piłsudski in the circle of the army and politics] (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 1998), 15–17; Nowak, *Polska*, 104–133, 364–377.

expand its influence over neighbouring countries. While trumpeting the propaganda slogans of "peace" and "self-rule of nations," the Bolsheviks initially acknowledged Poland's right to independence, but later considered it a "counter-revolutionary barrier between the revolutionary West and socialist Russia." These words, which came from an article published on 17 November 1918 by Commissioner for Nationalities Joseph Stalin, left no doubt as to the fate of the "dwarf national governments" that stood in the way of the Red Army's march into Europe to bring revolution to Germany and establish a proletarian state of councils. The destruction of the resurgent Polish state was one of the strategic objectives of Bolshevik Russia.[10]

The new order in the east also depended on the attitude of the Western powers. Piłsudski was keenly aware of the international environment which surrounded the peace talks in Paris that were shaping the Versailles Treaty. He knew that this environment would inevitably impact deliberations about the new Polish state and its borders. Paragraph 87 of the treaty gave the Allies the right to define Polish borders. Piłsudski accepted the Treaty of Versailles, signed on 28 June 1919, because it settled Poland's western borders with Germany.[11] Piłsudski assumed that in the east, on the other hand, there would be greater opportunities to implement his plans regarding the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.[12] Therefore

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[10] Nowak, *Polska*, 84–104; Aleksandra Julia Leinwand, *Czerwonym młotem w orła białego. Propaganda sowiecka w wojnie z Polską 1919–1920* [A red hammer on a white eagle: Soviet propaganda in the war with Poland 1919–1920] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2008), 63–67; Kucharczyk, *Wersal 1919*, 57–61.

[11] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 39; Janusz Pajewski, *Budowa drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1926* [Construction of the Second Republic of Poland 1918–1926] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007), 100–103; Marian Marek Drozdowski, *Józef Piłsudski. Naczelnik Państwa Polskiego 14 XI 1918 – 14 XII 1922* [Joseph Piłsudski: Head of the Polish State, 14 November 1918 – 14 December 1922] (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, 2008), 107–108, 212.

[12] Kazimierz Świtalski, "Listy Józefa Piłsudskiego" [Józef Piłsudski's letters], *Niepodległość* 7, (1962): 37–41; Władysław Baranowski, *Rozmowy z Piłsudskim 1916–1931* [Conversations with Piłsudski 1916–1931] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo "Zebra," 1990), 64; *Dokumenty i materiały do historii stosunków polsko-radzieckich* [Documents and materials for the history of Polish-Soviet relations], vol. II, *listopad 1918 – kwiecień 1920* [November 1918 – April 1920] (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1961), 262–263; Wacław Jędrzejewicz and Janusz Cisek, *Kalendarium życia Józefa Piłsudskiego 1867–1935* [Timeline of the life of Józef Piłsudskiego 1867–1935], vol. 2, *1916–1920* (Cracow and Łomianki: Wydawnictwo LTW, Instytut Książki, 2006), 2. According to Andrzej Nowak, the idea was to keep Poland in the big game "for as long as possible until it was prepared for a fully independent role in Eastern Europe, but also to keep ready to leave the game when necessary – with the most favourable

he had to consider not only how Poland would ensure safe borders in the east with the Entente's approval but also settle some more important questions: how to ensure that the Polish state would be independent and separate from Russia and how to maintain Poland's position as a part of Western European civilisation in the east? What manner of governance should be created on Europe's eastern flank – a Polish Empire or a group of independent states? Was the overarching aim to be for imperialism or free cooperation?

For Piłsudski, the aim had been to ensure the security of Poland in the east by moving the Russian border as far east as possible. The idea was to permanently weaken Russia. Piłsudski felt Russia had to be broken up and reformed along the "lines of nationality." The idea was to configure a system of viable buffer states between Germany and Russia that would effectively form a buffer to quash the expansionist instincts of these two powerful states. Piłsudski was faced with the question of how to knit together the three slices of territory that formed the Polish partition. But in addition, there was also the problem of how to fit other territories located between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea into the puzzle. Piłsudski visualized some sort of political and military alliance of new independent and democratic Eastern European states between the Baltic and the Black Seas which would also include Finland, Estonia and Romania.[13]

Piłsudski believed the federation formula was the best tool for this. His approach was to create a federation of Eastern European states, including Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic States. In fact, these plans were the continuation of the long-established Jagiellonian idea and policy of King Stephen Báthory (1533–1586).[14] Regardless of whether Russia were to be

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result possible at that stage: that was the double task faced by the head of state." Nowak, *Polska*, 83.

[13] Andrzej Skrzypek, *Związek Bałtycki: Litwa, Łotwa, Estonia i Finlandia w polityce Polski i ZSRR w latach 1919–1925* [The Baltic Union: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland in the policy of Poland and the USSR in 1919–1925] (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1972), 53; Waldemar Paruch, *Myśl polityczna obozu piłsudczykowskiego w Polsce 1926–1939* [Political thought of the Piłsudski camp in Poland 1926–1939] (Lublin: UMCS, 2005), 596.

[14] Jędrzejewicz and Cisek, *Kalendarium*, vol. II, *1916–1920*, 303; Marek Kornat, *Polityka równowagi 1934–1939. Polska między Wschodem z Zachodem* [The policy of equilibrium 1934–1939: Poland between East and West] (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Arcana, 2007), 84–85; Mędrzecki, *Kresowy kalejdoskop*, 58–59. The Jagiellonian idea had supporters and opponents among Polish politicians. As the socialist Stanisław Thugutt wrote, the history of the first two Polish parliaments was not a struggle between the different parties, "but a continuous, more or less masked struggle between nationalism and an attempt to return to the 'Jagiellonian idea,'

red or white, deprived of Ukraine and Belarus, it could not threaten such a federation. Piłsudski believed it very important to create, in the ethnically mixed communities, state structures based on democratic principles.

In order to prevent Russia from turning these new states into vassals, they would have to be cemented into an anti-Russian alliance. The glue holding them together would be their common interests and adherence to Western principles and values. Prime Minister Ignacy Paderewski, the Polish signatory to the Treaty of Versailles, hoped, with the consent of President Woodrow Wilson, for the creation of a United States of Eastern Europe.[15] Piłsudski spoke of taking a realistic approach. If the opportunity presented itself, he would try to achieve an ambitious federal outcome. Otherwise, he was ready to settle for the principle of incorporation. On 8 April 1919 he declared: "I do not want to be either imperialist or federalist until I have the opportunity to speak on the matters with such seriousness with a revolver in my pocket."[16]

Because the prevailing world sentiment – especially amongst Americans – appeared to back the notion of brotherhood between people and nations, Piłsudski was more than happy to go down the federalist route. But he was not averse to the idea of Poland incorporating other states if that solution was somehow preferable.

In his quest to resurrect a Polish hegemony stretching from the Baltic to the Dnieper River, Piłsudski envisaged a federation based on the tradition of supra-national cooperation by broadly reproducing the configuration of

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between a mutilated Poland in captivity and looking for new ways to heal, between the interests of the possessing classes and the needs of the world of work." Stanisław Thugutt, *Autobiografia* [Autobiography] (Warsaw: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1984), 154.

[15] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. VI, 122; Andrzej Nowak, "Czy Józef Piłsudski był federalistą?" [Was Józef Piłsudski a federalist?], in *Polska-Bułgaria w Europie Środkowej i Południowo-Wschodniej w wiekach XVII–XX. Podobieństwa, różnice, uwarunkowania. Materiały sesji Polsko-Bułgarskiej i Bułgarsko-Polskiej Komisji Historycznych* [Poland-Bulgaria in Central and South-Eastern Europe in the seventeenth-twentieth centuries: Similarities, differences, conditioning: Materials of the Polish-Bulgarian and Bulgarian-Polish Historical Commission Sessions], ed. Wiesław Balcerak (Warsaw and Łowicz: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Historii PAN, 2003), 161.

[16] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 73; Kazimierz Świtalski, *Diariusz 1919–1935* [Diary 1919–1935] (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1992), 40–41; Nowak, *Czy Józef Piłsudski był federalistą?*, 160–161; Suleja, *Mundur na nim szary*, 188; Andrzej Chwalba, *Przegrane zwycięstwo. Wojna polsko-bolszewicka 1918–1920* [A lost victory: The Polish-Bolshevik War 1918–1920] (Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2020), 130–134.

national areas which existed under the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The idea was to configure a system of buffer states between Germany and Russia that would have a chance to survive and effectively create a barrier for the possessions of great neighbours. Under this arrangement, the federal formula would give greater democratic legitimacy to his eastern policy, in effect deepening the political and military ties in the region while embracing Western values and principles such as freedom, self-government and self-determination.[17] This seemed to be the best way to refute accusations of imperialism and overcome Western opposition to Piłsudski's eastern policy, which included moving Polish troops beyond the Bug River.

Piłsudski's message on 12 February 1920, in an interview with *L'Écho de Paris* to the nations of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was unambiguous.

> The will of the countries we occupy is the only decisive factor for me. There is no way I would want Poland to incorporate large spaces inhabited by hostile people. History has proved that in the long run these heterogenous population clusters are dangerous, as evidenced by the fate of Austria-Hungary and Russia. Allowing freedom to the neighbouring people would be a source of pride for me as a statesman and soldier. Freeing those oppressed, I want to erase the last traces of partition. Tie them to Poland by violence – never in my life. It would add new rapes to past rapes.[18]

Piłsudski's approach was to be pragmatic in the face of the hard facts that presented themselves at the time. He cited the urgency required to head off opposition from Russia and Polish supporters of incorporation.[19] Piłsudski's

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[17] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 138–139; Suleja, *Mundur na nim szary*, 188; Paweł Rzewuski, *Filozofia Piłsudskiego* [Piłsudski's philosophy] (Warsaw: Fundacja Augusta hr. Cieszkowskiego, 2018), 79–98.

[18] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 147; Andrzej Nowak, "Geopolityczne koncepcje Józefa Piłsudskiego" [Geopolitical concepts of Józef Piłsudski], in *Przeklęte miejsce Europy? Dylematy polskiej geopolityki* [A cursed place for Europe? The dilemmas of Polish geopolitics], ed. Jacek Kloczkowski (Cracow: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2009), 150; Andrzej Meller, "Marszałek jako król? Polski monarchizm w okresie międzywojennym a Józef Piłsudski" [Marshal as king? Polish monarchism in the interwar period and Józef Piłsudski], in *Józef Piłsudski. Człowiek-żołnierz-polityk* [Joseph Piłsudski: Man-soldier-politician], eds Zbigniew Girzyński and Jarosław Kłaczkow (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2016), 345–365.

[19] Der bevollmächtigte Vertreter der österreichischen Regierung in Warschau, Nr. 8/P, Zur Frage der polnischen Ostgrenzen, Warschau, 20.10.1919, container 591,

main concern was ongoing threats to the independent Polish state. When the threat was small, as in the case of Cieszyn Silesia, he did not engage in military conflict, in this instance with Czechoslovakia. But when the threat was significant, as in the case of the seizures of Vilnius and Minsk by the Bolsheviks, he hit back, with a victorious offensive in August 1919, occupying the northeastern borderlands.[20] It was only later that he began the offensive in Eastern Galicia and, after fighting with the Ukrainians, reached the Zbrucz River in July 1919.[21]

Piłsudski offered to help the Entente, believing that a fully engaged Poland should take the initiative to create a settled legal state of affairs in Eastern Europe. But Piłsudski was unable to realize his vision. The situation was made more complex because the attitude of the Western states towards Russia was ambiguous. For a long time, there had been an appetite to attempt to recreate a pre-revolutionary white Russia. The Entente was waiting in the hope of a favourable outcome from the clash between the army of white generals and Bolshevik Russia. On 24 October 1919, the British Ambassador in Warsaw, Horace Rumbold, addressed this issue, signalling that Poland should choose to align with one of its great neighbours and opining that there was no alternative for the new state than to shelter under Russia's wings.[22] In November 1919, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour doubted if Poland as a buffer state would be of any benefit to Western Europe. He favoured the concept of an autonomous Poland within the borders of the Russian Empire.[23] It seemed that security and economic concerns were outweighing the arguments around the ethnic and cultural self-determination of Poland. For Piłsudski, the idea of making Poland a renewed vassal of Russia was unacceptable. The Western powers also failed to recognize the existence of nations such as Belarus and Ukraine and their state aspirations. Any attempts to cross the Bug River or to support

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fol. 51–52, Neues Politisches Archiv, Auswärtiges Amt, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv in Wien, Archiv der Republik (hereafter cited as ÖStA/AdR).

[20] Nowak, *Polska*, 308–309.

[21] Zaporowski, *Józef Piłsudski*, 11–12; Przemysław Piotr Żurawski vel Grajewski, "Od walki do przymierza – droga Polski i Ukrainy do sojuszu przeciw najazdowi sowieckiemu 1918–1921" [From the fight to the alliance: the road of Poland and Ukraine to the alliance against the Soviet invasion of 1918–1921], in *Sojusz Piłsudski-Petlura. Dokumenty i materiały* [Piłsudski-Petliura alliance: Documents and materials], eds Jan Pisuliński and Witalij Skalski (Warsaw and Kijów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Studium Europy Wschodniej, 2020), 121–126.

[22] Nowak, *Polska*, 343.

[23] Ibid., 343.

anti-Russian national movements were met with opposition from the Entente powers due to the perceived threat to Russia's territorial integrity.[24]

Given France's focus on issues connected with keeping Germany in check, the only significant player and potential ally that could help Poland to resolve the situation in the east would be Britain. Paradoxically, Great Britain turned out to be the strongest proponent of a pro-Russian policy. After the Bolsheviks' victory in the Russian Civil War, there were some unfortunate misconceptions in Britain about the true nature of post-revolutionary Soviet Russia. Piłsudski had a clear view and was quick to state on the 16 March 1919: "We had Tsarist imperialism, we see red Soviet imperialism today."[25] But Prime Minister David Lloyd George wanted to strengthen economic relations with Bolshevik Russia, including trade.[26] This would have meant revisions to the Versailles Treaty and pushing Poland back behind the Curzon Line. It would also have meant a British betrayal of Poland – placing it squarely within Russia's political, military and cultural sphere of influence.[27] At the Allied Conference in London on 24 February 1920, it was decided that Poland should be asked to refrain from pursuing a policy of aggression against Bolshevik Russia.[28] The Allies made it clear that they were ready to defend Polish borders only if the Red Army crossed the Curzon Line. At what was a critical moment of the Polish-Soviet War, there was no shortage of voices arguing that the best way to preserve peace was to accept there was no room for a fully independent Poland between the two established titans – Germany and Russia. Proponents of this view regarded the matter of whether Russia was red or

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[24] Suleja, *Mundur na nim szary*, 184.

[25] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 67. In the minds of Poles, there was a vivid tradition of Poland as a "bulwark" of Europe. Kornat, *Polityka*, 72–80, 127–140.

[26] Nowak, *Polska*, 401–402; Mariusz Wołos, *O Piłsudskim, Dmowskim i zamachu majowym. Dyplomacja sowiecka wobec Polski w okresie kryzysu politycznego 1925–1926* [About Piłsudski, Dmowski and the May coup: Soviet diplomacy towards Poland during the political crisis of 1925–1926 (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2013), 341.

[27] Andrzej Nowak, *Pierwsza zdrada Zachodu. 1920 – zapomniany appeasement* [The first betrayal of the West: 1920 – forgotten appeasement] (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2015), passim.

[28] Bogdan Grzeloński, *Dyplomaci USA 1919–1939* [USA Diplomats 1919–1939], (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, 2004), 13; Hugh S. Gibson, *Amerykanin w Warszawie 1919–1924. Niepodległa Rzeczpospolita oczami pierwszego ambasadora Stanów Zjednoczonych* [An American in Warsaw 1919–1924: The independent republic through the eyes of the first ambassador of the United States], trans. Andrzej Ehrlich (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2018), 228–234, 243–244.

white as irrelevant. Maurice Hankey, reluctant towards Poland, stated on the 17 July 1920 that the common border between Russia and Germany was inevitable and everything had to be done to make Germany, not Poland, the wall between Eastern and Western civilizations.[29]

The implementation of Piłsudski's new order in the east required the creation of new states. But not all the potential new nations were up to the task. The representatives of Belarus hoped to rebuild its own statehood. But, unfortunately, the development of the Belarusian national movement was proving to be very lethargic.[30] In September 1919 after arriving in Minsk, Piłsudski promised to allow Belarusians their own form of self-government. He was offering them the opportunity to speak freely about their future and about setting up an independent state.[31]

The order in the east that Piłsudski wanted to create required the good will of the leaders of the new states to cooperate within an alliance or federal structure. Nations in Eastern Europe thought more about their independence than about the security threat caused by their close proximity to Russia. The Lithuanians stubbornly focused on nationalist demands and did not understand the need to consider a broader supra-national unity with other buffer states in the face of the Russian threat. Instead, they were ready to turn their backs on Poland and cooperate with Germany and Russia to achieve their most ambitious aspirations.[32] In negotiating over the future of

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[29] Nowak, *Pierwsza zdrada Zachodu*, 404.

[30] Józef Lewandowski, *Federalizm. Litwa i Białoruś w polityce obozu belwederskiego (XI 1918 – IV 1920)* [Federalism: Lithuania and Belarus in the policy of the Belvedere camp (November 1918 – April 1920)] (Warsaw: PWN, 1962), 208–210; Piotr Okulewicz, *Koncepcja „międzymorza" w myśli i praktyce politycznej obozu Józefa Piłsudskiego w latach 1918–1926* [The concept of "intermarium" in the political thought and practice of Józef Piłsudski's camp in 1918–1926] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2001), 57–61.

[31] Leon Wasilewski, *Józef Piłsudski jakim go znałem* [Józef Piłsudski as I knew him] (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze Rój, 1935), 218–220; Lewandowski, *Federalizm*, 205–249; Przemysław Hauser, "Federacyjna wizja Rzeczpospolitej w poglądach Józefa Piłsudskiego i próba jej urzeczywistnienia w latach 1918–1921" [Federation vision of the republic in the views of Józef Piłsudski and an attempt to make it a reality in 1918–1921], in *Polska i Ukraina. Sojusz 1920 roku i jego następstwa* [Poland and Ukraine: Alliance 1920 and its aftermath], eds Zbigniew Karpus et al. (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Mikołaja Kopernika, 1997), 31–32; Nowak, *Czy Józef Piłsudski był federalistą?*, 166–170; Okulewicz, *Koncepcja „międzymorza,"* 86–89, 130; Chwalba, *Przegrane zwycięstwo*, 142–144.

[32] Algimantas Kasparavičius, „Rola Józefa Piłsudskiego w stosunkach dyplomatycznych między Litwą i Rosją (ZSRS) (1920–1926)" [The role of Józef Piłsudski in diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Russia (USSR) (1920–

the city of Vilnius, Piłsudski's position was clear. The capital of a Lithuania in a federal arrangement with Poland could be Vilnius. But Lithuania would have had to settle for Kowno as its capital if it wanted to reject a federal arrangement.[33]

After the seizure of Vilnius by the Polish army, having dislodged the Bolshevik troops, Piłsudski appealed to the inhabitants of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania on 22 April 1919, offering people freedom and the right to speak freely about their future aspirations and needs.[34] He also outlined the possibility of resolving internal, national and religious issues, without violence or pressure from the Polish side.[35] He guaranteed a civil administration, not a military one, whose task would be to organize free elections and ensure order and peace.[36] In response to the objections raised by Western states, Piłsudski, in a statement made on 2 May 1919, reassured the population of the Vilnius region. They would be given the opportunity to decide their fate with their own parliament, which would be convened in Vilnius.[37] But Kaunas Lithuania was reluctant to relinquish Vilnius as its capital.

At the end of December 1919, military cooperation was established with Latvia. Polish troops together with the Latvian army defeated the Red Army troops in January 1920, occupying the right bank of the Daugava River. Piłsudski declared on 28 January 1920 in Dyneburg that, according to Polish

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[33] Leszek Sosnowski, ed., *Nieznane rozmowy Józefa Piłsudskiego* [Unknown conversations of Józef Piłsudski] (Cracow: Biały Kruk, 2018), 90.

[34] Włodzimierz Suleja, "Geneza odezwy Naczelnika Państwa do mieszkańców byłego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego z kwietnia 1919 roku" [The genesis of the appeal of the chief of state to the inhabitants of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania in April 1919], *Niepodległość* 25 (1992), 17; Mędrzecki, *Kresowy kalejdoskop*, 58; Chwalba, *Przegrane zwycięstwo*, 134–135.

[35] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 75–79; Stanisław Swianiewicz, "Niezrealizowane plany Piłsudskiego" [Piłsudski's plans not realized], *Kultura* 5 (1960): 6; Nowak, *Polska*, 279–280; Nowak, *Czy Józef Piłsudski był federalistą?*, 162–164; Suleja, *Mundur na nim szary*, 190; Mędrzecki, *Kresowy kalejdoskop*, 55–61; Paweł Libera, *Józef Piłsudski wobec Litwy* [Józef Piłsudski towards Lithuania] in *Bez emocji*, 177–178.

[36] Joanna Gierowska-Kałłaur, "Odczyt Marszałka Piłsudskiego wygłoszony 24 sierpnia 1923 roku w Wilnie" [Marshal Piłsudski's lecture delivered on 24 August 1923 in Vilnius], *Przegląd Wschodni* V, no. 4 (1999): 768.

[37] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 79; Nowak, *Polska*, 280–281.

tradition, the Polish army must fight "not only for the freedom of our people, but also for the freedom of our neighbour and friend."[38] However, Piłsudski failed in his aim to forge a common bloc consisting of Finland, the Baltic States and Poland to make a co-ordinated and comprehensive peace settlement with Russia at the same time.

Many difficulties also manifested themselves in connection with Ukraine. Piłsudski received hostile communications from the Council of Four. Ukrainians from East Galicia chose to fight bloody battles with the Poles rather than the Russians. The Poles eventually emerged victorious and established a border on the Zbrucz River.[39] Ukrainians from the region of the Dnieper River took a different approach and considered their most important aim to be the maintenance of an independent state in the form of the Ukrainian People's Republic. Piłsudski found a statesman he could do business with in the person of Semen Petlura, who understood the superiority of strategic interests over ad hoc benefits and prestige. Petlura knew that Ukraine could exist without Lviv, but not without Kiev. In August 1919, Piłsudski held talks with representatives of Petlura in Warsaw with the view of embracing the future Ukrainian state as a natural ally against Russian aggression, which was threatening Polish interests.[40] The idea was to form an alliance to counter any threat by a resurgent Russia looking to expand westwards.

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[38] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 141–142; Nowak, *Polska*, 422–423; Tomasz Gajownik, "Józef Piłsudski a polityka bałtycka II Rzeczypospolitej – zarys problematyki" [Józef Piłsudski and the Baltic policy of the Second Polish Republic: An outline of the problem], in *Józef Piłsudski*, eds Girzyński and Kłaczkow, 249–250; Okulewicz, *Koncepcja „międzymorza,"* 89–96; Ēriks Jēkabsons, "Stosunki Łotwy i Polski: kwestia uznania Łotwy *de jure* w styczniu 1921 roku" [Relations between Latvia and Poland: The issue of de jure recognition of Latvia in January 1921], in *Międzymorze w polityce II Rzeczypospolitej. Nadzieje i ograniczenia* [Intermarium in the politics of the Second Polish Republic: Hopes and limitations], eds Elżbieta Znamierowska-Rakk and Bolesław Jaworski (Warsaw: Studium Europy Wschodniej UW, 2016), 221–232.

[39] Kazimierz Świtalski, *Diariusz. Uzupełnienie z lat 1919–1932* [Diary: Additions from 1919–1932] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2012), 25–26; Jan Pisuliński, "Sojusz Piłsudski-Petlura" [Piłsudski-Petliura Alliance], in *Sojusz Piłsudski-Petlura*, 23–24.

[40] Piotr Wandycz, "Nieznane listy Petlury do Piłsudskiego" [Unknown letters from Petliura to Piłsudski], *Zeszyty Historyczne* 8 (1965): 182–183; Piotr Wandycz, "Z zagadnień współpracy polsko-ukraińskiej w latach 1919–1920" [On the issues of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in the years 1919–1920], *Zeszyty Historyczne* 12 (1967): 12; Okulewicz, *Koncepcja „międzymorza,"* 102–103; Pisuliński, "Sojusz Piłsudski-Petlura," 20–23.

In April 1920, after forming an alliance with Petlura, Piłsudski wanted
to push forward deep into Ukraine towards the borders of 1772. This would
make it possible for the Ukrainian people to form an independent
government. The slogan "for our freedom and yours" was developed during
the battles undertaken by the Polish and Ukrainian forces as they took on
the Bolsheviks in May 1920.[41] Piłsudski held a meeting with Ataman
Petlura on 17 May 1920 in Winnica. Piłsudski made it clear at this time that
Poland, having struck a blow for the greatest treasure on earth, namely
freedom, had decided to press on and reject all that threatened freedom as
far as possible beyond its own borders.[42] Piłsudski said: "And in the flash
of our bayonets and our sabres you should not see a new imposition of
someone else's will. I want you to see a reflection of your freedom in
them."[43]

Dealing with the situation in Ukraine was helped by the capture of Kiev
and the political agreement of 21 May 1920 struck with Petlura.[44] However,
Petlura had overestimated his strength and influence. Consequently, he was
to suffer a disaster when the expected uprising in Ukraine to support his
cause failed to materialize.[45]

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[41] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 157; Wandycz, "Z zagadnień współpracy
polsko-ukraińskiej," 14–20; Świtalski, *Diariusz. Uzupełnienia*, 30–33; Henryk
Bartoszewicz, *Roman Knoll – polityk i dyplomata* [Roman Knoll: Politician and
diplomat] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2018), 44–45; Pisuliński, *Sojusz
Piłsudski-Petlura*, 33–40.

[42] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 159; Henryk Józewski, "Zamiast pamiętnika
(2)" [Instead of a diary (2)], *Zeszyty Historyczne* 60 (1982): 113–120.

[43] Piłsudski, *Pisma zbiorowe*, vol. V, 159; Józewski, "Zamiast pamiętnika (2)," 113–
120.

[44] Józewski, "Zamiast pamiętnika (2)," 121–134; Hauser, "Federacyjna wizja
Rzeczypospolitej," 34–35; Mirosław Szumiło, "Józef Piłsudski i sojusz polsko-
ukraiński w 1920 roku" [Józef Piłsudski and the Polish-Ukrainian alliance in 1920],
in *Józef Piłsudski*, eds Girzyński and Kłaczkow, 59–73; Mędrzecki, *Kresowy
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