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Eastern European Studies

**Central Europe in flux:
Germany, Poland and Ukraine, 1918-1922**

Phd Thesis


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2003

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PREFACE

This thesis is an examination of the relationship between the Ukrainian nationalists, led by Petliura (The Ukrainian Peoples' Republic) and both Germany and Poland in the period 1918-1922. The work begins by analysing the historical relationships with both countries prior to the First World War. The Polish relationship was far more long term and the experience of the 17th century struggle for independence by Ukrainians against Poland, had a major impact on the development of Polish history and on Ukraine's drift into a union with Russia. This historical experience also influenced the theories of Pilsudski and Wasilewski, as to how the Russian Empire could be reconstructed after its collapse, and the role of Ukraine in the reconfiguration of states in Central and Eastern Europe. Leon Wasilewski, the political and cultural theoretician who influenced Pilsudski, contributed extensively to the historiography. His works on the subject include, *Zarys stosunków galicyjskich* (Warsaw, 1906), *Ukraina i sprawa ukraińska* (Krakow, 1911), *Die Ukrainer in Russland und die politischen Bestrebungen derselben* (Vienna, 1915), *Na Wschodnich Kresach Królestwa Polskiego* (Piotków, 1916), *Die Ostprovinzen des alten Polenreiches (Lithauen u. Weissruthenien die Landschaft Chelm – Ostgalizien – die Ukraina)* (Krakow, 1917) and *La paix avec l'Ukraine* (Geneva, 1917). I utilised the classic works on Ukrainian history for this, examining the long term historical role of Poland in Ukraine. These include, Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1988) and Paul R. Magosci, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), along with Andreas Kappeler, *Kleine Geschichte der Ukraine* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1994).

Although the thesis addresses primarily the situation after World War I and the military collapse of Germany in Eastern Europe, I also examine the historical relationship between Germany and Ukraine, which came to the fore in the period of World War I, and especially following the treaties of Brest Litovsk. This period involved the German recognition of Ukrainian independence, and the German intervention in Ukrainian internal political and economic affairs. These issues are addressed in Chapter 2. It also is necessary to examine the beginnings of strains between Polish and Ukrainian nationalism and the competing claims to territories, such as Chelm. This caused a problem for the Germans, who were in the position of

arbitrating the conflicting territorial claims. The German military occupation of Ukraine is also examined and the dictates of German policy in the country. The role of Ukraine in Germany's overall war plans is also analysed and how the Germans placed great importance on the economic place of Ukraine. This is the aspect of German-Ukrainian relations prior to the Nazi period, which has been most analysed by German historians, and I have utilised these sources, together with material from German archives. One of my aims in examining this period is to analyse how the German war aims in Ukraine differed from those following the war and during the early years of the Weimar Republic and to what extent there was continuity.

In Chapter 3 I have analysed the serious situation, which existed between Poland and Germany during the course of the Versailles Treaty negotiations and until the settling of the plebiscites in areas with mixed German-Polish populations. The issue of disputed borders bedevilled Polish-German relations as much as it did Polish-Ukrainian. Upper Silesia and East Prussia were the flash points and the situation almost came to war on several occasions. The German hatred of Poland, which arose from virtually all political groupings in Germany, cannot be overestimated, and the sense that Poland was France's satellite and ally in Central Europe, whose purpose was to contain Germany following Versailles, was the abiding idea in the foreign relations of the two states. The Soviet-Polish War brought this to the fore and I am examining how Germany swung behind Soviet Russia in this conflict, albeit its ability to act was severely constrained by the Entente and Versailles. I demonstrate how the relationship could lead to very differing views on the issue of Ukrainian independence and how an opposing position was nearly always adopted.

Chapter 4 deals with the military situation in Ukraine from November 1918, when Germany surrendered to the Allied Powers, until March 1919, when German troops eventually left the country. There has been a very limited historiography on this period from the German perspective, unlike the role of the French and the anarchists. The question I am addressing is how the German military in Ukraine at this time, related to the Ukrainian nationalists, and whether the German military had an independent policy or were merely acting on Allied instructions. I addressed this question by examining the relationship between the German troops and the French and the influence of Bolshevik propaganda on the German army in the east. Most of the sources here were from German archives and the work of the German military historian

Kurt Fischer. K.Fischer, *Deutsche Truppen und Entente-Intervention in Süd Russland 1918/19* (Boppard am Rhein: Harold Bold Verlag, 1973), who has dealt with the German military role in Ukraine in the most detail. I also consulted Richard Debo, *Revolution and Survival: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1917-18* (1979) and *Survival and Consolidation: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1918-1921* (1990), also Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question* (1999). Michael J. Carley, *Revolution and Intervention: The French Government and the Russian Civil War* (1983) was also a relevant source. There is also some reference to the German military role in 1919 in the recent Perry Moore, *Stamping Out the Virus. Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War 1918-1920*. (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 2002). However, all of the above works, with the exception of Fischer, concentrate on the role of the French in Ukraine, and the foreign policy of the Bolsheviks, rather than the German – Ukrainian perspective.

In Chapter 5 the foreign policy of the early Weimar Republic, as it related to Ukraine is analysed, and particularly the views of the Auswärtiges Amt (Foreign Ministry). The principal issues here are to what extent the foreign policy of the German Republic differed from that of the empire and how the Foreign Ministry regarded the Ukrainian nationalists, with particular emphasis on the development of the Polish – Ukrainian alliance and its impact on German policy. Here I have used German archival sources from the Political Archive of the Foreign Ministry (Politische Archiv des Auswärtiges Amt) in Bonn, together with the Bundesarchiv (Federal Archive) in Potsdam, which includes the files of other government departments, together with press reports. The issue of diplomatic recognition by Berlin of the Soviet regime in Ukraine is addressed, and particularly attempts to pressurise Berlin by holding German diplomats hostage in Kiev. How did the arrest and detention of Radek, the Soviet representative in Berlin, impact on the diplomatic game being played out between Kharkov and Berlin? To what extent was Germany's refusal to recognise Soviet Ukraine the result of Entente pressure not to do so, and what was Germany's perspective on the various regimes in Ukraine during the course of 1919 and 1920? What was the imperative behind the Foreign Ministry's policy of 'wait and see'?

Following this, in Chapter 6 I have addressed the important issue of German economic interest in Ukraine, which dated from the period of the German occupation. What was the involvement of German industrialists in formulating policy towards

Ukraine and how German fears about the loss of the Ukrainian market led to an attempt to foster good relations with both the White regime of Denikin and the Soviet Ukrainian government? I am examining the influence of economic realpolitik on German relations with Ukrainian nationalists. The files of the Economics Ministry and the Reichs Chancellory files in the Bundesarchiv in Potsdam, together with Foreign Ministry files in Bonn, dealing with economic affairs were used as sources. The importance of the economic aspect of foreign policy to the early Weimar Republic cannot be overestimated, and especially the role of the developing eastern market. Once again, very little has been written on this, other than by historians concentrating on the broader German-Soviet relationship.

The role of Paul Rohrbach, as the leading German Ukrainophile was examined in Chapter 7 and his attempts to establish links between Ukrainian nationalists and official Germany. His part in formulating German policy towards Ukraine before 1918 has been examined by many German historians, but not much has been done to analyse his actions after World War I. I also wanted to address the question, how did his views influence German policy towards Ukraine after 1918 and to what extent were his views as a Baltic German typical of that group? For this purpose I consulted his writings: *Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt* (Berlin, 1912), *Russland und Wir* (Stuttgart, 1915), and *Um des Teufels Handschrift* (Hamburg, 1953), and an examination of the ideological underpinnings of the Baltic Germans in Robert.C. Williams, *Culture in Exile. Russian Emigres in Germany, 1881-1941* (London, 1972).

Chapter 8 analyses Poland's relations with the Ukrainian nationalists from late 1918 and the establishment of the Polish Republic until the Warsaw Agreement in early 1920. My aim was to address the question if Poland was supportive of Ukrainian independence from 1918 onwards or whether there was an anti-Ukrainian orientation because of the struggle in East Galicia and the need to present the Allied Powers with an anti-Ukrainian argument during the course of the Paris peace negotiations in 1919. Several Polish historians have argued in the course of the 1990s that Poland had been continually supportive of Ukrainian independence and I wanted to set out to disprove this theory. These historians include Zbigniew Karpus, Michal Klimecki and Waldemar Rezmer. The 1990s saw an attempt in Poland to redefine Poland's relations with Ukraine for political and economic reasons and the revisionist rewriting of Polish history was an aspect of this. Utilising the files of the Polish Foreign Ministry (MSZ) in

the Archiwum Akt Nowych in Warsaw, I examined reports from Polish embassies in Berlin and London, together with press releases issued by the Polish Press Bureau in London, which was directed by the MSZ. As secondary sources, I consulted Dziewanowski's monograph on Piłsudski's attempt to construct an alliance and the essays of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies on relations between Poles and Ukrainians.

The period encompassing the Warsaw Agreement and the Soviet-Polish War is dealt with in Chapter 9. I did not examine the military campaign, but rather the diplomatic and political relations between the Polish government and army and the government of the Ukrainian Peoples' Republic. As well as consulting Subtelny and Magosci, I also read Thomas Fiddick, *Russia's Retreat from Poland, 1920* (1990) but did not find a great deal there on the Ukrainian issue. From a Ukrainian perspective I consulted John Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1952), Ivan L. Rudnytsky, *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies: Edmonton, 1987), Anna Procyk, *Russian Nationalism and Ukraine*, (Toronto University Press: Toronto, 1995) and M. Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance, 1919-1921. An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution* (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies: Edmonton, 1995).

For a Polish perspective I consulted Zbigniew Karpus, *Wschodnie Sojusznicy Polski w Wojnie 1920 roku. Oddziały wojskowe ukraińskie, rosyjskie, kozackie i białoruskie w Polsce w latach 1919-1920* (Toruń: Michael Copernicus University Press, 1999), Z. Karpus, W. Rezmer and E. Wiszki (eds.), *Polska i Ukraina, Sojusz 1920 roku i jego następstwa* (Toruń: Michael Copernicus University Press, 1997). Dziewanowski's *Joseph Piłsudski* also explains the Polish reasoning behind the invasion. Another older Polish source is A. Przybylski, *Wojna polska 1918-1921* (Warsaw, 1930), which contains a lot of original quotes from Piłsudski and Polish commanders in the field. Another source, although one dealing primarily with the military aspect, is Norman Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star. The Polish-Soviet War. 1918-1920* (London: Mc Donald, 1972), although this concentrates solely on the Soviet-Polish issue. An important source is the collection of documents from the Joseph Piłsudski Institute, New York and published by the Polish Cultural Foundation in London, Janusz Cisek (ed.), *Sąsiedzi wobec wojny 1920 roku. Wybór dokumentów*

(1990), which examines Poland's relations during the Soviet-Polish War and after with various neighbouring states including Ukraine, Germany and Czechoslovakia. This illustrates the impact of the struggle on the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. The questions addressed are; did the Warsaw Agreement constitute a genuine alliance and what was the balance of power between the two allies, what were Polish aims in Ukraine and why did the intervention fail?

Chapter 10 handles the struggle in East Galicia between the competing nationalisms of Poland and Ukraine. I begin by examining the special status of East Galicia, as a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and how Ukrainian nationalism was more developed there than in Russian Ukraine. The conflicting claims of Poles and Ukrainians within the Hapsburg Empire are briefly examined and how this came to the fore during World War I and the Austrian and German negotiations concerning the establishment of a Ukrainian state. The Canadian Ukrainian historian Paul Magosci is one of the foremost authorities on East Galicia at this time. As well as his monograph *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), I have also drawn on his essay in *Nationalism and Empire. The Hapsburg Empire and the Soviet Union*, ed. Richard Rudolph and David Good (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1992) along with Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, where Reshetar examines the East Galician situation from a Ukrainian perspective. Another source has been the collected essays in Andrei S. Markovits and Frank.S.Sysyn (eds), *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Ukraine* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1984). The importance of East Galicia in both the military and political contexts in 1919 is examined and why it was important to both Bolshevik strategy for reaching Hungary and Central Europe and for *Entente* and Polish policy for blocking the advance of the Red Army. Here I examined the account of the Bolshevik commander Antonov-Ovseenko, who commanded the Red Army advance in the region, in B. Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoi voine, Volume IV* (Moscow, 1924). Because East Galicia had a different history prior to 1918 and because its central struggle after December 1918 was with Poland, rather than Soviet Russia, it is necessary to treat it separately in this thesis, although it was an essential part of Ukraine and the history of East Galicia is intrinsically linked with that of the rest of Ukraine. It was also in East Galicia that enmity between Poland and Germany became most obvious.

The narrative moves forward to an assessment of Polish attempts at the Paris Peace Conference to persuade the Allied Powers to grant Poland suzerainty over East Galicia. Sources for this are primarily the *Documents on British Foreign Policy and Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference 1919*. The question why the Poles were successful in undermining Ukrainian nationalism in East Galicia is studied, and particularly the role of Polish propaganda associating the East Galicians with the both the Bolsheviks and the Germans. Sources included the files of the Polish Foreign Ministry and the monograph by Arnold Margolin, the representative of the Ukrainian Peoples' Republic in London, A. Margolin, *Ukraina i Politika Antanty* (Berlin, 1921). The reports of massacres by the Ukrainians are also examined and the files of the Interior Ministry of Poland, which report on that. The issue of the decision of the fate of East Galicia at Riga is examined, and the grounds for the failure of the Ukrainian attempt to separate East Galicia from Poland. Historiography here includes Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians. Unexpected Nation* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) and Alexander Motyl, *Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism 1919-1929* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1980), which examines the pro-German orientation of Ukrainian nationalism in East Galicia, as a reaction to Polish conquest.

There are many Polish sources, some of the more recent are Ludwik Mroczka, *Spór o Galicję Wschodnią 1914-1923* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1998), Barbara Stoczewska, *Litwa, Białoruś, Ukraina w myśli politycznej Leona Wasilewskiego* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 1998) and T. Dąbrowski, *Ukraiński ruch narodowy w Galicji Wschodniej 1912-1923* (Warsaw, 1985). Older sources include Z. Zawadowski, *Ruś Podkarpacka i jej stanowisko prawnopolityczne* (Warsaw, 1931), J. Sopotnicki, *Kampania polsko-ukraińska* (Lvov, 1921), J. Rogowski, *Z walk o Lwów* (Poznań, 1929).

Chapter 11 deals with the Treaty of Riga and the end of the Polish-Ukrainian alliance and its impact on the Petliura's regime in Poland. I wished to examine whether there continued to be unrest against the Bolsheviks in Ukraine by nationalists after the Polish withdrawal. I also wanted to explore the question why the Poles abandoned the Ukrainians at Riga. Was it because of the imminence of the uncertain plebiscite in Upper Silesia, or the policy of the National Democrats, who had been opposed to the

Ukrainian alliance from the outset? What was the position of Pilsudski and his allies on the ending of the Ukrainian alliance, under the terms of the Riga Treaty? I also examined the terms of the Treaty of Riga, especially as they impacted on the activities of Ukrainian émigrés in Poland, and the resulting withdrawal of Polish recognition and toleration of the UNR regime in Tarnow. Polish and Ukrainian historians have tended to have very different views of the Riga Treaty and the necessity for ending the alliance, with its concomitant agreement to divide Ukraine between Poland and Soviet Russia, albeit under the title of Soviet Ukraine. The activities of the anti-Polish Ukrainian groups are analysed and their attempts to destroy the Polish-Ukrainian alliance, an example of this is the Vienna conference, where they called for an alliance with Germany, and other countries opposed to the Polish orientation.

I have drawn on the files of the MSZ, Polish General Staff and the Leon Wasilewski papers in Archiwum Akt Nowych, Warsaw, along with the Trotsky papers and the memoirs of Grabski, the National Democrat politician, who played a major role in the Polish government, which negotiated the Treaty of Riga. Also the papers of the British Foreign Office, and the article by Jan Jacek Bruski on the parliament of the Ukrainian People's Republic in exile in Zbigniew Karpus (ed), *Polska i Ukraina, Sojusz 1920 roku i jego następstwa* (Toruń, 1997) and the article by Alexander Kolańczuk, 'Soldiers of the Ukrainian People's Republic Interned in Poland (1920-1924)' in the same collection of essays. Piotr. S. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations 1917-1921* (Cambridge Mass., 1969) is also a source of material on the Soviet-Polish negotiations at Riga. I have also referred to the essay 'Polish-Ukrainian Relations' in the collection of essays on Ukrainian relations with other nationalities edited by Ivan L Rudnytsky, the Canadian-Ukrainian historian, *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History* (Edmonton: CIUS, 1987), where he refers to the attempt by Poland to reach a compromise with the East Galicians before the Treaty of Riga. Finally, I have referred to the Polish concerns about developing economic links between German firms and Soviet Ukraine, where there is evidence in the Polish archives concerning this.

Other historiography on the period leading to the ratification of the treaty is the work of the Polish communist writer Markhlevsky, who held a pro-Soviet and anti-Ukrainian position, Y. Markhlevsky, *Voina i Mir mezdhu Burzhuaznoi Pol'shoi i Proletarskoi Rossei* (Moscow, 1921) and Clara Zetkin, *Erinnerungen an Lenin* (Vienna, 1929), where Zetkin recounts the Soviet desire for peace and Lenin's view of the treaty

being a second Brest-Litovsk, which would grant Soviet Russia a breathing space, in order to crush internal dissent and Wrangel. The text of the treaty is also included in *R S F S R: Sbornik Deistvushchikh Dogovorov*, ii (Moscow, 1921), No. 51, pp. 43-71. On the position of the National Democrat Party towards the Ukrainians and the establishment of the eastern frontier, there is the theoretical work by the leading National Democrat politician Grabski: S. Grabski, *Uwagi o bieżącej historycznej chwili Polski* (Warsaw, 1922) and the commentary on Grabski's theories by the Polish historian Wojdyło in: W. Wojdyło, *Koncepcje społeczno-polityczne Stanisława Grabskiego* (Toruń, 1993).

In Chapter 12 I turn to examine the issue of the Ukrainian prisoners held in the Polish internment camps from the end of the Soviet-Polish War until 1924. These prisoners, who had fought alongside the Poles on behalf of the UNR, were held in several large camps by the Polish authorities. I examine the question of where they were held, the conditions of internment and the relationship between the Polish authorities and the internees. There has been very little historiography on this issue and the main source was the Polish historian Zbigniew Karpus's work, which details statistics and dates for the opening and liquidation of camps and the numbers held. His major work in this field is *Jeńcy i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińscy na terenie Polski w latach 1918-1924* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 1997). Other than this work there have been very few detailed accounts of the internees in Poland, except for earlier works by Karpus, dealing with particular internment camps and groups of prisoners. These include Z. Karpus, *Jeńcy i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińscy w Polsce w latach 1918-1924. Z dziejów militarno-politycznych wojny polsko-radzieckiej* (Toruń, 1991), Z. Karpus and W. Rezmer, *Tuchola. Obóz jeńców i internowanych 1914-1923* (Toruń, 1997), Z. Karpus 'Raport o sytuacji jeńców i internowanych oraz o stanie obozu w Dąbiu pod Krakowem od listopada 1918 do 1920 r' in *Polska i jej sąsiedzi w czasach najnowszych Studia i materialy ofiarowane Profesorowi Karolowi Grünbergowi w 70-lecie urodzin* (Toruń, 1995) and Z. Karpus, 'Obóz jeńców bolszewickich i internowanych ukraińskich w Wadowicach. Raport z listopada 1920 roku' in *Wojkowsky Przegląd Historyczny, Number 4/1994*. The Ukrainian historian Alexander Kolanchuk, has also researched the question of the Ukrainian internees in Polish camps in 'Żołnierze armii Ukraińskiej Republiki Ludowej internowani w Polsce (1920-1924)'

in Z. Karpus, Waldemar Rezmer and Emilian Wyszka (eds.), *Polska i Ukraina* (Toruń: Micheal Copernicus University, 1997).

I also examined the records of the Red Cross, using the *International Review of the Red Cross* (from the British Red Cross Society archive in London) and the volumes covering the years from 1920 to 1926. These did not refer at all to the Ukrainian internees in Poland but did reveal some interesting facts on Ukrainian internees held in Czechoslovakia and the attempts of the Czech government to persuade them to return to Poland. In this way, I addressed the issue of why the Ukrainians were reluctant to settle in Poland, and the reaction of the Polish government to Ukrainians trying to settle there. The question of the situation of internees in Poland was also dealt with in the Red Cross reports, by the visit of the Red Cross delegation to Poland in 1920 and the second visit in 1921 to investigate the conditions of Ukrainian political prisoners. I was essentially addressing the issues of how external agencies and observers regarded the plight of the Ukrainians, as the historiography was rather limited otherwise. I sought to establish in what situation the Ukrainians found themselves before 1924. Finally, using both archival sources and Karpus's source information, I tried to determine how and why the Ukrainians finally left Poland in 1924.

In the conclusion I address how the relationship between Germany and Ukraine and Poland's relationship with Ukraine impacted on the attempt by Petliura to establish an independent Ukraine and in which ways it did this. Also, if an attempt by Polish historians in the 1990's to claim that Poland had consistently supported Ukrainian independence from the outset are justified. I have also attempted to address the issue of whether there continued to be a German interest in Ukraine and in Ukrainian nationalism in the early years of the Weimar Republic. Clearly, I am only examining the history of the Ukrainian nationalists led by Petliura and the Ukrainian People's Republic, rather than the East Galicians or the pro-German Ukrainians led by Skoropadskyi. However, these other groups do enter the discourse, when their activities affect the decisions of the Petliuran nationalists, or their Polish allies, or how the Petliuran project was perceived elsewhere. I have attempted to navigate the shifting sands of Ukrainian nationalism, without becoming lost in the myriad details of its rival adherents. I have clearly not addressed the issue of Soviet-Ukrainian relations, except insofar as it impinged on the German and Polish relationships with Ukrainian nationalism. My principal aim has been to examine the relationship between these two

Central European countries and Ukrainian nationalism during the period following the end of World War I and the establishment of the frontier between Poland and Ukraine by the Treaty of Riga.

In the wake of World War I the situation in Central Europe was extremely fluid. New states were being established and others were clamouring for recognition. These states emerge or almost emerge and then come into conflict. The situation was extremely multi-dimensional. Most historical works on this period have been two-dimensional, an example is Norman Davies's *White Eagle, Red Star*, which only examines the Polish-Russian conflict and ignores the role of Germany, Ukraine and Lithuania. The Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies has produced interesting works analysing the Ukrainian relationship with Germans, Poles and others, but in general English language historiography has steered clear of the subject.

Most historiography relating to the German-Ukrainian relationship has seen 1918 as the end point and has only taken up the theme again in 1933. The general view has been that German interest in Ukraine ended with Germany's defeat in November 1918. I am demonstrating that this was not the case and that the Weimar Republic, even before Rapallo and Riga, attempted to develop political and above all, economic links with Ukraine. The Polish dimension in this relationship cannot be ignored, and German awareness of the developing links between Warsaw and the nationalists had to have an effect, as German policy in Eastern Europe was always seen through the prism of its relationship with Poland. German historians are now beginning to develop this theme of German-Ukrainian relations in the wake of World War I. Frank Golczewski of Hamburg University, who is the leading German historian in the field of modern Ukrainian history, is currently writing a monograph on German-Ukrainian relations in the early years of the Weimar Republic. I have examined some important aspects of this, both economic, military and diplomatic. Utilising German archival sources, I have sought to prove a continuing German interest in Ukraine.

Relations between Petliura and Poland are the other side of this multi-dimensional relationship. Most of the English language historiography has derived from the Canadian Ukrainians, with Rudnytskyi and Magosci as the main figures. This has been generally anti-Polish, although Rudnytskyi attempted to understand the Polish position and in particular, missed opportunities by both Poland and Ukraine to develop a more positive relationship in the crucial years 1918-1921. From the Polish side the

issue was not widely addressed between 1945 and 1989, with the exception of a few historians such as Dziewanowski. Since 1989 a new Polish school of historiography on Polish-Ukrainian relations has developed, and I have utilised this to examine contemporary Polish discourse. I have used Polish archival material to argue that Ukrainian nationalism was not regarded favourably by the Polish state.

Other than the Canadians, I believe that my work is one of the first attempts to address the extremely complex issue of Polish-Ukrainian relations during these years. Also, the issue of the Ukrainian internees in Poland has not been examined, other than by the Polish historian Karpus, and I have drawn important parallels between their treatment in Poland and the position of the Ukrainian internees in Czechoslovakia. Once again, this emphasises the multi-dimensional and international aspect of the struggle for Ukrainian independence in the immediate aftermath of World War I.

This period was crucial for the attempt by many nations in Central and Eastern Europe to escape from the ruins of the collapsed multi-national empires of Austria-Hungary and Russia. For a brief period from 1917 a window of opportunity opened, only to close again by 1920. Some nations, such as the Poles, were successful in establishing an independent state. Others, such as the Ukrainians, were not. I am demonstrating that there were many external players in this attempt by the Ukrainians to gain their independence and that Germany, and especially Poland were two of them. The struggle for Ukrainian independence in the aftermath of World War I cannot be properly understood without examining the roles of both Germany and Poland, and seeing the seed of future relations between Ukrainian nationalism and both Poland and Germany.

The origins of German relations with Ukrainian nationalism during the Third Reich date back to the experience of Polish rule in East Galicia and the Polish crushing of Ukrainian resistance in East Galicia. Also, the experience of the Polish-Ukrainian alliance of 1920, and the failure of the Poles to support Ukrainian claims at Riga left an extremely negative impression of Polish policy in Eastern Europe. The Petliuran experiment was short-lived and disastrous, and ensured that Ukrainian nationalism regarded an anti-Polish orientation as a *sine qua non*. The crucial period for Ukrainian nationalism were the years following World War I, and the opportunity to form an independent state would not arise again until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Ukraine lies in an area of Europe, which has had an immense geo-political significance throughout the 20th century and during two world wars. I have analysed its history during one of its most turbulent periods and its relationship with two of its most important neighbours. I have contributed to an understanding of the history of Europe's second largest state and an analysis of its relations with two key states in Central Europe, both of which were to play an important part in its subsequent history.

CHAPTER 1

GERMANY, POLAND AND UKRAINE – AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Although the events outlined and examined in this thesis occurred in the years immediately after World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the collapse of the Russian Empire, they were the result of centuries of interplay and conflict between the three countries concerned. Ukraine came under the influence of Poland, Russia, and Germany, consecutively. Each coveted the rich resources of this large and abundant territory; and Poland and Russia, at least, regarded it as an essential part of their respective empires. Germany's relationship with Ukraine, at least in the modern period, was more short-lived; but it too sought to dominate this country at the heart of Europe.

I have not examined the relationship between Russia and Ukraine in this thesis, and it is in many respects the central relationship in modern Ukrainian history - and one on which there have been many studies. In my opinion the relationship between Ukraine and Poland is almost as central to the development of Ukrainian history, and has often been the counterweight to Russian influence in Ukraine. The role of Germany, while not as central, has nonetheless led to important developments in modern Ukrainian history and, indeed, is regarded by some as the motor of Ukrainian nationalism. The view that Ukrainian nationalism was a German creation is heard as often today, especially among the ranks of Russian nationalists, as it was in 1918.

Ukraine, together with Byelorussia and East Prussia, lay in the zone of conflict between the nascent Polish state and the Teutonic Knights in the late Middle Ages. The other major power in the region was Lithuania and scholars have speculated on the possibility that Ukraine could have become part of a Lithuanian state but the Teutonic Knight's struggle with Lithuania meant that Lithuania was drawn away from involvement in Ukraine and had to concentrate its resources against the Teutonic threat.¹ Not for the last time in Ukrainian history had the role of the Germans played a central part in its development. In the next few centuries it was principally Poland with which the destiny of Ukraine was linked. According to the terms of the Treaty of Lublin in 1569, Kiev and Lviv both came under Polish rule – the newly created Polish Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita*). This was the period of Poland's greatest influence in Europe and became for Polish nationalists 'the Golden Age', when Poland's rule

¹ Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians. Unexpected Nation*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 46.

stretched from the Baltic to the Black Seas.² Even today Polish tour guides proudly tell tourists of its one time greatness and point out insignia demonstrating its suzerainty over Lithuania and Ukraine. It was this historical memory that stirred the newly created Polish Republic in 1918 and even today has echoes in Polish foreign policy.³

The Polish Commonwealth made several fundamental mistakes, however, in relations with its Ukrainian subjects. It sought a policy of Polonisation and Catholicisation, which provoked Ukrainian resistance. It could be argued that the policies of Dmowski and the National Democrat Party in 1918 continued to pursue this policy and that nothing had been learned from the lessons of the 17th century. The Ukrainian historian Viacheslav Lypynskyi (1882-1931) argued that without the revolt of 1648 direct and indirect Polonisation might have led to the eventual disappearance of the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) nation. It was in response to the threat of Polonisation and Catholicisation that some Ukrainians sought the assistance of Moscow, and it is from this time that the other major player in Ukrainian history – Russia – became involved.⁴ Russia, whether Tsarist or Soviet, would remain the major foreign power involved in Ukraine until 1991 (and some would argue that it remains so even today).

The Ukrainian Cossack revolts of the 17th century, particularly that led by Khmelnytskyi, shook the Polish Commonwealth to its foundations and left a legacy of bitterness and distrust between Poles and Ukrainians. Regarded by Polish historians as a Civil War, it is regarded by Ukrainian historians on the contrary as a 'War of Liberation'. It also, of course, led to the alliance and eventual union with Russia under the terms of the Treaty of Pereiaslav in 1654. Soviet historians interpreted this as the real date of the union of the east Slavic peoples and their true destiny. The process of union with Russia was not immediate but was a very slow one, culminating in full union during the reign of Catherine II in the late 18th century. It must also be remembered that parts of Ukraine still remained under Polish rule, particularly Galicia and Volhynia. There was a reversal of policy in 1658 when the Hetman (Ukrainian Cossack leader) signed a treaty of alliance with Poland at Hadiach. This was the treaty whose articles Pilsudski knew by heart, and often recited, and was for many Polish nationalists in 1918 the source of their hopes that an alliance with Ukraine could be

² Paul Magosci, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 148-150.

³ Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997), p. 86.

⁴ Magosci, *A History of Ukraine*, pp. 213-215.

renegotiated. The treaty, however, was never implemented and Ukraine continued to move into the Russian sphere of influence.

In the early 18th century the Ukrainians, led by Hetman Mazepa, rebelled against the Russians but did not form an alliance with Poland. Instead Mazepa chose Sweden, which was at that time a great military power in northern Europe and Russia's strongest enemy. A clear pattern emerges of Ukrainian alliances with Western European powers, which are in a position to challenge Russia for control of Ukraine. Mazepa was defeated, however, at the Battle of Poltava in 1709 and Ukraine remained under Russian rule.

With the three Partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793 and 1795 Poland itself disappeared from the map of Europe. Russia gained Volhynia and all of Ukraine west of the river Dnieper. Galicia, however, remained outside Russian control and this was to have huge significance for the development of Ukrainian nationalism in the 19th century and in the period after 1918. After the disappearance of Poland Galicia came under the rule of the Hapsburg Empire. This province, which was almost 50% Ukrainian and 50% Polish; found itself within a predominantly German speaking empire. The Hapsburgs later divided the province into two – West Galicia and East Galicia, which was to lead to major consequences after the break up of that empire in 1918. West Galicia was predominantly Polish whereas East Galicia was predominantly Ukrainian, or Ruthenian as it was then known as. The subsequent histories of the two parts of Ukraine, one in the Hapsburg Empire, the other in the Romanov Empire would diverge significantly in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The 19th century is regarded as the century when nationalism came of age and Ukraine was no exception. In Galicia the Hapsburgs gradually recognised the claims of the 'Ruthenians' for the recognition of their language and culture, and many Ukrainians in Galicia began to travel to study at German and Austrian universities, thus being influenced by the ideas of German nationalism and the renewed interest in folklore and local history. It is from the late 19th century that a German interest in Ukraine develops, especially among theorists such as Paul Rohrbach. Similarly, Ukrainian nationalists in Galicia (and some in Russian Ukraine, who travelled to Galicia) began to come under the influence of German ideas.⁵ The problem, of course, was that Ukrainians in Galicia were in constant competition with Poles, whose nascent nationalism was another

⁵ Andrei S Markovits and Frank E Sysyn. (eds), *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1984).

powerful force within the Hapsburg Empire. The fault lines in Galicia already appeared after 1849, when the Hapsburg viceroy in Galicia, himself a Pole, attempted to 're-Polonise' the province but the Ruthenians were strong enough to resist. The city of Lemberg (Lvov) was for Poles an ancient centre of Polish culture and learning, and any attempt to remove it from the Polish cultural sphere would be strongly resisted. This would come to a head in 1918, with the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire and the rebirth of the Polish state.

The rivalry between the Hapsburg and Russian Empires also involved the Ukrainians. Particularly in the late 19th century and in the years approaching World War I, St Petersburg sought to portray itself as the saviour of all Slavs under foreign domination, and to revive its claim to the remnants of Rus. Russian treatment of Ukrainian nationalists in Russian Ukraine, however, did not encourage many Ukrainians to support the Tsar. Restrictions imposed on Ukrainian cultural expression there in 1863 and 1876 demonstrated that St Petersburg would not tolerate any form of identity within the frontiers of Ukraine other than that of 'Little Russia'.⁶ Most Ukrainians were peasants (80%) and Wilson argues that the cultural repression in 1863 and 1876 was to prevent the Ukrainian intelligentsia establishing institutionalised channels of communication with the peasantry.⁷ Furthermore, the Austro-Hungarian Empire grew increasingly liberal towards its Ukrainian subjects and by 1914 there were plans for a Ukrainian university in Lemberg, and separate Polish and Ukrainian chambers in the local legislature. Austria was proving to be more supportive of Ukrainian self-determination than Russia.

Here it must be stressed that an awareness of, or support for, Ukrainian nationalism was by 1914 confined to a small section of the intelligentsia. The vast majority of the peasantry, whether in Galicia or Russian Ukraine, had no other identity other than as a resident of a particular village or province. In the context of the events of World War I and the Russian Civil War, along with the Soviet-Polish War, many Ukrainian peasants just knew that they were anti-German, anti-White, or anti-Polish, rather than firm supporters of an independent Ukrainian state.

The outbreak of World War I in August 1914 brought Ukraine into the centre of the struggle between the three great empires ruling Central and Eastern Europe – the Russian, the German and the Austro-Hungarian. The front line was at first in Poland

⁶ Rudnytsky Ivan L, *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History* (Edmonton: CIUS, 1987), p. 25.

⁷ Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, p. 79.

but gradually the forces of the Central Powers (particularly Germany) drove back the Russians, and the Austro-Hungarians mounted counter-attacks from Galicia. Ukrainians found themselves in both the Russian and Austro-Hungarian armies and thus had a similar fate to the Poles, who were conscripted into the German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian armies. German and Polish minorities in Russian Ukraine were also enlisted in the army of the Tsar. The military might of Germany was too much for Russia, and combined with massive internal stresses, resulted in the collapse of the Russian Empire in February 1917, to be replaced by the Provisional Government in Petrograd.

The collapse of the empire led to the Ukrainian nationalists setting up an assembly in Kiev in February 1917 and the declaration of the Ukrainian People's Council, later the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR).⁸ Russia was still engaged in the war with Germany and Austria-Hungary and the armies of the Central Powers pressed on into Ukraine against the demoralised Russian army. In the interim in Russia the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government and declared a Soviet state.

Within the period covered by this thesis there were several governments in Ukraine –The Hetmanate, Nationalist, Soviet, White, Soviet, Nationalist and finally Soviet - indeed the years 1918-1920 in Ukraine are characterised by perpetual changes of regime in Kiev or Kharkov. Prior to December 1918 the Hetmanate (the pro-German government led by Skoropadskyi) was in power in Kiev, this was followed by the UNR regime (the Ukrainian nationalists) once again based in Kiev; then in early 1919 by the Soviet Ukrainian regime based in Kharkov. In the course of 1919 the Soviet government was replaced by General Denikin's White regime, which was later replaced by the Soviet Ukrainian government for a second time. In early 1920 the Soviet government was overthrown by a Polish backed UNR regime (at least in Right Bank Ukraine). This was, in turn, replaced by the Soviet Ukrainian regime, which continued in power. In the interim, large armies of Whites, Bolsheviks, Poles, Nationalists and Anarchists controlled areas of Ukraine. The Germans and even the French became involved.

Germany after the fall of the Empire in November 1918 passed through a relatively short revolutionary period but by mid 1919 the parliamentary democracy known as the Weimar Republic was firmly ensconced. Poland was also a parliamentary democracy after December 1918 in the guise of the Second Republic.

⁸ Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, p. 122.

In January 1918 the UNR declared the independence of Ukraine minus the Hapsburg territories. The Bolsheviks were not prepared to recognise the sundering of Ukraine from Russia and invaded Ukraine, occupying Kiev in February 1918. It was now that the Germans directly influenced the fate of Ukraine by occupying most of the country, and signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Ukrainian nationalist government, the Rada. The Germans thus created the idea that they were the initiators of Ukrainian nationalism. In April 1918 the Germans overthrew the UNR government and created the 'Hetmanate' in Ukraine, which was in effect a German satellite regime. Now, with the prospect of final victory in the east in sight and a victory in the west soon expected, the German High Command concocted some of its most expansionist and imperialistic schemes for Ukraine.⁹ Both Bolsheviks and Germans recognised the economic importance of Ukraine as 'the breadbasket of Europe' and the source of huge reserves of iron ore and coal.

The Ukrainian peasantry resented the Germans, as indeed they resented the Polish and Russian landowners and the Jews. When the German troops attempted to requisition food for the war effort this led to peasant resistance and widespread revolt against the 'Hetmanate'. With the defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary in November 1918, both empires disintegrated, leaving a vacuum in the borderlands of Eastern Europe. The withdrawal of the Germans from Ukraine led to the seizure of power once again by Ukrainian nationalists and the reinstatement of the UNR government. In Galicia the end of Hapsburg rule led to a struggle for independence by the Ukrainians there against the newly formed Polish state.¹⁰ In Poland, the creation of the Second Republic encouraged ideas of the rebirth of the Polish Commonwealth and of a possible incorporation of Lithuania and Ukraine within its frontiers. In Soviet Russia, engaged in a life and death struggle against a collection of White generals intent on its destruction, the view was that the reconquest of Ukraine was vital.

The mix of nationalities in Ukraine in the period 1918-1922 was not the reasonably homogenous one that it is today. In the former provinces of the Russian Empire the urban population was predominantly Russian and Jewish and the percentage of Russians increased further east. The rural areas were mainly populated by Ukrainians, particularly in southern and central Ukraine, and also in East Galicia.¹¹

⁹ Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine A History* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1994), pp. 356-357.

¹⁰ Rudnytsky, *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History*, p. 65.

There were also many Polish landowners, particularly west of the Dnepr, and there was a sizable German minority in the area adjoining the Black Sea. In East Galicia the population of the large towns, especially Lemberg (Lvov), was mainly Polish and Jewish.

Here I am engaged principally in the examination of relations of both Poland and Germany with the Ukrainian nationalists. Although, at times, it will be necessary to discover their relations with the other forces struggling for power in Ukraine, i.e. Denikin's Whites and the Ukrainian Soviet regime. Both Poland and Germany were of course part of the broader constellation of forces in Europe in the aftermath of World War I. Ukraine, not sufficiently strong to resist the threat from the east, needed support and its rich resources lay open to the victor. In the confusion and chaos of the Russian Civil War both Poland and Germany, the one with ancient links to Ukraine, the other with more recent ones, would be engaged in a duel for her affection.

CHAPTER 2

GERMAN WAR AIMS AND UKRAINE, 1914-1918

Following the collapse of Imperial Russia and its army after the Bolshevik Revolution, Ukraine lay open and undefended to the might of Germany and its army. In the early months of 1918 Germany and Austria-Hungary gradually occupied the whole of Ukraine. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between the Central Powers and Soviet Russia in March 1918¹ was merely the diplomatic recognition of a *fait accompli*. Ukraine was now divided into two zones of occupation – the Austro-Hungarians controlled the Black Sea coast, together with the major port of Odessa, and the southern steppes – whereas the Germans controlled the north of Ukraine, together with its capital Kiev, and the industrial area near Kharkov. This division displayed the relative power of both countries. Germany held the lion's share and was very much the senior partner in Ukraine during the period of occupation.

It is important at this point to ask, what sort of regime held power in Germany at this time, and what were its aims in Ukraine?

Germany in early 1918, and indeed until the end of the First World War, was nominally an Empire with Kaiser Wilhelm II as its leader. In reality, however, Germany was a military dictatorship led by the High Command and, in effect, by two men – Hindenburg and Ludendorff. They had effectively sidelined both the emperor (who concurred with most of their plans) and the parliament (the Reichstag). Under the terms of the German constitution the Reichstag had only limited powers, and was very much at the behest of the Kaiser and the army in general. All parties had supported the declaration of war and continued to support the government and the Supreme Command throughout 1918. The defeat of Russia and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk were seen as a major advance in Germany's war plans and virtually all Germany rallied behind Hindenburg and Ludendorff. The way was now open for Germany's long-term plans in the east to be implemented. Ukraine was to play a major part in these plans.

Even before the outbreak of the war, many thinkers and strategists in Germany had advocated German control of Central and Eastern Europe. These ideas have been

¹ A separate treaty had also been signed at Brest Litovsk on February 9th between the Central Powers and Ukraine, recognising Ukrainian independence and the Rada as the legitimate government of Ukraine.

well covered by German historians such as Fritz Fischer.² These concepts included the plan of turning Ukraine into a German colony; which would supply the Reich with unlimited supplies of food and also land, where German colonists could settle and create a new area of German culture and influence. There was already a historical precedent in Ukraine for some of these ideas. In the 18th century a princess from the province of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, in northern Germany, had ascended the throne of Russia as Catherine II. One of her policies was to introduce German settlers into her empire, and one of the main settlement areas was southern Ukraine.

These German settlers had retained their language and culture and were still to be found on their original land in 1918. To the imperialists in the German Supreme Command these settlers were but the first wave of a new policy of colonisation. Some in the Supreme Command (including Ludendorff) favoured even more extreme measures. They hoped that with the defeat of Britain and in conjunction with their ally Turkey, the Caucasus would also fall within the new German empire. To these theorists Ukraine would fulfil a vital role as a land bridge to Asia, and the Black Sea coast would become a German Riviera. With the occupation of Ukraine in 1918 many of these dreams seemed realisable.

There was, however, another German war policy, which was more immediate and seemed practical in the short-term. This plan involved supplying the cities of the Central Powers with badly needed food and raw materials from Ukraine. In 1918 as a result of the British naval blockade of the North Sea there were food shortages in many German cities. For the German generals Ukraine provided the solution. The plan was that food in Ukraine would be requisitioned, sent to the Black Sea and transported from there by barge up the Danube to the cities of Austria-Hungary and Germany. This would allow the German army to continue to fight on the Western Front and finally overwhelm the combined forces of Britain, France and the United States.³

What was the economic importance of Ukraine both to Russia and Germany? A litany of economic facts concerning the role of Ukraine in the Russian Empire suffices. Before World War I three quarters of all coal produced in the empire came from Ukraine, as did two thirds of the iron ore, three quarters of the manganese, two thirds of the salt, four fifths of the sugar and nine tenths of the wheat exported from the empire.

² Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht: Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland, 1914-1918* (Dusseldorf, 1961).

³ Erich Ludendorff, *Meine Kriegserinnerungen, 1914-1918* (Berlin, 1922), p.531.

The Germans had propounded the idea of the liberation of the subject peoples of the Russian Empire since the beginning of the war, and this was an important element of German imperialistic propaganda. In this they had considerably less problems than the Austro-Hungarians in that they did not rule a multinational empire and had no major Slav groups within their borders, with the exception of the western provinces of Poland ruled from Berlin. It was ostensibly to liberate Ukraine from the Russian yoke that they entered the country in 1918 and they were to maintain this fiction up until November 1918, when they were forced out of the war. Berlin regarded the Ukrainian nationalists as important allies in the battle against Russia and in its attempts to control Ukraine. It was at the request of the Central Rada (Ukrainian Nationalist government) that the German army first occupied Ukraine in February 1918. The Rada, on February 23, 1918 issued the following declaration:

In order to put an immediate end to the pillaging of Ukraine and to make possible, upon the condition of peace, immediate promulgation of laws to deal with the condition of the workers, the Council of People's Ministers has accepted the military assistance of the friendly powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary (...) They are coming to Ukraine to suppress disorder and anarchy and to establish peace and order (...) They are coming purely to help our Cossacks who are staunchly defending our country, our land, and our freedom from the armed attacks of the Russian government, the Council of People's Commissars, which, like the old tsarist government, wishes to subject Ukraine to the authority of Russian capitalists, and thus to enable the Russian people to live on the labour and wealth of Ukraine.

In helping the Ukrainian government in its fight against violators and plunderers, these troops have no hostile intentions towards us; it is in the interest of Germany and Austria-Hungary that order should be re-established and an opportunity for peaceful work to be given to the toilers of Ukraine.⁴

Stefan Horak's work, *The First Treaty of World War I. Ukraine's Treaty with the Central Powers of February 9, 1918*, on the first Brest-Litovsk treaty, between the Central Powers and Ukraine, concentrates on German and, to a lesser extent, Austro-Hungarian relations with the independent Ukrainian government. It was Germany and

⁴ Xenia Joukoff Eudin, 'The German Occupation of Ukraine in 1918', in *The Russian Review*, I, 1. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), p. 91.

the Central Powers, which first recognised Ukrainian independence. There were two major problems for Germany however with this policy and these were to become apparent within a few months.

A separate treaty between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers was signed in March, ending the state of war between them, and gaining Soviet recognition of Ukraine's independence. Horak argues that the treaty with Ukraine speeded up the signing of the treaties between Germany and Soviet Russia and Germany and Romania, and also improved Germany's prospects of gaining the much desired supply of foodstuffs, thus making it possible to realise Germany's war aims in the East as formulated since 1914.⁵

The parties comprising the Rada were mainly left-of-centre and left, probably in Russian terms a mixture of Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. Indeed, when it dealt with economic policies the Rada had many similarities with the Bolshevik/Left SR government in Russia. A principal economic demand was the nationalisation and redistribution of the land to the peasantry and the breaking up of the large estates. This presented a major obstacle for the Germans, how to requisition the food and grain supplies they needed for their war effort from millions of small peasant landholdings. There was also the ideological and political aspect. How could it be explained to the German Junkers and large landlords that Germany was now the ally of a radical socialist Ukraine, which had nationalised all its agricultural land and would probably do the same with its industries? For the suspicious German ruling class it suggested revolution and the prospect of the virus of socialism being released into Germany. Furthermore, it appeared to the Germans that the Rada would not be able to fulfil its obligations to them. Colonel von Stolzenberg, in Kiev, telegraphed the German commander of the eastern front on March 9, 1918:

It is very doubtful whether this government, composed as it is exclusively of left opportunists, will be able to establish firm authority. Decisive and most difficult battles await us in the West. If it is impossible to do it any other way, then we must take by force what is absolutely necessary for our life and fight.⁶

⁵ Stefan Horak, *The First Treaty of World War I. Ukraine's Treaty with the Central Powers of February 9, 1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 139.

⁶ Taras Hunczak, 'The Ukraine Under Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi', in *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution*, (ed) Taras Hunczak. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977), p. 62.

There seemed only one solution: to replace the Rada with a government more pliable and more sympathetic to Germany's ruling class and Supreme Command. The fiction of Ukrainian sovereignty would have to be maintained, however, both to pacify the Ukrainian population and to mollify world opinion that Germany was not acting as a coloniser or arrogant occupier in Ukraine.

General Eichhorn (the German commander in Ukraine) received the order from Berlin to replace the Rada; first he had to cast about for a replacement. His choice was General Pavel Skoropadskyi, an aristocrat of Ukrainian extraction and former general in the Russian imperial army. Skoropadskyi was the recognised leader of the large landowners and monarchists in Ukraine. Although he longed for the restoration of the Romanovs, he was prepared to settle for a Ukrainian state with himself at its head and very much yoked to Germany. His supporters saw this as the best protection against both Soviet Russia and its designs on Ukraine and the machinations of the Ukrainian socialists, whose policies were anathema to Skoropadskyi and his supporters. In April 1918 the Germans agreed to hand power to Skoropadskyi and the Rada was dissolved by force of German arms. Once again to conceal their true aims the Germans turned to Ukrainian history for a cover.

In the 17th century during the struggle for Ukrainian independence against the Poles, the ruler of Ukraine had been the Hetman. Hetman was the title of the ruler of the Cossacks and Skoropadskyi now adopted the title of Hetman (to which he had some claim by inheritance) and Ukraine changed from being a National Republic to being the Hetmanate. The Hetmanate would remain (under German military protection) until November 1918.

With the establishment of the Hetmanate the true period of German and Austro-Hungarian occupation began. The Hetman's government consisted of large Ukrainian landowners, reactionary Ukrainian nationalists, and former Tsarist army officers. There was no doubt that Berlin was the paymaster and would dictate economic and foreign policy. One of the most interesting aspects of this period in relation to German policy was that Germany continued to keep lines of communication open with the Russian Whites. This policy was to continue in the early Weimar period and created difficulties in the relationship between the Germans and the Ukrainian nationalists. An example of this was the decision taken about the ultimate fate of Ukraine at the Spa conference

between the Kaiser and the Supreme Command on July 2-3, 1918. One of the conclusions of the conference was:

The overthrow of the Bolshevik government should not be sought now; at the same time, however, closer ties should be established with the monarchists in order to be prepared for any eventuality. The condition for this is their acceptance of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. They should not be deprived of their hope for the eventual re-establishment of Great Russia. His Majesty, the Kaiser, recommends the rallying of Russia's orderly elements in Kiev.⁷

The Hetman called for the levying of food taxes on the peasantry, and the peasantry refused to pay. German army detachments were sent out to requisition the grain and there were many clashes between them and the often-armed Ukrainian peasantry. Indeed it was at this stage that Makhno and the Anarchists began to rally the Ukrainian peasantry against the Hetman and the Germans. The carefully planned German requisition targets were not fulfilled and by September 1918 only one-tenth of the food supplies had been collected. Germany's plans for feeding its armies from Ukraine were foundering. The German Supreme Command became more desperate and more determined, and further troops were despatched to Ukraine. The Hetman's government, for its part, began to arrest all opponents and particularly those nationalists, who called on the peasants to resist the German food requisition squads, and for Ukraine to be a truly sovereign state.

The first signs of the future conflict between Poland and Ukraine emerged during this period. Also the role of the Germans in mediating between Poles and Ukrainians was central and added to Polish suspicions of Germany's role in relation to Ukraine. The centre of dispute in early 1918 was the region of Chelm. Chelm lay in the extreme west of Ukrainian ethnographic territory and now lies just inside the Polish frontier. The Ukrainians considered Chelm as one of their oldest provinces but it was also considered as part of their historic territory by the Poles, who feared that if they failed to control it, their chances of acquiring East Galicia and the Vilno region would be harmed. Article 3 of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk stipulated that a German evacuation of

⁷ Politische Archiv des Auswärtiges Amts. Bonn '(hereafter referred to as PAA)'. Büro des Staatssekretar. Russland. Nos 52 and 1500. Minutes of the Talks on Unsettled Political Problems Held at Spa on July 2-3, 1918, Between the Representatives of the Imperial Chancellery and the Supreme Army Command, Under the Chairmanship of the Kaiser.

the occupied areas was to begin immediately. These areas were mainly Chelm and Volhynia.⁸

In 1918 Poland was under the control of the Central Powers and both Germany and Austria-Hungary wished to gain the support of the Poles for their war effort. The Ukrainians were concerned about increasing Polonisation of the Chelm area and, indeed, of East Galicia. The Poles protested against a “fourth partition of Poland” but as Horak states, these protests were more pretentious than substantial because the population of the Chelm region was predominantly Ukrainian.⁹ The Hetman’s government protested to Vienna, but without effect.¹⁰ The Germans, however, supported Ukraine’s claim to Chelm, and Ludendorff rejected Poland’s claims to Chelm (as far as the river Bug), arguing that it would completely destroy Ukraine’s confidence in Germany.¹¹ The German Foreign Ministry took the same position. In late October 1918, when General von Beseler requested the Foreign Ministry to allow the Poles to move into Chelm, the new German Foreign Minister, Wilhelm Solf, rejected the idea. On November 9 a special agreement was signed in Berlin between Ukraine and Germany, which provided for the dispatch of two German divisions into Chelm so that Ukrainian administration could be established there. However, in late November, with the collapse of Imperial Germany the Poles moved into the area unopposed.¹² Incidents like this were to form the basis for the Polish belief that the Germans were behind Ukrainian nationalism and implacably opposed to Polish territorial claims.

In December 1918 and in 1919 this would become a serious charge from the Poles about German involvement in the East Galician situation. So, even before the Polish state had come into existence, the battle lines were being drawn for future Polish-Ukrainian conflict with an added German dimension.

What of Soviet Russia? Lenin and Trotsky watched developments in Ukraine with anxiety and dismay. The Socialist Revolutionaries called for outright war with Germany and regarded the abandonment of Ukraine to the Central Powers as a betrayal of the Revolution, and of both the Ukrainian and Russian peoples. At the fifth All Russian Congress of Soviets, the Left SR speakers called for; “the tearing up of the Brest-Litovsk treaty (which is fatal to the Russian and the international revolution) in

⁸ Horak, *The First Treaty of World War I*, p. 46.

⁹ Ibid, p. 155.

¹⁰ Oleh S. Fedyshyn, *Germany’s Drive to the East and the Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1918*. (New Brunswick, New Jersey., 1971), p.175.

¹¹ Ibid, p.176.

¹² Ibid.

revolutionary style; to appeal to the solidarity of the German workers (...)”¹³ Lenin saw, however, that Germany was still too strong to confront directly and that Russia had to abide by the terms of Brest-Litovsk. The SRs, not content with this policy, decided to force the issue through terrorism. They murdered the German ambassador in Moscow, Count Mirbach, and thereby hoped for a diplomatic breach between Soviet Russia and Germany, and the beginning of a new revolutionary war to liberate Ukraine from the Central Powers.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks were not prepared to be driven into a war with Germany and declared war instead on the SRs. The Bolshevik government apologised in the fullest manner to Berlin and immediately began to hunt down the assassins, together with most of the SRs. For the Hetman’s government all of this was a clear indication that any left wing movement in Ukraine might expect no Russian assistance, at least directly. The essential belief of the Hetmanate was, of course, that Germany would go on to win the World War and that the status quo would remain. The Bolsheviks and their supporters in Ukraine believed in the inevitable defeat of all the combatants, and in the revolutionary movement in Germany and Austria-Hungary.



Map 4. Ukraine, 1917-20. Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians, Unexpected Nation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 122.

¹³ Victor Serge, *Year One of the Russian Revolution*, (London: Bookmarks, 1992), p. 263.

The Germans for their part were strongly anti-Bolshevik, especially Ludendorff, though they were in favour of German-Soviet cooperation. It is significant that it was only after a major Allied breakthrough on the Western Front, that the Germans agreed to a supplementary agreement with Soviet Russia in August 1918.¹⁴ Talks between the Hetmanate and the Soviet government continued during the autumn of 1918; but Ludendorff requested that the Hetman be advised not to do anything that could be regarded as a provocation by the Bolsheviks.¹⁵

The Ukrainians had joined the Central Powers and were even more hated by the Allies than the Bolsheviks. It is from the period of the Hetmanate that the Allied distrust of the Ukrainian nationalists began; and the policy of the British and French in particular began to take a pro-Russian counter-revolutionary direction, which would continue throughout the Russian Civil War to the detriment of the Ukrainians. One of the richest ironies is that Kiev under the Hetman became the centre and gathering point for those Russians who wanted to restore the Tsar or establish a military dictatorship.

The Hetmanate was to be short-lived, however. By October 1918 it was clear that Germany was facing defeat on the Western Front. In Germany Prince Max of Baden was appointed Chancellor and this signalled the end of the military dictatorship. By 9 November the Kaiser had been compelled to abdicate and revolution broke out in Germany. The changes were quick and unexpected; as John Hiden commented in his work *Germany and Europe 1919-1939*: "Wilhelm Solf, the last Foreign Minister of the Empire, woke up as it were, the first Foreign Minister of the Republic, servant to the all-socialist Provisional Government, which was composed on 10 November 1918, the Council of People's Commissars."¹⁶

The changes in Germany produced chaos in Ukraine. Germany was facing its 'Disaster in the East', the first of two such experiences in the 20th century. The position of Austria-Hungary was even more desperate than that of Germany. The Austro-Hungarian Empire no longer existed and its army had completely collapsed. Mutiny and mass desertions broke out in the Austrian zone of occupation and whole Austrian and Hungarian regiments marched home via Galicia. The Hetmanate, created by German arms, was now powerless and the only force between the Soviet Russian forces

¹⁴ Hans Gatzke, 'Zu den deutsch-russischen Beziehungen im Sommer 1918', in *Viertelsjahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, III, No. 1 (January, 1955), p.73.

¹⁵ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretar. Hauptquartier 118. Lersner (General IIQ) to Foreign Ministry (Berlin), Telegram No. 2567, October 25, 1918.

¹⁶ John Hiden, *Germany and Europe 1919-1939* (New York: Longman, 1993), p.7.

massing on the eastern borders of Ukraine and Poland was a demoralised and disorientated German army, whose empire no longer existed and whose role was unclear and confused.

The Hetman made a last desperate attempt to appeal to the Entente powers to uphold some form of Ukrainian autonomy within a future non-Bolshevik Russian state. On November 14, 1918, three days after the signing of the armistice between Germany and the Entente, the Hetman issued an edict calling for the formation of an All-Russian Federation. The Hetman attempted to turn the position of the Hetmanate around and reorientate it as a pro-Entente state and part of a greater Russia:

We are now confronted with a new political task. The Allies were always friends of the old united Russian State. Today, following a period of turmoil and dissolution, Russia has to adopt new conditions for her future existence. The old might and power of the All-Russian State must be restored on the basis of a different principle – that of federalism. Ukraine should assume a leading role in this federation since it was she who gave the example of law and order in the country; it was also within Ukrainian borders that the citizens of the old Russia, oppressed and humiliated by the Bolshevik despotism, found freedom and security. Ukraine took the initiative in developing friendship and cooperation with the glorious Great Don and the glorious Kuban and Terek Cossacks. These principles, which I hope are shared by Russia's allies – the Entente – and which cannot but be viewed sympathetically by all peoples, not only in Europe but throughout the world, should be the basis for Ukraine's policy in the future. Ukraine should thus take the lead in the formation of an All-Russian federation, the principal goal of which should be the restoration of great Russia.¹⁷

The Hetman's government was linked to the Germans and fatally compromised in the eyes of the Entente; it was impossible for it to continue in power. Furthermore, the actions of the Hetmanate in supporting the occupying forces had also fatally compromised it in the view of the Ukrainian nationalists. It no longer had a base of support and consequently collapsed. On December 14, after gaining a guarantee of German non-intervention, the troops of the Ukrainian nationalist government, the

¹⁷ Fedyshyn, *Germany's Drive to the East*, p.287-288.

Directory, entered Kiev and the Hetman abdicated. The period of direct German control of Ukraine was over.

The Armistice signed between Germany and the Allies on 11 November 1918 demanded the abrogation of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and technically placed Germany in a state of war with Russia. One of the aims of the Allies was to prevent Bolshevism from reaching Central Europe and particularly the territories of the defeated powers - Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria and Ukraine. Whereas the territories occupied by German troops in Western Europe were to be evacuated immediately, under Article XII of the Armistice, Germany was only to evacuate those occupied areas in the east formerly belonging to Russia when the Allies deemed it suitable. A new role was being found for the German army in Ukraine, as a *force sanitaire* against the Bolshevik contagion. On 18 November 1918, the Council of People's Commissars in Berlin held a meeting to discuss Germany's relations with Soviet Russia. Germany's main concern was the attitude of the Allies towards any rapprochement. The USPD (Independent Social Democrat Party) supported the view that: "The Entente is willing to meet the present bourgeois-socialist republic halfway in the matter of peace terms and food supplies, but only as long as the government adheres to its present composition under Ebert's leadership. The Entente would however intervene with all its might to forestall the rise of Bolshevism."¹⁸

The new German government sent a dilatory reply to Lenin and it was now clear that both the German government and army would sit on the fence and see whether the Bolsheviks would remain in power. If they did, then Germany would reconsider its position, if they did not then Germany might well join an Allied-led coalition to remove the Bolsheviks.

¹⁸ C.B. Burdick and R.H. Lutz (eds), *The Political Institutions of the German Revolution 1918-1919*, (New York, 1966), p.70.

CHAPTER 3

GERMAN-POLISH RELATIONS, 1918-1922

In the context of this thesis it is important to examine the underlying rivalry and tensions between Weimar Germany and the Second Polish Republic in the years following World War I. Their competing policy with regard to Ukraine was just one area of foreign and economic policy where there was conflict during these years.

The background, of course, is that a large part of Western Poland had been ceded to Prussia, and later the German Empire during the partitions of Poland in the late 18th century. These areas were to remain part of the Reich until the end of World War I. Under the terms of the Versailles Treaty, some areas were to become the territory of the new Polish state, whereas others, with mixed populations of Poles and Germans, would have their future decided by plebiscite. Two areas were affected by this – East Prussia and Silesia. This would be the dominant factor in the relationship between the two states in the aftermath of the war.

There was also the perception in Berlin, largely justified, that Poland was France's ally and satellite in Central Europe, whose main purpose for France, was to contain and control German recovery and expansion in the region. Thus, Germany felt surrounded by two hostile states on both its eastern and western frontiers. This explains German attempts to develop some form of alliance with Soviet Russia, which it regarded as an enemy of Poland and also of the Entente. Traditionally Germany had also had a close relationship with Ukrainian nationalism, particularly following the first Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and Ukrainian nationalism was in conflict with Poland in 1918. The area where that conflict was strongest was in East Galicia. East Galicia had never been part of the German Empire but any nationality struggling against Polish rule, drew a natural sympathy from the Germans in 1918. Were not their people being forcibly incorporated into the new Polish state by the Entente?

Roman Dmowski, the leader of the Polish National Democrat Party, had spent the last year of the war in Paris, with the Polish National Committee, which was recognised by the Entente as the quasi-official voice of Poland. Following the Russian Revolution, the Entente powers were firmly committed to Polish independence. The question was what was Poland's territory? To re-create the Poland of 1772, before the First Partition, would be to create a huge territory and to include within its frontiers millions of Germans, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Czechs. Natural frontiers were also of little use –

Poland had no 'natural' borders. President Wilson had promised the new Polish state "free and secure access to the sea" but Poland had no seaport. The only port available was Danzig, whose population was ninety percent German. And how would the Poles reach Danzig and the Baltic? A Polish 'corridor' would have to be created through West Prussia. This would have the effect of isolating East Prussia from the rest of Germany.

Piłsudski had been the leader of a Polish army in Austrian service and had attempted to negotiate Polish independence with the Central Powers but they had been unwilling to go so far. He had then parted ways with the Germans and had been imprisoned by them as an unreliable nationalist. When the Kaiser fell, the Germans released Piłsudski and attempted to come to an arrangement with him around future Polish-German frontiers. He, however, refused to negotiate. They then allowed him to return to Warsaw, where he was declared chief of state.

Piłsudski faced a terrible dilemma. To the east lay an independent Ukraine and Lithuania had already announced its own independence. Furthermore, within Poland proper there were still 80,000 German troops and another 400,000 in Ukraine.¹

The armistice agreement between the Entente and Germany had stipulated that the German army "withdraw within the frontiers of Germany as they existed on 1 August 1914". The aim of this was to utilise German forces in the east to prevent the Bolsheviks from overrunning Central Europe.

The withdrawal of German forces from Poland proved problematic and there were many clashes between Germans troops and groups of armed Poles. This soured the relationship between Germans and Poles considerably. The area of Posen, with Poznan as its capital, proved a special source of conflict. It had been part of the German Empire since the Second Partition of Poland. Although the majority of the population was linguistically and ethnically Polish, there was also a large German minority – almost a million.

After the evacuation of the German army from France and Belgium, the Supreme Command decided to set up a separate Army command 'Grenzschutz Ost' (Frontier Defence Force East) for the protection of Germany's eastern borders.² Regiments of veteran troops were transferred from the West to the Polish frontier to strengthen

¹ Richard Watt, *The Kings Depart. The German Revolution and the Treaty of Versailles 1918-19* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969), p. 396.

² Ibid, p.423. *Freikorps* detachments were also heavily recruited.

German units there. The German Supreme Command also speeded up the withdrawal of German forces from Russia in order to force the Poles to concentrate their forces on the eastern frontiers of Poland.

Hostilities began in Posen, where German troops and Polish irregulars clashed in December 1918. The Poles were victorious and captured Poznan. German troops were disarmed and Posen came under Polish control.³ One of the reasons why 'Grenzschutz Ost' had been unable to intervene was because its attention was totally taken up by the revolution in Berlin.

In January 1919 a Polish general election was held and a parliament established. Poland immediately sent a delegation to the Paris peace conference and Poland was formally recognised as an independent state. Paderewski became Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, whereas Pilsudski remained chief of state, with special responsibility for the army. Pilsudski now began to furiously expand the army and the Polish army was soon in action on all fronts. In the southeast against the Ukrainians in East Galicia, in the east against the Red Army, and in Posen against the German *Freikorps*. They were also in action against the Czechs in Teschen and invading Lithuania in the north. By February 1919 the Poles controlled Posen and Upper Silesia.

France made clear that she would support Poland in any way possible. Pilsudski's chief of staff was a Frenchman, General Paul Henrys. Before 1917 Russia had been France's main ally in the east and counter-balance to German power, now Poland would fulfil the role.

In Paris Dmowski appeared before the peace conference to argue Poland's case. He contended that Poland's frontiers should be those of 1772 but that those frontiers could be extended. He gave as an example Upper Silesia, which although not a part of the Kingdom of Poland for nearly seven hundred years, was now inhabited by a population, which was ninety percent Polish. The conference, he argued, should not rely on German population statistics, which were misleading. According to Dmowski, large areas of Germany (West Prussia, East Prussia and Posen) were not really German. They had been seized from Poland unlawfully, and although the population seemed to be predominantly German, this was only because German statistics had been falsified or the areas artificially colonised.⁴

³ Ibid, p.400.

⁴ Watt, *The Kings Depart*, p. 403.

In May 1919 Poland feared that Germany would reject the Allied peace proposals and launch an offensive in the east while defending its frontiers in the west. Just before receiving the Allied peace proposals Germany mobilised its forces on the Polish frontier as a show of force and to deter any possible Polish moves.⁵ At the same time Paderewski wrote to the French Foreign Minister, Pichon on May 6, 1919 that reports of a German-Soviet alliance were reaching the Polish government.⁶ The Commission on Poland recommended on March 19th, 1919, the acceptance of most of Dmowski's proposals, except for East Prussia, where it urged that a plebiscite be held. The Allies agreed to Polish claims but demanded plebiscites in the Allenstein and Marienwerder districts of East Prussia and Upper Silesia. Poland was the chief beneficiary of Germany's territorial losses.

The Versailles Treaty came into effect on January 10, 1920. Danzig, with an area of 1,914 square kilometres and a population of 331,000 (315,000 of whom were German) was awarded to Poland. The regions of Poznan and West Prussia, with an area of 42,927 square kilometres and a population of 2,962,000 (1,080,000 Germans), were also awarded to Poland.⁷ Poland was disappointed that the western frontier with Germany was not that of 1772 but was careful to adhere to the terms of the Versailles Treaty in the inter-war period.

The governments of the Weimar Republic, for their part, also agreed to abide by the terms of the treaty. Muller, the Social Democratic Foreign Minister, gave a speech to the Reichstag that Germany would seek neighbourly relations with Poland, although it did not agree with the terms of the treaty in the east.⁸

With the outbreak of the Soviet-Polish War in 1920, the German Left hoped for the collapse of Poland, as indeed did the German Right. The dockworkers of Danzig went on strike and refused to handle war materials en route to Poland.⁹

Morawski, the head of the German desk in the Polish Foreign Ministry, noted that: "The German government found it impossible to reconcile its foreign policy,

⁵ Archiwum Akt Nowych. Warsaw (hereafter referred to as AAN). Archiwum Iganciego Paderewskiego 711, s. 44. Paderewski to Pichon.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Werner Merkert (ed.), *Osteuropa Handbuch-Polen*, (Cologne, 1959), p. 22.

⁸ *Nationalversammlung, Sten. Berichte*, 328, July 23, 1919, p.1856.

⁹ E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923, Volume 3* (London: Macmillan, 1953), p.216.

which demanded the annihilation of Poland, with its domestic policy, which was largely directed by the fear of a Spartacist revolution.”¹⁰

General von Seeckt, the Commander in Chief of the Reichswehr, in a memo to President Ebert and Defence Minister Noske in February 1920, admitted that a Bolshevik advance into Poland would be dangerous for Germany but Germany alone would have to deal with it, and not by an alliance with Poland.¹¹

The German government remained officially neutral in the face of the Bolshevik advance. The German ambassador to Poland, von Dirksen, wrote: “The representatives of the Western powers let themselves be drawn into friendly, yet non committal conversations. The Polish government had no intention of including the hated and still feared German neighbour in a combination of any sort.”¹² This indicates that though the Russian invasion of Poland was imminent, the Poles would still not seek any sort of alliance with Germany, and illustrates the depth of anti-German feeling in Poland.

The German Communists, who supported the Russian invasion of Poland and the attempt to establish Soviet power there, called for an alliance between Germany and Soviet Russia against Poland. In August 1920, Paul Levi, the leader of the German Communist Party, spoke in the Reichstag and called for such an alliance, which would receive the full support of the Communist Party of Germany. A prominent former German communist said, at a later date that this speech was directly inspired by Karl Radek, the Bolshevik leader, who dealt with German issues.¹³

Lord D'Abernon, the British Ambassador in Berlin, supported the policy of German co-operation in Poland. Writing from Warsaw, where he represented Britain on the Allied mission to Poland, he stressed “the importance of obtaining German co-operation against the Soviet. News from Paris is to the effect that German representatives there are constantly fishing for an invitation from the Entente to use German military force against the Soviet.”¹⁴ This view seems to contradict the view of Seeckt and other German military leaders that the defeat of Poland was the main aim of German military policy in Eastern Europe. However, some German officers regarded a military strike against the Red Army as being the means of mitigating the terms of the

¹⁰ *Foreign Office Records, London, Foreign Office. Series 371, Volume 4827, p. 6.* Sir Horace Rumbold to Lord Curzon, September 3rd, 1920.

¹¹ Hans von Seeckt, *Gedanken eines Soldaten*, (Berlin, 1929), p. 12.

¹² Herbert von Dirksen, *Moskau, Tokio, London*. (Stuttgart, 1949), p. 36

¹³ Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), p. 197

¹⁴ Viscount D'Abernon, *The Eighteenth Decisive Battle of the World. Warsaw 1920* (London, 1931), p. 72.

Versailles Treaty regarding the strength of the Reichswehr, and possibly regaining German influence in Europe.

On July 31, when the Red Army reached the border of East Prussia, the German local authorities established contact with them and were assured that the Bolshevik forces “will under any circumstances respect the German frontier, they were forbidden under penalty of death, to cross the border.”¹⁵ The Bolsheviks were being very careful not to stir up the German population in the border areas and to give the appearance to Berlin, that Soviet Russia would respect the frontiers of Germany and do nothing to bring Germany into the war on the Polish side. A neutral Germany was far more preferable for Moscow, than a Germany called to arms by the threat of imminent Bolshevik invasion. Moscow had to pursue a very difficult path in relation to the German bourgeois government in Berlin. The hope was, of course, that the German workers would rise up, with the approach of the Red Army, and establish a Soviet Germany. This proved to be as illusory as the belief that the Polish proletariat would overthrow the regime in Warsaw.

General von Seeckt, the leader of the anti-Polish faction in the Reichswehr, stated his view in a memorandum on July 31, that the Red Army could possibly enter the territory of former German Poland. He was opposed to the idea of sending German troops to protect the German minority there, as this would be considered a severe breach of the Versailles Treaty and the Entente would intervene. He proposed that the German government should publicly ask the Russian government to spare the German population the horrors of war. This would demonstrate to the world, and particularly to Russia, that Germany felt responsible for this territory. It would establish “the groundwork for the recovery of the land snatched from us.”¹⁶

He went on to add that should, however, Soviet Russia accept the British proposal for a peace conference in London, Germany should insist on participating. He hoped for Soviet support “because of their own hatred of Poland, if for no other reason.” Further, as the military situation now had developed so favourably for Russia, he expected that never “in a foreseeable future would Russian and German interests be so parallel as they are now.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Albert Norden, *Zwischen Berlin und Moskau. Zur Geschichte der deutsch-sowjetischen Beziehungen*. (Dieter Verlag: Berlin, 1954), p. 318

¹⁶ Bundesarchiv, Potsdam ‘(hereafter referred to as BA)’, *Seeckt Nachlass* (Seeckt Papers), reel 21, stuck 130.

¹⁷ Ibid.

On July 20, the German government passed a motion declaring neutrality in the Soviet-Polish war. The government immediately forbade the export and transit of war materials to Russia and Poland.¹⁸ This would have a far greater impact on materials to Poland, as most of these passed through Germany from France, whereas Russian supplies did not pass through German territory. Therefore, the declaration of neutrality was less neutral than it appeared.

The *Königsberger Hartungsche Zeitung* described the situation in the border town of Prostken on August 10th 1920 as: "Here on the border one can hear the opinion expressed repeatedly that now Germany has the opportunity to free herself, through an alliance with Soviet Russia, from the unbearable burden of the Versailles peace (...) People are motivated by their utter hatred of Poland. They don't care at all about the Bolshevik economic system, but they don't see any other way out of Germany's misery. Their enthusiasm reminds one of the August days of 1914. Even officers in uniform have gone over, as it has been confirmed to me incontestably from various sides"¹⁹ This was referring to the large numbers of German volunteers crossing the frontier to join the Red Army in its battle with the Poles.

The Poles also believed that the Soviet government was making overtures to Germany in return for its assistance. Polish agents claimed to have intercepted letters from the Russian government to Kopp, the Soviet representative in Berlin, offering the German government Danzig and Upper Silesia in return for military aid.²⁰ During the course of the Red Army's advance into Poland, a group of Russian officers met some German nationalists at Soldau in East Prussia and promised them the liberation of West Prussia and its restoration to Germany.²¹

The leading voice of anti-Polish sentiment in Germany was General von Seeckt, Commander of the Reichswehr. In 1922 answering Brockdorff Rantzau's Pro Memoria on the future of German-Soviet relations, he wrote:

Poland is the crux of the Eastern problem. The existence of Poland is unbearable and incompatible with the vital interests of Germany. She must vanish and shall vanish through her own internal weakness and through Russia – with our assistance. Poland is even more unbearable for Russia

¹⁸ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Russland, (1680/3617), 800/991.

¹⁹ Ciechanowski Deposit. Hoover Library, Stanford. *A Report of the Polish Chief of Staff, General Rozmadowski*, August 26, 1920. Env 2, No 38382/11. Cited in Josef Korbel, *Poland Between East and West. Soviet and German Diplomacy Toward Poland, 1919-1933* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, 1963), p. 90.

²⁰ Ibid, A report of January 20, 1921; No. D.S.P. 93

²¹ E.H. Carr. *The Bolshevik Revolution. Vol 3*, p. 327

than for us: no Russian government can ever reach a settlement with Poland. With Poland falls one of the strongest pillars of the Versailles Peace, the power outpost of France. To achieve this goal must be one of the most fundamental drives of German policy since it can be achieved. But it can be achieved only through Russia or through her help. Poland can never offer any advantage to Germany, not economic, nor political, as she is France's vassal.²²

In his pamphlet *Deutschland zwischen West und Ost*, Seeckt argued for the complete disappearance of Poland from the map of Europe. Any settlement along ethnographic lines, even if favourable to Germany could be no more than a truce.²³

So, it is evident that for many Germans, particularly those on the nationalist right, the very existence of Poland was anathema and they would do all they could to weaken its position. They were very clearly of the view that Poland was France's ally and conduit in Eastern Europe and as such, constituted a threat to Germany ever becoming a powerful state in the region again. Furthermore, Poland now held sway over territory, which for centuries had been populated by Germans, and which Germany considered its own, as of right. Constrained by the Versailles Treaty and the Entente, the new German Republic would have to co-exist with the new Polish state on its eastern frontier, but would be a grudging and resentful neighbour. The German Right would bide its time and wait until circumstances were more propitious for a final reckoning with Poland. In the interim, Poland's enemy was Germany's friend.

The Treaty of Riga and the ending of the Soviet-Polish War put paid to any German ideas about altering Poland's frontiers, although the situation in Upper Silesia remained unresolved. It would be decided by plebiscite. The Weimar government resolved to accept the status quo and accept the frontiers of the new Polish state. However, both Germany and Russia regarded Poland as the child of the Versailles Treaty and hoped to revise its frontiers at some point in the future. Eighteen years after the signing of the Treaty of Riga, they would seize the opportunity to do so.

²² BA: Seeckt Papers, reel 24.

²³ Hans von Seeckt, *Deutschland zwischen West und Ost*. (Hamburg, 1930), pp. 30-31.

CHAPTER 4

THE GERMAN ARMY IN UKRAINE, NOVEMBER 1918-MARCH 1919

The German Army in Ukraine was in late 1918, after the signing of the Armistice, very much at the mercy of the Entente (Britain and France) and their policies. Britain and France were now reassessing their policies in the East and particularly with regard to Soviet Russia.

Britain's main expert on Soviet Russia at this time was Bruce Lockhart, who had been in Moscow from October 1917 until November 1918. Lockhart warned the British about underestimating Bolshevism. Lockhart criticised the opinion (widespread in Britain at the time) that there was a hidden conspiracy between Germany and the Bolsheviks. Lockhart continued: "We will never correctly understand the Bolshevik movement or analyse its danger correctly if we continue to regard it simply as the tool of German imperialism."¹

Lockhart recommended three possible courses of action to the British Cabinet:

1. Ending Intervention and entering into an agreement with the Bolsheviks.
2. Similar to above but instead of an agreement with the Bolsheviks, to offer support and financial assistance for the anti-Bolshevik forces in Russia and the creation of a string of national states on Russia's western frontier.
3. Immediate intervention on a large scale to support the White forces in northern Russia and Siberia. The despatch of an expeditionary corps to southern Russia to join the anti-Bolshevik forces there and to attack Moscow.

Lockhart left no doubt that the third course of action was preferable.

At a Cabinet meeting on 13 November 1918 General Wilson's memorandum 'On our Present and Future Military Policy in Russia' was reviewed. Wilson was of the opinion, in view of the ending of hostilities with Germany, Allied troops must be withdrawn from Russia at once. During this period British troops were already in the Caucasus helping both the White forces and the Georgian nationalists, they had also landed in North Russia to support the Whites; and Japanese and American forces had

¹ Public Record Office London '(hereafter referred to as PRO)', Memorandum on the Internal Situation in Russia. Cabinet Papers 24/73 G.T. 6662.

landed in the Russian Far East. The French were also hovering off the Black Sea coast. Wilson went on, however, to call for the occupation of the eastern ports of the Black Sea by the Allies, in order to strengthen the anti-Bolshevik forces in the Caucasus. With the establishment of a strong and non-Bolshevik Russia behind the buffer states there would be a genuine counterweight to Germany in the east.

The Foreign Secretary (Balfour) was of the opinion that there were two basic principles involved. Firstly, a crusade against the Bolsheviks was out of the question as there was insufficient support for it amongst the British population. Secondly, the states on Russia's western frontier needed to be supported. Balfour was also of the opinion that Britain should continue with the policies reached at the Convention with France in December 1917, i.e. that British influence should be limited to the area between the Don and the Volga.

In the event, despite these policy differences British troops remained in Russia and in the Black Sea area the British continued to manoeuvre. The official policy remained one of non-intervention in the internal affairs of Russia. This left many questions unanswered:

The question had not been answered, however, about what was to happen to the troops already in Russia. How were they to react to the Bolshevik forces? Were these forces to be regarded as hostile, should the British forces act defensively or offensively? To what extent should the anti-Bolshevik forces be militarily supported? How should the German forces in Russia in accordance with Article XII of the Armistice be regarded? Should they be regarded as allies against the Bolsheviks or should they be watched with suspicion?²

British policy in Russia and Ukraine remained very unclear and befuddled. On 8 February 1919 at a Cabinet meeting, Churchill was driven to ask: "If we are going to withdraw our troops, it should be done at once. If we were going to intervene, we should send larger forces there."³ This state of indecision continued until March 4th 1919, when it was agreed to withdraw British troops from the Caucasus and give General Denikin 1,000 British military advisors instead. The British did not regard Ukraine as within their sphere of influence and were much more interested in the

² Kurt Fischer, *Deutsche Truppen und Entente- Intervention in Süd Russland 1918-1919*. (Freiburg: Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamt), p. 41.

³ Ibid.

Caucasus. As the major naval power, however, their navy was to play a vital role in the Black Sea.

It was the French who were to play the largest role in Ukraine and the relationship between Germany and France was to be a major factor there. Already before the signing of the Armistice, a plan had been drawn up to despatch French troops to Ukraine. The French Prime Minister, Clemenceau, wrote to General Franchet d'Esperey (the Allied Commander on the Saloniki Front) advising him to link up his forces with General Berthelot, Chief of the French Military Mission in Rumania, and to intervene in Ukraine using Odessa as an access point.⁴ In the opinion of General Franchet d'Esperey a wholesale occupation and intervention in Ukraine would be impossible and he recommended controlling merely Odessa and some of the adjoining ports. Clemenceau disagreed with General d'Esperey's conclusions and the plan was entrusted to General Berthelot. In the event d'Esperey's opinion was proven to be accurate.

In November 1918 Berthelot met with General Denikin's representative, General Shcherbachev in Bucharest. France promised to land 12 French and Greek divisions in Ukraine and the Crimea and to use Odessa and Sevastopol as bases; and to fully equip these bases with weapons, supplies and military vehicles. France was also to assist the Volunteer Army (the Whites) by occupying Kiev, Kharkov and parts of the Don and Kuban regions. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, was in favour of French and Romanian troops linking up with bands of Ukrainian partisans against the Bolsheviks. French foreign policy regarding Ukraine displayed tremendous ignorance of the situation: "An indication for the limited understanding of the situation in Russia by the French Foreign Ministry was the notion that they could support Denikin's plans for an indivisible Russia and also the federalist if not separatist ideas of the Ukrainians, which were diametrically opposed to those of Denikin's and went together like oil and water."⁵

On 13 and 22nd December 1918 Clemenceau sent the commanders in the east instructions, which were to clarify France's policies there, and its relationship with its allies. The plan included the concept of separating Ukraine, from Russia proper and

⁴ A. Delpeuch, *Les Alliés contre la Russie : avant, pendant et après la guerre mondiale, faits et documents*. (Paris, 1926), p. 285.

⁵ Ibid, p.45.

thus bringing it economically to its knees.⁶ Clemenceau wrote: "The common enemy is Bolshevism and in order to resist it more effectively, we must establish a Ukrainian barrier."

France would then continue to support the 'forces of order' in these regions. In France also as in Britain there remained the fears over a rapprochement between Soviet Russia and the new German Republic. Various adventurous plans were drawn up, by (among others) Marshal Foch, but many of these plans foundered on the hard rocks of financial reality or military limitations.

What was the reaction of Germany to machinations of the Entente in the east? Article XII of the Armistice (stipulating that German troops should remain on the territory of the former Russian Empire) had been included at the suggestion of the Germans. The German delegation saw this as a major success and included it under their definition of 'defending the general cultural and humanistic values'.⁷ Once again there was an inclusion of Germany on the side of those fighting for civilised Europe against the pagan hordes of Bolshevism.

It is worth reviewing at this stage what had been happening in Germany from the signing of the Armistice to the spring of 1919. The Army, as a result of its alliance with the Social Democrat government of Ebert, was now back at the centre of power and many of its officers were those, who had served the old regime and continued to believe in its tenets. The Supreme Command now decided to play the 'Russian card' for all its worth, as it was only in the east that the fledgling army of the Republic (Reichswehr) had room to manoeuvre:

It was the policy of General Groener, who temporarily guarded the OHL (the Supreme Command) after Ludendorff's departure, to exploit to the maximum the notion of Germany as a bulwark against Bolshevism and to take part with the Allies in a military crusade against Russia. In so doing it was hoped that Germany would retain a strong army and achieve a more favourable peace treaty. Early in 1919, German Freikorps units began to

⁶ Micheal. J. Carley, *Revolution and Intervention. The French Government and the Russian Civil War 1917-1919* (Kingston and Montreal: Mc Gill- Queen's University Press, 1983), p. 150.

⁷ *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen von den Verhandlungen in Brest-Litowsk bis zum Abschluss des Rapallovertrages*. Vol 1. (Berlin: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1967), p. 835. Telegram from the Army Supreme Command to the War Ministry, 31 December 1918.

leave the Baltic front in fulfilment of Article XII of the Armistice and to help hold the front against the advancing Red Army.⁸

The German Army had also to function with a potentially hostile Poland at its back. As the Great War ended, a series of flashpoints and frontier conflicts developed with Poland, and Germany was particularly concerned with the problem of East Prussia being cut off from the rest of Germany by an independent Poland. Poland was at this time trying to clear its territory of all foreign troops, including German, and trying to control as large an area as possible, in order to present the Paris Peace conference with a *fait accompli*. A clear division emerged at this stage in Germany. The Supreme Command wanted an out-and-out war with the Allies against Soviet Russia, whereas; the SPD government and the new Foreign Minister, Brockdorff-Rantzau, wanted a far more cautious approach.

Another important issue for the new German government was the position of Russian POWs in Germany, many of who were Ukrainians. In early 1919 the Allied Armistice Commission forbade the further transport of Russian prisoners out of Germany. Marshal Foch announced the establishment of an Inter-Allied Commission for the Repatriation of Russian Prisoners of War in Berlin under the direction of a British officer, Major-General Sir Richard Ewart. As Robert Williams commented, the motive was quite clear, that repatriation would only increase the numbers of the Red Army, and in order to prevent it, the Allies were prepared to house and feed these prisoners.⁹ There was, of course, no distinction drawn between Russian and Ukrainian prisoners. The government of the Weimar Republic opposed this policy, as they were not enthusiastic about supporting these prisoners, and were also worried about possible Bolshevik reprisals against German prisoners in Soviet territory. A German agency for repatriating Russian prisoners (*Reichszentralstelle für Kriegs- und Zivilgefangene*) was set up in January 1919, although the Allies claimed jurisdiction over it. The agency was headed by an SPD Reichstag deputy, Moritz Schlesinger, and it tried to send as many prisoners as possible back to Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine in the course of 1919.¹⁰

The German Right and the military, together with sections of the government, perceived an imminent Red Peril because the army in the east was in headlong retreat and the Red Army was moving to fill the vacuum in Ukraine and the Baltic. The panic

⁸ John Hiden, *Germany and Europe*, p.16.

⁹ Robert C. Williams, *Culture in Exile. Russian Émigrés in Germany, 1881-1941*. (London: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 83.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 84.

and sense of imminent invasion in Germany is typified by this appeal from the German government to its citizens dated 9 January 1919:

Comrades! From the other side of the frontier Russian troops threaten our homeward bound fighters and threaten to block their safe passage (...) We must defend ourselves. Report to the Frontier Protection Corps! We will not lead you into a new war! You will prevent the advance of disorderly troops and those who would destroy the peace of our land. You shall prevent the overrunning of defenceless villages and towns. You shall make it impossible that aliens pour into Germany like a horde and settle themselves here (...) The enemy within is destroyed! Defend yourselves against the enemy without!¹¹

The German military analysis of the position in the Border States is quite revealing and also applies to Ukraine. On 9 January 1919 the German military representative for the northern Reich, von Reichenbach, based in Stockholm, sent a telegram to the Delegation for the Eastern Front in Berlin (*Delegation Ostfront*), in which he set out his opinion on the situation in the Baltic States and Ukraine, and particularly in regard to the insecure nature of their governments:

The political grounds (...) are as follows: a. The demands of the governments existing in the Border States to protect them against the advance of Soviet troops because they themselves are not in a position to do so, as up until now they have not been able to form their own troop corps and to arm them. However, it must be taken into account that none of these governments have their roots firmly anchored in the population, but are far more governments who only have limited support and who are opposed by a stronger proletarian Soviet movement...¹²

In the Hetmanate the feeling began to increase that Germany would now withdraw from Ukraine and that its fate would be decided by the British and French. The German army in Ukraine began to experience a similar fate to that of the Austro-Hungarian – desertion, breakdown of discipline and loss of morale. The events in faraway Berlin were bound to influence the army and in Kiev a Soldiers' Council was set up, along the lines of those established in Germany by the Spartacists and Left

¹¹ BA: Revolutionsakten. Heimatschutz Ost, Beiheft 23 (2500/3), 13253/4. Appeal from the government of the Reich. 9 January 1919. Published in the German press.

¹² BA: Revolutionsakten. Beziehung zu Russland, Beiheft 28g (25083). Telegram from the German Military Representative for the Northern Reich in Stockholm to the Delegation Ostfront in Berlin.

Social Democrats. Many German troops began to stream westwards towards the Fatherland via Poland and the Baltic States. As German power in Ukraine began to decay the Ukrainian nationalists began to stir themselves once more and to move against the Hetman's government.

Germany was not in a position to support the Hetman militarily. As his troops and police began to be attacked all over Ukraine, and as many of his forces began to desert to those of the nationalists, it became clear that the Hetman and his regime were finished. The German Army in Kiev met with the representatives of the Rada in December 1918, who now termed themselves the Directory. The main condition of the Germans was that their troops would be allowed to leave Ukraine unhindered. The Directory agreed, and the Germans duly withdrew all diplomatic recognition from the Hetman and recognised the Directory as the legitimate government of Ukraine. In order to escape the vengeance of his own people, Skoropadskyi, disguised as a German soldier, left Ukraine for Germany with the retreating German forces.

On 11 December 1918, the German embassy in Berne reported to the AA that the Ukrainian National Committee in Switzerland had protested to the Germans about the participation of German troops in the conflict between the nationalist forces and the White troops in Ukraine. The Ukrainians claimed that the German troops had assured the Directory that they would not get involved in the internal affairs of Ukraine and that they had broken their agreement.¹³

On December 19th 1918 the Directory assumed power as the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic. Its leading figure was Simon Petliura, who was to play a major role in Ukrainian history until 1921. In Galicia the Rada of Western Ukraine voted to join the Ukrainian People's Republic on January 4 1919, thus it was that for the first time for centuries all the Ukrainian lands were united under one government. However, this time of euphoria for Ukrainian nationalists would not last long.

The German Ambassador in Kiev was less than complimentary about the German troops there and analysed the German withdrawal from Ukraine as follows:

The principal reason for our withdrawal lies in our own Eastern Army. There are only a few soldiers to be found in our remaining troops who are under 35 years old and they are only really fit for garrison duty (...) In this condition our Eastern Army has not been a fighting force for a long time.

¹³ PA AA Bonn: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14388) 675.

With the outbreak of the revolution in Germany the discipline among the troops has declined, partly influenced by Bolshevik ideas from nearby Russia and partly from concern about their relations at home, so that among large sections of the army discipline has completely collapsed (...) The regiments retreat without orders towards Germany and refuse to fight the Soviet troops who follow closely behind (...) The German Eastern Army no longer provides a defence for the country.¹⁴

The situation reached a dramatic new turn, when it emerged that German troops stationed in eastern Ukraine were allowing Soviet forces to enter their zone, in return for assistance in their being transported to Germany. On 20th December 1918, the Chief of the General Staff of the Army (Kiev) contacted Berlin with the news that; "An agreement was made between the Soldiers Council of the 20th Landwehrdivision and the Peoples Commissar of the Russian Soviet Republic."¹⁵ This agreement stipulated that the German troops would withdraw before the Red Army.

For Lenin and the Bolshevik government in Moscow, the relationship between Germany and the Entente was clear, and the role of the German army was central to that:

"A popular revolution and perhaps a proletarian revolution" was "inevitable" in Germany, but in the meanwhile, he warned, "a tacit bargain has most definitely been struck between the German bourgeoisie and that of the Entente powers", in which the former would allow the latter, to occupy Ukraine in exchange for leaving 'a portion of the spoils' to Germany.¹⁶

The Directory in Kiev seemed to be in a position of strength and this was emphasised when the Directory entered into negotiations with Lenin, much against the advice of the Ukrainian Bolsheviks, who wanted no truck with what they regarded as a bourgeois-nationalist regime in Kiev. The troops of the Directory surrounded Kiev and very much controlled the movement of the German troops there. The main consideration of the German commanders on the ground was the safe evacuation of their troops back to Germany. The other problem was how to comply with Article XII of the Armistice. This was brought to the fore by Henot, France's representative in

¹⁴ PA AA Bonn: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14388) 764. Ambassador Lersner in Kiev to Auswärtiges Amt.

¹⁵ Ibid. Chief of the General Staff to Auswärtiges Amt.

¹⁶ Richard.K. Debo, *Revolution and Survival: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1917-18* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1979), p. 379.

Ukraine. Henot was to be the future French consul in Kiev but because of unrest in Ukraine he had stayed in Odessa. His role was to interpret instructions from Paris and to prevent any understanding developing between the Germans and the Bolsheviks. Henot's role was somewhat unclear. Carley refers to him as "the so-called French consul."¹⁷ He acted in the name of the Entente in Ukraine and was well connected with the anti-Bolshevik Russians and was also strongly anti-Ukrainian. He had no direct connection with Paris and went to Odessa in December 1918 carrying a proclamation signed by British and French ministers appealing to the local population to maintain order until the arrival of Allied troops.¹⁸

One of the main concerns of the German Army was the railway system and its safety. In an era before road transport was extensively used by military vehicles, the railways were the major links with Germany, and vital for both the withdrawal of troops and supplies. Under the terms of an agreement reached between the Ukrainian Directory and the German Army Group Kiev, the Ukrainians guaranteed the safety of German troops and the continuation of support for the German rail depots en route. The Germans, for their part, agreed to continue to pay the wages of Ukrainian railway personnel, and the Directory permitted German troops to be stationed for protection purposes along the rail lines to the west. Both parties also agreed that in order to supply the civilian population in Kiev and the German troops there that trains with supplies would be allowed to travel from other parts of Ukraine.¹⁹

On 14th December a further agreement between the Directory and the German Army was signed. This new agreement weakened the position of the Germans even further as all rail depots and public buildings of the Ukrainian railways were now to be occupied by Ukrainian troops but everything possible was still to be done to expedite the retreat of German troops to the Reich.

The dire situation of the German troops was obvious. The conditions of the Armistice at Compiegne demanded the conservation of the power relationships existing in southern Russia at the end of the war. This was impossible because of the lie of the land. Neither the internal situation in Ukraine, nor the republican sympathies of many soldiers for the Directory allowed the power situation to remain as it had. To that could be added the

¹⁷ Carley, *Revolution and Intervention*, p. 118

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

consequent risk of destroying the only functioning link with Germany – the railway – as a result of the intervention of German troops.²⁰

In Odessa, a city occupied by French and Greek forces, negotiations continued between the French and the representatives of the Directory about the possibility of co-operation against the Bolsheviks.

While the change in regime in Kiev was progressing, the withdrawal of German troops and the constant movement of troop trains heading west continued. In accordance with the Armistice the evacuation of German troops from Ukraine was ordered. The time envisaged for the withdrawal of all German troops was 120 days.²¹

The military situation in Ukraine at this stage was by no means straightforward. Apart from the troops of the Directory and the German Army, there was a Greco-French force based in Odessa, the White Russian Army of General Denikin in the south-east, a Bolshevik force gradually entering Ukraine from the east and the troops of newly independent Poland threatening Galicia and the western frontier.

The German Supreme Command was now presented with a major logistical problem. All of the coal supplies for the operation of the troop and supply trains came from the Donets region but the amount of coal being mined there continued to decrease during the last two months of 1918 and in December the region was occupied by the Don Cossacks. Kharkov, the centre of the coal mining area, was occupied by the Bolsheviks in early January 1919. There was also a chronic shortage of both railway engines and wagons. The growing feeling of panic and threat in the Reich itself led to calls for the army to be withdrawn.

The Soviet invasion of Ukraine had to be presented as an action supporting indigenous Ukrainian communists and not as a foreign occupation. As James White commented:

The Baltic region, the Ukraine and Belorussia could no longer be regarded as part of the Russian state. Independence movements had developed there, and had been given recognition by the German military authorities. An offensive by the Red Army would be regarded as a foreign invasion, and would certainly be so presented by the Allied Powers. This would mean that intervention against the Soviet regime would take the form

²⁰ Fischer. *Deutsche Truppen und Entente-Intervention in Südrußland 1918-1919*, p.61.

²¹ Fischer, *Deutsche Truppen*, p. 62.

of military assistance to subject nations to throw off the yoke of Soviet occupation. It would also deprive the Soviet regime of the valuable asset of supporting national self-determination in contrast to the Whites, who were pledged to restore a Russia that was 'one and indivisible'. The solution to the problem was to create independent Soviet states in the path of the advancing Red Army.²²

This, of course, the Bolsheviks did in Ukraine, choosing Kharkov as the seat of the government.

It is ironic that the Entente had no intention of recognising an independent Ukrainian state, which they still regarded as too tied to Germany. Soldiers' Councils developed throughout the Army of the East and these often dealt with the day-to-day negotiations with both the Ukrainians and the Bolsheviks. Many conservative army officers regarded them as 'legitimised mutineers' but the government in Berlin was prepared to tolerate them, as the alternative could be a complete mutiny in Ukraine. On the other hand, many officers in Ukraine recognised that far from being a nest of Spartacists or Bolsheviks, many Soldiers' Councils were merely the efforts of the German soldiers themselves to ensure some sort of orderly and planned withdrawal from Ukraine.

On 1st December 1918 the Central Soldiers Council in Kovno notified the government in Berlin: "The Eastern Army fights with all its might against Bolshevism and knows what misery it has brought to Russia. Our soldiers who stand on the Great Russian Front are attacked by Bolshevik hordes and often suffer bitter losses. With what right do the representatives of the Russian Soviet government meet in Berlin whom we regard as the greatest danger for Germany's socialist future?"²³ However, the central *Soldatenrat* assumed a more pro-Soviet position, when it sent a delegation to Berlin on 1 January consisting of its chairman, Asch, the chairman of the Kovno *Soldatenrat*, and Lev Zalin, a delegate of the Kovno Soviet. The delegation spoke to Scheidemann of the Social Democrats and to Haase of the Independents. Haase stated that the government's time was taken up with internal problems and that it could not give its attention to what was happening on the eastern frontiers. Therefore the government delegated decision making on matters, which arose there, to the central

²² James D. White, 'National Communism and World Revolution: The Political Consequences of German Military Withdrawal from the Baltic Area in 1918-1919', in *Europe-Asia Studies*, (Vol 46, No 8, 1994), pp. 1361-1362.

²³ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Bolshevismus, Bd 2, Nr 2. Central Council for the Eastern Front to Peoples Commissar Haase. Berlin. 1 December 1918.

Soldatenrat in Kovno.²⁴ Although Kovno was not in Ukraine, but in Lithuania, the situation is indicative of the type of negotiations, which were taking place along the former Eastern Front.

This indicates that the German government in late 1918 and early 1919, preoccupied with events in the Reich itself, was prepared to leave decisions in the east to the Soldiers' Councils. These councils, whose priority was withdrawal from the occupied areas to Germany, were often prepared to enter agreements with the Bolsheviks. Obviously this was a major concern for the Entente and the High Command of the German army.

Fischer contends: "Deliberate contact between the German troops and the Bolsheviks, such as the journey undertaken by a deputation from the Kiev Soldiers Council to Moscow to see Lenin and the agreement reached between the Soldiers Council of the 20th Landwehrdivision and the Soviet government remained isolated cases and could hardly be drawn upon by the Allies as proof of fraternisation with Bolshevism on the part of the German Army of the East."²⁵ Debo also supports this thesis: "The situation was similar in Ukraine, where Lenin had hoped that the German armies might become allies of the Bolsheviks. Although the soldiers of a small garrison fraternised with the Red Army and sent their greetings to Lenin, the German army in Ukraine retained its discipline and remained subordinate to the officer corps."²⁶

The main rail line linking Ukraine with Germany ran from Kovel-Brest to Litovsk-Bialystok and on to Grajevo-Prostken (East Prussia).²⁷ Increasingly the retreating troop trains were being attacked by bandits and partisans seeking food and arms. The situation worsened with the withdrawal of the German 10th Army at the end of December 1918. In order to prevent the attacks the Army Group Kiev ordered that infantry and artillery were to be mounted on the trains. They also ordered that armed troops were to be positioned on every engine and tender to ensure that the drivers continued the journey without harassment and that telegraph equipment was also to be carried in every train.²⁸

The momentum of withdrawal developed and there was a great deal of co-operation between the Directory and the Army Group Kiev, plans were drawn up for

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Fischer, *Deutsche Truppen*, p.72.

²⁶ Debo, *Revolution and Survival*, p. 402.

²⁷ Map at rear of Zbigniew Karpus, *Wshodni Sojusznicy Polski w wojne 1920 roku*. (Toruń: Michael Copernicus University, 1999). See Appendix 4.

²⁸ Ibid, p.73.

ten trains per day to travel to Germany, until the remaining 300,000 German troops returned home. The transportation of German troops was now to be the responsibility of two distinct transport groups. The first, based in Kiev, would handle the troops in the northern Ukraine facing the Bolshevik troops and the second group would handle the troops in the southern Ukraine in Kharkov, Poltava, Odessa and Nikolaev²⁹. The withdrawal from the northern Ukraine continued apace and the last troop transports left Kiev on 26th January 1919. The remaining German troops were now on the Black Sea coast and were to become active pawns in the battle of the Allies against the Bolsheviks.

As can be expected, Moscow watched these developments with great unease. Already after the end of the war the Ukrainian Bolsheviks had been clamouring for the Red Army to come to their aid and 'liberate' Ukraine but the German Army stood in their way and the last thing Lenin wanted was a clash with the Germans. In Berlin the battle over the diplomatic recognition of Soviet Ukraine raged. On 16 November 1918, Chicherin (the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs) and Radek made a number of demands on the new German government. Among them were two demands, which concerned Ukraine:

1. The German government should instruct the German military authorities in Ukraine not to hinder the movements of Soviet troops, when those movements were not directed against the German army.
2. The German troops should disarm the White forces stationed in German-occupied territory.

The Revolution in Berlin in early January, on which Lenin had set his hopes, and its subsequent crushing (together with the deaths of Liebknecht and Luxemburg) set back Soviet-German relations. Russia was more concerned at this stage about German troop movements and political machinations in the Baltic States than in Ukraine, where the Germans at least seemed interested in withdrawal. Observing the absence of German troops in the eastern and northern Ukraine Trotsky gave the order to the Red Army to conquer Ukraine, and throughout January 1919 the Bolsheviks moved steadily westwards towards Kiev. At the same time the Volunteer Army, led by General Denikin began its campaign to 'liberate' the 'one and indivisible Russia' from the Bolsheviks. The German army in the south stood between these forces.

²⁹ Ibid.

In Kiev the Directory was making frantic efforts to appeal to the Allies. The French, in particular, were demanding the ending of socialist and left-wing policies in return for some form of recognition. The left wing parties of the Directory met to discuss the situation. Things came to a head with the question of whether the social revolution should have priority over the national question or whether national independence should be the issue above all others. The decision was for the latter and with that decision a man came to the fore of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic (UNR), who until today is one of the most controversial figures in Ukrainian history – Simon Petliura. The further history of the UNR was to be closely bound with his personality. Petliura's policy was to seek as much Allied support as possible. The Directory knew that faced with a row of enemies, the most serious one was the Bolshevik threat. Petliura was prepared to throw in his lot with the anti-Bolshevik forces. The remaining German forces were also becoming a part of this anti-Bolshevik coalition.

The German forces in 1919 occupied a triangle on the Black Sea formed by Odessa–Nikolaev–Kherson. This area was strategically vital; not only did it control the major Black Sea ports but also the land route to the Crimea. In February 1919 Bolshevik troops captured Kiev, and the Directory relocated its capital in the northwestern Ukraine; this made the territory in the south even more militarily important. As Kurt Fischer made clear: "As Ukraine (according to the revolutionary strategy) was the basis for the extension of the revolution to Hungary and from there to Western Europe, it was also absolutely vital for supplying Bolshevik Russia with grain, coal and iron. The offer of accessible territory for the overseas enemies of Bolshevism in southern Russia, with a German force of occupation was a great danger for the Bolsheviks."³⁰

Various ideas were drawn up on how to counter the Bolsheviks in the region; some were more practical than others. As already mentioned, many of the German settlements and villages were in this region and for the German forces this seemed to offer a golden opportunity. The German Military Fieldpost No 201 reported to the German Consulate in Odessa on 20th December 1918:

The idea was put forward of forming a volunteer army from the sons of colonists in the southern Ukraine with German officers and non-commissioned officers who voluntarily would remain in Ukraine. The plan

³⁰ Ibid, p.76.

failed however, partly due to the passivity of the colonists and partly due to the very small number of German troops willing to remain in Ukraine, so that the plan had to be dispensed with.³¹

It would appear that many of the German troops were singularly lacking in enthusiasm. In the Foreign Ministry, the manoeuvres of the German troops in the southern Ukraine were regarded with suspicion. In a Memorandum dated 20 January 1919, an official at the Foreign Ministry, commented on the Allies and their plans: "They are seeking to occupy and hold the most important points on the south coast – Odessa, Nikolaev, the Crimea and Mariupol – and to urge on the Don Cossacks and the Volunteer Army, whom they have supplied with munitions, weapons and money against the Ukrainians. For us it is my present conviction that in the present circumstances a cautious waiting policy is best."³² The policy of 'wait and see' continued.

The German military were no more enthusiastic about a full-scale military intervention in Ukraine; Major von Velsen, the German military attaché in Kiev, wrote to the Foreign Ministry that he did not foresee another German military campaign in Ukraine but that: "I would see the involvement of mixed volunteer detachments in cooperating with the Ukrainian divisions fighting in the east as the best solution."³³

Those German troops who found themselves on the shores of the Black Sea in early 1919 were not only those divisions, which had been in Ukraine itself. In the closing months of 1918 the Germans had managed to withdraw both the troops stationed in western Turkey, those based in Asiatic Turkey and also troops from the Caucasus. These forces now found themselves crowded into the harbours of the Ukrainian Black Sea ports. Germany placed in command of all operations on the Black Sea coast Vice Admiral Hopman of the German navy. It was his task to maintain order in the face of the Bolshevik advance and also to safely withdraw as many troops and supplies as possible to the Reich by the long sea route through the Black, Aegean, and Mediterranean seas.³⁴

On the 12th November 1918 the Army Group Kiev issued the order to evacuate the Crimea. Hopman now asked for the Allies to send a representative to the region so that all German troop withdrawals would be in accordance with the conditions of the

³¹ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14389). Deutsche Feldpost 201.

³² PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14390). Aufzeichnung. 20 January 1919.

³³ Ibid, (Telegram from Major von Velsen at the German Embassy in Kiev. 22 January 1919).

³⁴ Fischer, *Deutsche Truppen*, p.78.

Armistice. The Allies replied on 24th November that a British cruiser and destroyer would land at Sevastopol in order to oversee all troop movements on behalf of the Allies. Hopman continued to appeal to the Allies to allow his troops in Sevastopol to be allowed to fall back - but the Allies did not reply.³⁵

The Governor of Sevastopol, Lieutenant-General Baron Waldersee, appealed to Hopman that the unrest among the troops was so great that he did not know if he could maintain order any further. In order to maintain discipline Hopman allowed a mass meeting of all troops in Sevastopol to take place; he explained the reasons for the delay in evacuating troops, the problems with the Allies, and the shortage of suitable ships, and he encountered full support and understanding on the part of the soldiers.³⁶ In several of the smaller ports the German troops began to give the control of buildings and harbour installations etc over to officials and officers of Denikin's Volunteer Army. The Germans were now semi-official allies of the Russian Whites.

In a meeting with the British and French in Sevastopol it was agreed that German troops would be withdrawn from the Crimea on board German and Austrian ships and carried to Odessa and Nikolaev.³⁷ From Odessa and Nikolaev they were to be carried further by train to Germany. On the 29th November 1918 500 British marines landed in Sevastopol to take control of the port and to replace the German troops there.³⁸

The government of the Crimea³⁹ made a serious allegation against the Germans to the Allies. According to them, the German troops leaving the Crimea had distributed weapons and supplies amongst the population and had been guilty of pro-Bolshevik sympathies. Admiral Calthorpe, the Allied commander in the Black Sea, informed Hopman that he would hold him and his officers personally responsible for any further infringements of the conditions of the Armistice. Hopman replied that the German troops were the force protecting the area against Bolshevism and that the sailors with Bolshevik sympathies had already been despatched to Germany. Hopman and the German officer corps then realised that they would have to tread very carefully and be especially cautious of the French.

With the withdrawal of German forces in central Ukraine, an overland transportation to Germany was out of the question, the sea route was the only solution.

³⁵ Ibid, p.79.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 80.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 82.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ The Germans had established a government for Crimea in early 1918, headed by a Tatar general.

Hopman's task was to oversee the withdrawal of 20,000 men from Odessa, 3000 from Poti and 10,000 from Turkey. The last German troops in the Crimea retreated in December 1918 to Nikolaev, leaving the Crimea to the Allies and the White Russians. Most German troops were concentrated in Nikolaev and it was both here and in other Black Sea ports that political unrest began to ferment:

Thus it was that in Nikolaev a 'War Revolutionary Committee of the Left Socialist Revolutionary Party (Internationalists)' and the 'Communist Party of Ukraine (Bolsheviks)' was formed. In leaflets they called on the peasants and workers to fight with their weapons against 'foreign bayonets', against 'counter-revolutionary bandits' for the 'Socialist Federal Soviet Republic' (Russia). The Bolsheviks hoped in this way to draw upon the fears of many peasants that the arrival of the Allies would mean the loss of their lands, which had been broken up from the large estates.⁴⁰

The Bolsheviks were making a determined effort to stir up the local population against both the French and German troops.

In Odessa the situation came to a head with the landing of French troops in late December 1918; these troops along with sections of Denikin's Volunteer Army, engaged the forces of the Directory in a battle. The Ukrainian forces were driven out of Odessa but continued to surround the city. The French landed 35,000 men between December and March. They also appointed a general of the Volunteer Army as commander of the city – General Grishin-Alamazov. The Germans had remained neutral during these developments but there were signs of friction between German and French troops and these were confirmed in reports reaching the Foreign Ministry from Ukraine. The consuls of the Netherlands, Italy, Brazil, Greece and Norway wrote to the British representative in Nikolaev, Captain Royds, that the worst was to be feared if the German troops were withdrawn. They asked that a ship be provided to transport them also in the event of a German withdrawal.⁴¹ This points quite clearly to what an essential role the German army was providing and as to how 'neutral' observers regarded that. Hopman observed the strong dislike of the local population for the White army and their refusal to pander in any way to Ukrainian nationalism. Hopman

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.94.

⁴¹ PRO: Admiralty 137/1733 Vol 1, p. 159 Letter of Proceedings in NIKOLAEV, 14 December 1918.

remarked in his report that Lenin's opinion seemed correct that the Directory and its supporters were merely a prologue for Bolshevism in Ukraine.⁴²

On the 31st December 1918, Ataman Grigoriev, Commander of the Directory's forces in the south, issued an ultimatum to the German troops. In the ultimatum, Grigoriev demanded the withdrawal of all German troops by foot, within 4 days. According to Grigoriev the Germans had had long enough to leave Ukraine and the patience of the Ukrainian people had now come to an end. He continued: "After four days, every German soldier, who remains where his troops are stationed now, will be destroyed."⁴³ The Germans refused to answer the Ultimatum and instead strengthened their positions around Nikolaev and prepared to resist. In the meantime Vice Admiral Hopman telegraphed Berlin and Kiev to notify them of developments, and also enquired from the Directory if Grigoriev was acting under their orders.⁴⁴ Instead of German troops having their first conflict with the Bolsheviks, it seemed that it would be against the Ukrainian nationalists instead.

In early February, news reached the Black Sea coast that Kiev had fallen to the Bolsheviks and that the troops of the Directory had fallen back in disarray to Galicia. The Bolsheviks were now in control of all Ukraine with the exception of the coastal strip and Galicia. Ataman Grigoriev, besieging the coastal towns, now threw in his lot with the Bolsheviks and so the German forces found themselves facing an ally of the Bolsheviks. Tension increased between the French and German troops and the French gave orders that the Germans were to be confined to barracks, and only allowed out when the French agreed. Later the French moderated the conditions and the German troops were confined to certain parts of the towns.⁴⁵

The Germans were particularly concerned about the German settlements, and in January 1919 despatched an armoured train to bring back German colonists to Nikolaev; but the plan failed because not enough German colonists were prepared to leave their farms and place themselves under the protection of the German forces. A German battalion was placed along the rail line from Odessa to Nikolaev in order to protect German settlements in the area. A very real danger, from the French point of view, appeared in March 1919, when the Bolsheviks, aware that many German troops were battle weary and wanted to return to Germany, suggested that if the Germans

⁴² Fischer, *Deutsche Truppen*, p.106.

⁴³ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Russland. [Ukraine], No 1, Vol 32, p. 145.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Fischer, *Deutsche Truppen*, p.102.

surrendered their weapons and supplies to them they would guarantee them safe passage overland to Germany. The Bolsheviks also told the Germans that the French had no intention of ever returning them to Germany and that it was merely a ruse in order to get them to fight France's war. This propaganda was quite successful with the Germans and the French later alleging that Nikolaev had been lost because of the Germans.

On February 10th Nikolaev was attacked by the Bolsheviks. There were 100 French and 1,500 Greek troops in the town but it was also the base of the 15TH Landwehr Division of the German army. The French ordered the Germans to defend the town against the Bolsheviks, with 50 guns and 100 machine guns. The Germans succeeded in repulsing the Bolshevik attacks.⁴⁶

Ukraine was a powder keg of nationalities and Odessa was even more so: "The town was, as Denikin later put it "a political Babel". The (Ukrainian nationalist) Directory had just taken over (as Hetman Skoropadskyi's authority broke up), but not even a fifth of the people were Ukrainian (the rest were Russian or Jewish)."⁴⁷ The French themselves were extremely reluctant to fight the Bolsheviks and one French officer remarked: "Having kept his head at Verdun and the Marne no French soldier would agree to losing it on the Russian fields."⁴⁸ The French were to prove the truth of this statement several times during the Ukrainian campaign but would tend to throw the blame on to the German troops. Some historians have recognised the total unsuitability of these French troops for the job, after all they were intervening in someone else's war after 4 years in 'the war to end all wars':

When they came under attack, and especially in Kherson and Nikolaev the local populations had joined the Bolsheviks in firing on them, many of the French troops had refused to fight and the Greeks had in turn blamed their losses on the French. These incidents, plus the subsequent mutiny of a sizable number of the sailors of the French squadron, were among the many factors which had to be taken into consideration in deciding whether to remain in Odessa or not. Although the French Command probably overrated

⁴⁶ Perry Moore, *Stamping Out the Virus. Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War 1918-1920* (Atglen PA: Schiffer Military History, 2002), p. 172-173.

⁴⁷ Evan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War* (Birlinn: Edinburgh, 2000), p.129.

⁴⁸ W. Bruce Lincoln, *Red Victory*. (New York and London: Simon and Schuster, 1989), p.315.

the Bolsheviks' strength, it did appreciate the inferior condition of its troops and their unwillingness to fight a Russian war.⁴⁹

The failure of the French fighting forces encouraged Grigoriev's forces and they began to turn their attention to the Germans.

The Allied attitude to the Ukrainian nationalists and the Directory continued to be influenced by the 'German Factor'. At the very time that the nationalists were fighting for their lives in Ukraine, the Peace Conference had started in Paris. The representatives of Ukraine were not treated kindly at the Conference. W.E.D Allen remarked:

Furthermore, so soon after the recent hard struggle with Germany, the representatives of the Allies were not inclined to regard with favour envoys from the de facto succession states of the Russian Empire, the governments of which had owed their origin to German diplomacy and German bayonets (...) After having failed to raise interest in the fate of the 'oppressed nationalities' of the Russian Empire, Margolin (the Ukrainian representative) broached the question of the fate of the Jews, but here too he found that people were not interested. In 1919 it was well remembered that the Jewish population of Poland and Ukraine had been on the side of the Germans and that German Jews had taken upon themselves the role of intermediaries between the German High Command and the Bolsheviks.⁵⁰

The battle being fought in the southern Ukraine was Bolshevism versus the Allies and both the Ukrainians and Germans were secondary players with very few rights in the game.

A far from complimentary report reached Berlin in May 1919 from Vice Admiral Hopman about the military events of that March. He reported that everywhere the French came into conflict with the Bolsheviks their forces fled. The report claimed that as Grigoriev and the Bolsheviks attacked Nikolaev, the French fled and left the defence of the town to the Germans. On 3-5 March Grigoriev attacked both Nikolaev and Kherson but his forces were beaten back by a German armoured train. The report goes on: "(...) The German troops and approximately 55 civilians, among whom were the Consul Stobbe and ten citizens of the Reich, were taken in safety on to the ships. The

⁴⁹ George Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia* (Indiana: Notre Dame University, 1966), p.133.

⁵⁰ W.E.D. Allen, *The Ukraine: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), p.311.

ships with the refugees from Nikolaev then sailed towards Odessa. After a short time the Bolsheviks turned towards Odessa.”⁵¹

Vice Admiral Hopman becoming increasingly concerned about his men and the encroaching Bolsheviks. He contacted the Admiralty in Berlin, to find out when the forces under his command would be evacuated. The reply, when it came, was not reassuring: “Everything possible has been done by the authorities here in Germany for weeks to evacuate German forces from the Black Sea region. The Allies have until now refused to do anything, so the blame lies with the foreign governments.”⁵² Finally ships were provided to remove the soldiers from Nikolaev, but so great was the distrust of the French, that many German soldiers believed the Bolshevik propaganda, that they were in reality being shipped to Morocco to take part in forced labour.⁵³

From a deserter from Grigoriev’s forces, Hopman and the Allies discovered that already officers of the Red Army were active and attached to Grigoriev’s army and staff. He also informed them that the Ukrainian Soviet government in Kharkov had a group of German Spartacists working on propaganda against the German units in Odessa and the other coastal towns.⁵⁴

On 10th March 1919 the evacuation by sea of the 7th Landwehr Division from Odessa and the 15th Landwehr Division from Nikolaev began. In Nikolaev the bands of Grigoriev entered the burning suburbs while the Germans were still embarking.⁵⁵

The French commander in Odessa received the order from Paris to evacuate the city. This signified the end of Allied direct intervention in Ukraine. Although the British would continue their links with General Denikin’s Volunteer Army, the evacuation of Odessa was the last involvement of the French in Ukraine. On 22 March the last German troops together with German consular staff left Odessa on board the hospital ship ‘Jerusalem’ and sailed for Germany via Istanbul. The last German forces had finally left Ukraine. The evacuation of Odessa was a military and human tragedy. Many civilians and refugees from the Bolsheviks committed suicide, when it became clear that they would be left to the mercies of the Red Army. The evacuation of Odessa was one of the greatest disasters of the Russian Civil War. In the course of the Civil War there were numerous instances of panic and confusion when the responsible

⁵¹ BA: Waffenstillstandskommission 1918/19 [09.04]. Truppen am Schwarzen Meer, Nummer 98. Abschrift A14970, 18 May 1919.

⁵² Fischer, *Deutsche Truppen*, p.127.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.128.

⁵⁵ W.E.D. Allen, *The Ukraine*, p.308.

authorities mismanaged their tasks. None was worse than the French organisation of the evacuation of Odessa. Primary responsibility for the Odessa debacle belongs to the French. They embarked on an ambitious scheme without clear goals. German forces had been instruments in this French game of great power politics.

What was the opinion of the German military after this, the first of its 'Disasters in the East', the second being in 1943? General Groener, the commander of the Reichswehr in 1919 and who had himself been commander in Ukraine in 1918, wrote to Hindenburg in 1923 expressing his opinion of both communism and of the experiences drawn from the campaigns of 1918/19: "Marxism, which today is attacked so much for reasons of party politics, is finished. Its place has been taken by Communism, the fight against it is at the moment the most important task. The fight against Communism is facilitated if it is undertaken in alliance with Socialism, because basically there are, as in Russia, no more bitter enemies than Socialists and Communists."⁵⁶ Groener's opinions were, in my opinion, moulded not only by the struggle in Germany itself between the new Social Democrat government, whose chief ally Groener was, and the Spartacists, but also the struggle in Ukraine between the Directory (a mainly Socialist government) and the Bolsheviks, which he had witnessed.

The experience in Ukraine was to convince the Germans that this should be the last time that their military should act as an adjunct of the Allies and it was not to happen again. However, many German officers now began to put their faith in General Denikin and the Whites as the only force which was capable of defeating the Bolsheviks. Even after the debacle in Ukraine, much official opinion in Germany was still convinced that the Bolsheviks would not remain in power for long. A report to Berlin, from Von Mack (an official of the Reichs Wirtschaftsamt) detailing events with the German military in Ukraine ended by analysing the future: "Despite that, nobody can doubt that the Bolsheviks will not remain in power in Russia for long. Because of the widely practised passivity of the Russian people Bolshevism can remain in power longer than in a western European country (...) In my opinion the closest relationship with this future Russia is in the interests of the Reich."⁵⁷ The irony in much of this sea of shifting alliances is that the Russian Whites and particularly Denikin considered

⁵⁶ F.L.Carsten, *Reichswehr and Politics. 1918-1933* (Oxford, 1966), p.292.

⁵⁷ BA: Waffenstillstandskommission 1918/19 [09.04]. Truppen am Schwarzen Meer, Nummer 98. Abschrift A14970. 18 May 1919.

Ukrainian nationalism as an 'unthinkable device' created by the Germans during the First World War to undermine Russia's strength.⁵⁸

In view of the distrust with which they were regarded by both the White Russians and the Allies, it is surprising that the German troops in Ukraine operated so effectively from November 1918 to March 1919. It is not surprising that if the French interventionary troops were war weary, that the German forces were even more so, some having been in Ukraine since March 1918.

Lenin was still hoping for the revolution in Germany but things turned sour when his emissary Karl Radek was arrested in Berlin in March 1919. On 29 March 1919 a telegram informed the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, that 10 Germans had been taken hostage by the new Soviet government in Ukraine, because of Radek's arrest and would be executed if anything happened to him.⁵⁹ This was to be probably the nadir of Germany's relationship with Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine. The experience of Germany's military involvement in Ukraine in 1918/19 would cure even the German military of any further wish for military intervention in Ukraine for the remainder of the Russian Civil War.

The German army had first become involved in Ukraine in the course of the First World War with clear imperial military and political goals. With the ending of that war the picture became much more unclear and several leading questions need to be asked. The German military intervention could be claimed to have been a disaster. It had neither supplied the materials needed for the German war effort, nor had it led to a major change in the situation on the Western Front, as Hindenburg and Ludendorff had hoped in early 1918. The German intention to try and hold on to some of their influence and prestige in Ukraine after 1918 also failed. Contrary to the wishes of General Groener and Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, the Foreign Minister, the Germans had had to play very much second fiddle to the Allies. This was only natural as Germany had just been defeated in a 4-year war; the bitterness and scale of losses of which had never been seen in human history.

The naive strivings of the German Supreme Command to win back power and influence via their involvement in Ukraine seem now to have simplistic in the extreme. In November 1918 the Germans had been in a position of military strength in Ukraine,

⁵⁸ Lincoln, *Red Victory*, p.317.

⁵⁹ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine] (R14391) 21. Telegram. 29 March 1919.

although with their defeat in the World War their forces would gradually evaporate during the following months. It was they who could have decided whether the Hetman or the Directory remained in power, and whether the Bolshevik armies could have advanced on Kiev and Kharkov months before they, in fact, did. The majority of German troops in Ukraine simply wanted, however, to return to the Fatherland. For them the war in Europe was over and the grand designs of London, Paris, and Berlin were as nothing compared to their loss of morale and war weariness.

In the German reports reaching Berlin in the course of early 1919 there was tremendous distrust and resentment of the Allies. Some German agents and officers in Ukraine hoped for some form of rapprochement with the Russian Whites, and particularly General Denikin, and then the formation of some form of German-Russian alliance against Britain and France⁶⁰. This plan fell on stony ground however, as Denikin as a former Tsarist general, blamed the Germans not only as the destroyers of the Russian Empire, but also the encouragers of the nationalists, and particularly of the Ukrainian nationalists.

Some German officers even set up a spy ring on the Ukrainian coast in late 1919, and made constant reports to Berlin about the activities of the Russian Whites.⁶¹ It is quite clear that for the German officers in particular, the French came closely behind the Bolsheviks in terms of hostility.

The majority of German opinion was glad to end its engagement with Ukraine in 1919. Germany as a defeated power had far too many other issues to be involved with. The exceptions were a small group of right wing thinkers, such as Paul Rohrbach, who had always regarded Ukraine as vital to Germany's interests in the east. It must be borne in mind that in the early months of 1919 Germany was still labouring under a British naval blockade and starvation was still widespread in the cities. There was also an attempt at a Soviet style revolution and the country's representatives were still trying to negotiate for terms at the Versailles Conference. It

⁶⁰ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine] (R14394) 116. A memorandum from Müller, the legal representative of the 'White Ruthenian Delegation' in Warsaw refers to the growing antagonism of the Russians towards France and the increasing sympathy for Germany. He believed that many German officers were prepared to reach an accommodation with the Russian Whites and to move towards a Russian-German alliance.

⁶¹ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Russland. Innere Politik, Parlements – und Parteiwesen. (R84255) 8. A spy ring was established, with the Catholic Archdeacon in Sevastopol, Schupert, involved, along with several leading members of the Tartar community. They reported to a German official in the local administration, who in turn passed on reports to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin. The main aim of the espionage was to determine the political views of Denikin's officers and to encourage a pro-German orientation. They were not paid by Berlin and the group was a very ad hoc affair.

is not surprising that under such circumstances both the German public and the German Foreign Ministry had no stomach for further military adventures in Ukraine.

The French retreat from Odessa had ended the possibility of further German military involvement there. The British, totally exasperated with the French involvement in Ukraine, decided to support the Russian Whites indirectly and not to send any further forces to Ukraine. It also reinforced their concept of Ukraine as 'Little Russia', which was exactly the policy of Denikin and the Whites. On June 11 1919 the Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon wrote to Lord Balfour: "We have always maintained that we could not regard Ukraine independently of Russia, and that General Denikin's Government was the only one in South Russia worthy of support. Ukraine, when it is reconquered, should properly fall within General Denikin's sphere of influence and consequently under our control"⁶²

This would be the policy of the Entente throughout 1919 but the Germans after their experience in Ukraine would remain far more cautious. It did seem in the summer of 1919 that Denikin's forces were marching from victory to victory, and with the fall of Kiev in September that the days of the Bolsheviks were numbered. For Germany however, the debacle of 1918/19 was a salutary one and it would refrain from any further involvement in Ukraine.

⁶² Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army*, p.144.

CHAPTER 5

THE GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND UKRAINE

When the SPD government under Scheidemann came to power in January 1919, the Foreign Ministry began to exercise more influence than it had since the end of the war in November. The German Foreign Ministry (*Auswärtiges Amt* – AA) played under Bismarck a central role in the Imperial administration. It was overshadowed during the military ‘dictatorship’ of Hindenburg and Ludendorff. It recovered its influence under the Republic. The Foreign Minister appointed in December 1918, Count Ulrich Brockdorff-Rantzau, wanted to gather together the various aspects of German foreign policy under the Foreign Ministry. The Army headquarters was transferred to Kolberg in order to control events in the east and this created a problem for the government in Berlin. Together with this there was the problem of the efforts of White Russian generals in the anti-Bolshevik forces to influence foreign policy. A network of official, semi-official, and personal ties developed between German and White Russian forces and this made the planning of foreign policy difficult.

The result of events in Germany was that no single party had an absolute majority of the vote and coalition governments became common. This was to affect the conduct of foreign policy after 1918. There was pressure from the Left and Centre parties, from some of the industrialists who wanted a foreign policy more responsive to Germany’s international trade, and also from some officials within the Foreign Ministry who wanted reform of the AA, for realignment in international relations.

The Schüler reforms of the AA in 1920 realised many of these hopes. The consular and diplomatic services were merged and the AA was reorganised into departments dealing with various regions. Department IV (Abteilung IV) dealt with Russia and Ukraine. The merging of political and economic affairs ensured that economic issues received far more emphasis and became an integral part of foreign policy.¹ The AA had to ensure the support of the parties comprising the government. There were regular meetings between the Foreign Minister and the foreign affairs experts of the government parties.

The foreign policy of the Republic needed to secure the support of the Reichstag at all times and although the President (Ebert) had the power to appoint diplomats and

¹ John Hiden, *Germany and Europe 1919-1939*, (New York: Longman, 1993), p. 33.

sign treaties, he tended to avoid conflict with the AA. Some older diplomats were not happy with the Republic but they remained loyal to the State. One of the AA's main aims was to 'revise' the terms of the Versailles Treaty. Other ministries also influenced foreign policy particularly the Reich Economic Ministry and the Ministry of Finance. Because of the importance of economic recovery to Germany, the important new markets in Eastern Europe led to much policy making involving Russia and Eastern Europe being coordinated by the Economics Ministry.

Soviet Ukraine in 1920 was a land of 26 million people and contained the most important coal and iron deposits in the European part of the former Russian Empire. It was vital for Germany to cultivate good relations with her but when would Germany be ready to recognise Soviet Ukraine?

The governments, which were in power from 1919 to 1923, were chiefly interested in working with the Entente on foreign policy. The first glimpse of German thinking on Ukraine comes from the report of Colin Ross, attached to the AA, and based in Kiev, during the summer and autumn of 1918, concerning the situation in Ukraine during the German occupation in 1918.² In his opinion the roots of the nationalist movement were not buried very deep, and the situation in the country was so chaotic that any government, which could promise to restore order would be popular. The Bolshevik propaganda had done its work however, and all forms of authority were distrusted by the Ukrainian people. Ross described the agricultural riches of Ukraine but commented that the peasants were unwilling to sell anything because of the uncertain situation and the loss in value of the currency. He believed that the only way in which Germany would gain its supplies was in co-operation with the large landowners, and that the peasants were already resisting the German troops. According to Ross's account the Germans were held in good regard by the intellectuals and the middle class, especially Russian officers, and Ross believed that more than 1,000 (Russian officers) had been executed by the Bolsheviks in Kiev prior to the German intervention. He also went on to state that the other classes of Ukrainian society were also sympathetic to the Germans, with the possible exception of the industrial workers, who he regarded as being tainted with Bolshevism.³

The German troops in Ukraine were apparently being approached by the supporters of various political factions, from monarchists to socialists and seeking to

² BA: Stellvertreter des Reichskanzlers (13), Bd IV. Film 45062.

³ Ibid.

influence them. This would indeed be a feature of German-Ukrainian relations in the years ahead with many differing groups seeking to have the ear of the Foreign Ministry. Ross warned of trying to replace the Rada with a more pliable administration as this would lead to the Germans being regarded as 'conquerors ' by the Ukrainians. Ross continued: "All the conditions are there in order to bring pro-German influence to bear on the population (...) The present Ukrainian government is nothing more than a collection of political adventurers, who have completely unrealistic aims. Germany is in the position to dictate to this bunch and to come out of the affair not too badly."⁴

In October 1918 a memorandum of the AA set out the then current thinking on the situation in Ukraine. It appeared that the AA was having second thoughts about the Hetmanate and its role in Ukraine. It criticised the ending of the free press, the arrest of Ukrainian nationalists and a policy supporting the large landowners who (according to the memorandum) were the main supporters of Russification and pro-Russian feeling in Ukraine. The Germans had allowed the Hetmanate to block any policy of land reform, and the memorandum was critical of this, seeing it as the alpha and omega of policy in Ukraine. The AA view was that the Army's policies in Ukraine were leading to anti-German sentiment and the memorandum continued:

To summarise all these facts, the present situation in Ukraine is as follows: the Germans have the support of the Jews, and the Polish and Great Russian landowners, because they are of the opinion that the Germans will prevent the land reforms and other measures being carried out. In the matter of Ukrainian independence the Germans are regarded as being against the Entente who are considered as the archenemies of Ukraine. The whole Ukrainian people is turning against the Germans because it is of the opinion that the policies of the Hetman's government stem from the Germans (...) This is the beginning of the political consequences of the false policy of the German Supreme Command in Ukraine (...) The Ukrainian circles who were sympathetic to the Germans are as a result of all the above disorientated and full of distrust. The Ukrainians before were under the Russian yoke, which was brutal, but disorganised and ineffective. Now however they have the feeling that they have gone out of the frying pan into the fire. The organisation of their lives is now with the help of the Germans more

⁴ Ibid.

stringent than ever (...) The many enemies of Ukrainian statehood, the Poles, the Jews, the Russians, and the agents of the Entente have been attempting to create bad feeling between Germany and Ukraine and one must admit that they have to a large extent succeeded.⁵

The memorandum went on to state that Ukraine, which was the economic penetration point for the whole East, had become a minefield for the Germans. It recommended land reform, the free development of political parties, and the establishment of a constituent assembly. It also warned about the influence of the pro-Russian elements on the German Supreme Command in Ukraine, and pointed out that whereas the Ukrainians were predominantly an agricultural people, that the pro-Russian Officers had their roots and their support mainly amongst the aristocracy.⁶

Some of the warnings were about to become true and in November 1918 with the defeat of Germany the collapse of German power in Ukraine began.

The new Ukrainian government – the Directory – wanted good foreign relations and accordingly supported the concept of opening diplomatic negotiations with Soviet Russia but the Bolsheviks were not interested, and were waiting for the slow withdrawal of German troops from Ukraine. Doubts persisted over the viability of Ukrainian independence and the *Königsberger Zeitung* reported this on 1st February 1919: “The foreign policy situation in Ukraine is completely dependant on the internal consolidation of the state - this consolidation does not seem to be as yet on a secure footing. The union of the West Ukrainian Republic with Ukraine on 3rd January has strengthened the Galician influence in Kiev extraordinarily. The Galician influence is one explanation for the sharp turn in policy of the Kiev government against the Russians and the Russian language.”⁷

As the Revolution gained ground in Berlin, and the conduct of foreign relations became more difficult, many agreements were entered into between the Directory and the German troops on the ground in Ukraine. There were also agreements between the Germans and the Soviet forces in the east, as has already been referred to. All of this was deeply resented by the Entente, who neither wanted Bolshevik penetration of Ukraine, nor a nationalist regime in Kiev. The policy of the French was clear, support

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. The Memorandum is by an unnamed official in the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Ukrainian Section). It was a warning to Germany that Ukrainian nationalism was a volatile quantity and that the policy of being too closely involved with the Hetmanate's main supporters – the pro Russian aristocracy and landowners – could lead to future problems for Germany.

⁷ BA: Informationsstelle der Reichsregierung [209]. *Pressberichte zur politischen und wirtschaftlichen Lage in der Ukraine*, (57844).

for the White forces of General Denikin and the restoration of the Russian Empire. As a result of German troops remaining in Ukraine and acting at the behest of the Entente, strong diplomatic strains appeared in the relationship between the Directory and the German government. The German Ambassador in Kiev, Count von Berchem, wrote to the Foreign Ministry on 14 December 1918 stating that he would begin *de facto* relations with the Directory and if possible attempt to gain the same conditions as Germany had previously obtained from the Hetman's government, and even to continue the economic clauses of the previous agreements with that government.⁸ This suggested either considerable arrogance or naïveté on the part of Berchem, as the economic agreements between the Hetmanate and Germany were those of a satellite state with its occupier. It followed that the Directory would not sanction such agreements so favourable to Germany.

The relations between Germany and Poland were to play a vital role in Germany's perception of Ukraine. Already in December 1918 it was clear that Germany would lose territory to Poland in the east, and for Germany Poland was to become the chief antagonist in Eastern Europe. The Foreign Ministry was faced with the conflicting demands of the Directory and the Entente. The Directory called for total German military withdrawal from Ukraine, whereas the Entente wanted German intervention against the Bolsheviks. The position adopted at that time by the AA was to become the prevailing one during the period of the Russian Civil War. A memorandum from Solf (Chief Secretary of the AA) dated 30 December 1918 stated: "Politically we must be very careful and draw back, as long as the fate of Ukraine is uncertain. Should the country succeed in achieving its independence that would be excellent for us, particularly because of the counterweight of Ukraine to Poland."⁹ Count von Berchem recommended the withdrawal of all German diplomats from Ukraine because of the total chaos. Solf, the Chief Secretary of the AA, wrote to Berchem expressing his caution about the withdrawal of German diplomats. Solf believed that the closure of the embassy would give the impression that Germany was abandoning Ukraine to the Bolsheviks, or at least withdrawing or limiting diplomatic recognition of the Ukrainian government. "So long as the situation hangs in the balance this is not to be desired. This should only come about when the Ukrainians themselves can be convinced that, without doubt, extraterritoriality would no longer be respected or that the government

⁸ PA AA: Büro des Staatsekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten (Ukraine). (R14388). s. 136.

⁹ PA AA: Büro des Staatsekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten (Ukraine). (R14389). Duplicate. s. 75.

was not in a position to provide any credible defence of security.”¹⁰ This was a rather dubious definition of the Foreign Ministry’s view of Ukrainian independence.

As the year 1919 progressed the desperation of the Directory became more marked and they began to appeal to the Germans for military assistance against the Bolsheviks. The Directory had grasped that without some form of external assistance its days were numbered, and as the Entente were not in favour of an independent Ukraine, the Germans seemed the only source of intervention. Such attempts proved to be fruitless however, and by February a Soviet government was in power in Kiev.

Lenin had decided to grant the new Ukrainian Soviet government a level of independence in its foreign policy in order to gain international recognition for Soviet Ukraine. Lenin appointed Christian Rakovsky as Commissar for Foreign Affairs of Soviet Ukraine, and he was at the same time Chairman of the Soviet of People’s Commissars of Ukraine and member of the Politburo of the Ukrainian Central Committee. Throughout the Civil War Rakovsky’s main task was to strengthen Soviet authority in Ukraine and to impose his own government and order. In March 1919 the constitution of the Ukrainian SSR was ratified by the Second Congress of the Ukrainian Soviets. It established close economic and military union between Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Russia.

Germany did not officially recognise the new Soviet regime in Kharkov and to complicate matters further, Radek (the representative of the Russian Soviet government) had just been arrested in Berlin. A group of German, Austrian, and Hungarian Spartacists were also keen to occupy the German consulate in Kiev and set up some type of diplomatic mission for what they perceived as the future ‘revolutionary’ Germany which would surely emerge with the wave of unrest convulsing Europe. For the moment they were held in check by Rakovsky and the Bolsheviks, keen for diplomatic and trade relations with Germany.

On 3 April 1919 the newspaper *Severnaya Kommuna* reported that Rakovsky had visited the German consulate and asked the consular staff if they were accredited. He went on to state that the position of the Soviet Ukrainian government was that they were not, and that certain privileges would be withdrawn from them. Rakovsky stated, as it was not clear whether they were recognised by their government as diplomatic representatives, and as it was unclear whether citizens of Soviet Ukraine had reciprocal

¹⁰ Ibid.

rights in Germany or not, that he would give them the opportunity to use the telegraph to ascertain the position from the German government as to whether Berlin recognised the Soviet government of Ukraine or not. He also wished them to ascertain from the German government, whether it was possible to send a Ukrainian consul to Germany.¹¹

The situation escalated further and the Ukrainian paper *Svobodnoe Slovo* reported that at the end of April 1919 Rakovsky visited all foreign consulates and delivered an ultimatum. Unless their governments recognised the Soviet Ukrainian government within 10 days all consular staff would be deported from Ukraine. After the 10 days had elapsed the consulates only received a confirmation from their governments that the ultimatum had been received. The Ukrainian Bolsheviks subsequently carried out searches of the consulates.¹²

Germany was clearly pursuing the agenda set by the Entente and refusing to recognise Soviet rule in Ukraine. In Germany there were signs of a hardening of attitudes towards the Bolsheviks by the German Right and particularly those involved with military adventurism and intervention in Russia and Ukraine. The German newspaper *Republik* reported on 3 April 1919 that a Russian White Guard was being set up in Germany: "The volunteers are not by any means prisoners of war from the camps but come mostly from Ukraine where, before the advance of the Bolsheviks, they joined the German troops retreating from Ukraine. There are many former Tsarist Officers amongst them and adjutants of Kornilov and Denikin whose purpose is clearly the destruction of the Soviet government."¹³ The SPD government watched uneasily, as both the Entente and the German Right applied pressure in an anti-Soviet direction.

The Directory, in the meantime, was appealing to the Peace Conference in Paris for recognition. On 12 March 1919 the Ukrainian Press Service reported that the Ukrainians based their appeal on their historic existence as a nation and claimed that they had been involved in the struggle for freedom for centuries.¹⁴ The Entente however continued to turn a deaf ear to their claims and maintained their policy of supporting the Whites, and their aim of one indivisible Russia

General Groener, the Chief of Staff, contacted the War Ministry on the 9th May 1919 and gave his opinions on Germany's links with the anti-Bolshevik forces in

¹¹ BA: Informationsstelle der Reichsregierung. Presseberichte zur politischen und wirtschaftlichen Lage in der Ukraine. 209 (57844).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ BA: Reichslandbund. Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen. (8579). [6.1. Re 1]

¹⁴ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14391) 180.

Russia and Ukraine. Groener stated that after 1918 the initial contacts between the Germans and the White Cossacks in southeast Russia had come to nothing. The Supreme Command had also asked the War Ministry if Russian prisoners of war in Germany could be pressed into service against the Bolsheviks, but had received no firm reply from the Ministry. The letter ended with the addendum that the War Ministry had stated that there was to be no question of Russian prisoners being used in this way.¹⁵ Once again the German government was acting cautiously and refusing to become involved in any adventure in Ukraine.

Relations with the Russian Soviet government were at this period very strained and one of the chief causes was the actions of the German troops and 'volunteers' in the Baltic States, where they had intervened in a decisive way to support anti-Bolshevik governments in Latvia and Lithuania. There may well have been the fear in Moscow that Germany had similar plans for Ukraine. Chicherin, the Russian Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, in a series of articles entitled '*Seven Years of Soviet Foreign Policy*' characterised 1919 as: "The period when Scheidemann was in power, could only be described as a period when the German government was in a state of war with us, and the permission of the German government for the troop formations of Von der Goltz, Bermond, and the 'Iron Division' to form was only the continuation of a policy which, already in the period of Brest-Litovsk had been the actual policy of Ludendorff, Tirpitz and the like."¹⁶ The German government, for its part, claimed that it was unable to control the actions of the *Freikorps* in the Baltic and Gustav Noske, the Defence Minister, wrote:

Alas, the poor government was expected to have perfect control of everything in Germany, while large parts of the country were like a madhouse. How could we be expected to manage our business affairs in the Baltic properly when machine guns were being fired all around us? While I was absorbed with my work at Dahlem (organising the recapture of Berlin from the Spartacists), I could not concern myself with all the little Wallensteins, who recruited men and led them to the east. So it went on for months.¹⁷

¹⁵ BA: Reichskanzleiakte, AA 09.01. (5073) 89.

¹⁶ Horst Günther Linke, *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen bis Rapallo*. (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1970), p.82. Phillip Scheidemann was appointed German Chancellor in February 1919. He resigned as Chancellor on June 20 1919.

¹⁷ Gustav Noske, *Von Kiel bis Kapp* (Berlin, 1920), pp. 177-8.

Rakovsky and Lenin decided to appoint the arrested Radek ambassador of Soviet Ukraine in Germany. In the interim Rakovsky arrested and imprisoned several German consular officials and businessmen. The German government protested strongly and alleged that Radek was not being held on political grounds but rather for various criminal infringements. When the Prussian Justice Ministry informed the Foreign Ministry that the courts would probably dismiss the charges against Radek, the AA telegraphed Moscow to state that the charges against Radek were being lifted and that he would be deported to Russia on condition that the German hostages in Ukraine were released, and when the Soviet government gave a firm undertaking that Radek would not attempt to return to Germany. The Soviet government refused to accept the limitation on Radek's right to travel. He was released from custody and placed under house arrest. The affair dragged on until January 1920 when Radek finally left Germany. The affair would poison relations between Germany and Soviet Ukraine.

Early in April 1919 a new Soviet Republic was proclaimed in Munich. Lenin, in a speech to the central council of the trade unions, referred to the mutiny of French troops in Odessa and to the Soviet republics in central Europe as proof that Bolshevism's victory on an international scale was completely secure. Lenin was inspired by the Versailles treaty to discover 'an immense revolutionary movement' in Germany.¹⁸ Chicherin greeted the new Soviet Republic in Bavaria in a message published in *Izvestiya*: "We may rest assured that the day is not far off when the revolutionary socialist Entente will join forces with us and will give support to the Bavarian republic against any attack. Every blow aimed at you is aimed at us. In absolute unity we carry on our revolutionary struggle for the well-being of all workers and exploited peoples."¹⁹ None of this was designed to allay the fears of the German government that the Bolsheviks were planning the export of their creed to Germany, and led to a freezing diplomatic climate between the two countries. It seemed to the Bolsheviks that the time had indeed come for revolution throughout Europe. Their optimism had peaked too soon. On 1 May 1919 the Bavarian Soviet Republic collapsed, in June an attempted communist uprising in Vienna was crushed, and in August the Hungarian Soviet Republic was overthrown due to the intervention of Romanian troops backed by the Entente.

¹⁸ Lenin, *Sochineniya*, Volume xxiv, p. 381.

¹⁹ *Izvestiya*. 9, 10 April 1919.

These defeats left Soviet Russia cut off from the world and the fate of Ukraine was similar. By summer 1919 the White forces of General Denikin advancing from the south took Kiev, and the government of Rakovsky was overthrown and a White military regime under Denikin established. Germany now had to deal with a very different government in Ukraine. At the same time the other White armies led by Yudenich outside Petrograd, and Kolchak in Siberia, were threatening the very existence of Soviet Russia. Once again Ukraine had been severed from "Russia" but this time by a force convinced of the fact that it alone represented the spirit of the old Russia.

On 20 June 1919, a new cabinet under the SPD Chancellor Gustav Bauer was formed, consisting of members of the Centre Party, Bavarian Peoples Party, and of course, the SPD. The new Foreign Minister was Hermann Müller. In a speech before the National Assembly on 23 July, Müller set out his policy on relations with Soviet Russia: "It is pointless to try and prophesy Russia's future development. For years the imminent collapse of Soviet power has been foreseen. We must grasp the fact that in the centre of Russian life, particularly in Moscow, Lenin still rules."²⁰ In the course of September 1919 discussions took place between a representative of the Soviet Russian government, a certain Herr Kopp and the Economics Minister, Schmidt, and the Foreign Minister, Müller. The subject of discussion was the opening of trade links with the RFSSR. The Germans were very keen to reopen links with Russia, egged on by the coal and steel industries but the Entente intervened. The Allied Supreme Council, on 9 October, issued a note calling on the German government to participate fully in the Allied blockade of Russia. This note stated: "The hostility of the Bolsheviks to all governments and the programme of international revolution that they issue is a grave danger to the international security of all powers. Every strengthening of the powers of resistance of the Bolsheviks increases this danger and it is to be desired that all peoples who seek to establish peace and social order, unite to fight this danger."²¹

The White regime of Denikin in Ukraine was to be short-lived, ruling the country less than 6 months in all, but the diplomatic and military developments during this period were to prove illuminating for the future. There were three forces in Ukraine in the summer of 1919, indeed four if the anarchist forces under Makhno were included - the Whites who controlled most of Ukraine - the nationalists under Petliura in the

²⁰ Linke, *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen bis Rapallo*, p.83.

²¹ Ibid, p. 85.

western part of Ukraine, and the Red Army which had withdrawn beyond the Russian frontier. The Whites, especially Denikin, refused offers to cooperate with the nationalists against the Bolsheviks, as long as Petliura insisted on an independent Ukraine. They also convinced the Entente to reject Ukrainian appeals for recognition at the Paris Peace Conference. The nationalist forces found themselves attacked by both the Whites and the Reds simultaneously. The Ukrainian forces were ravaged by a typhus epidemic in the autumn of 1919, and casualties were high, with the result that the army of the Directory disintegrated as an effective fighting unit.²²

On 6 November 1919, General Tarnovsky, who commanded the Galician forces in the nationalist army, placed his troops under the command of General Denikin and the Whites, with an agreement that his forces would not participate in any attacks on other Ukrainians. Petliura and the Directory lacking any effective military power, took refuge in Poland where they began to negotiate with Pilsudski and the Polish government. Subtelny regards late 1919 as the effective end of the nationalist struggle in Ukraine but that would be premature as Petliura and the nationalists were to reappear in 1920 with the assistance of the Polish army. Subtelny has analysed the failure of the nationalist movement as follows:

“Confronted with overwhelmingly powerful enemies, both the East and the West Ukrainians were unable to gain the recognition and aid of the victorious Entente powers. Among the reasons why the Entente – which was quite forthcoming with military and diplomatic support for the anti-Bolshevik Whites and numerous new East European nation states – turned its back on the Ukrainians were the following: ignorance of actual conditions in Ukraine, the energetic and effective anti-Ukrainian propaganda of the Whites and Poles, the association of the Rada and the Hetmanate with the Germans, and the leftist tendencies of the Directory.”²³

Allied naval units participated in the defence of Odessa by the Whites against a Ukrainian attack during September 1919, and at the same time a new rash of rumours were started to the effect that the French were going to intervene on Petliura's behalf. To some extent such rumours were a product of the fact that the White Russian ambassador Maklakov continued to seek French mediation in the Ukrainian question, not only to prevent further clashes with the Whites, but also to avoid having this

²² Isodore Nahewsky, *History of the Modern Ukrainian State 1917-1923* (Munich: Ukrainian Free University, 1966), p. 200.

²³ Orest Subtelny, *The Ukraine. A History*. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1994), p. 379.

question stand in the way of possible cooperation between Denikin and Poland. The question of the relationship between Denikin and Poland was to be a central one, and one especially important to Germany, as Poland was perceived as the principal enemy in the east.

During November 1919 the Russian White representatives in Poland reported that the Polish government was anti-Russian and uncooperative. They reported that an alliance with Poland would only be possible if Russia renounced its claims to Belorussia and Western Ukraine as far as the Dnepr. The report also stated that an alliance between Poland and the Russian Whites would not be sincere or long lasting because Poland opposed the restoration of Russia, and proposed instead to aid in the establishment of "all the little independent states" which had grown up in neighbouring territories.²⁴ Piłsudski's view was indicated by his rejection of the provisional border suggested in November by the Peace Conference – later known as the Curzon line. Piłsudski saw the new border as denying to Poland territories, which he wanted to incorporate into the Polish state, and he wished to maintain the independence of the Belorussian and Ukrainian borderlands under Polish influence and protection.²⁵

On 18 December 1919 an official of the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, Von Blücher, placed his thoughts on the Ukrainian situation on paper:

The Ukrainian state has totally collapsed. The Directory has dissolved itself and part of the cabinet has gone over to the Bolsheviks, the rest have fled to Poland. Petliura himself is to be found in Warsaw. There he makes great promises to the Polish government about an attack by Poland to support Ukraine (...) Herr Stepanovski is of the opinion that Ukraine can now only be helped by a joint intervention by England and Germany. I made it clear to him that Germany cannot be drawn into any adventures.²⁶

The efforts of the Whites to increase their influence and to establish full-scale diplomatic relations were obvious in Germany itself. Information on the foundation of a Russian-German Society by Russian Tsarist exiles in Berlin was sent to the AA in early 1920, together with an invitation to the minister to attend. The society had been formed on 1 December 1919, and had as its aims the improvement of relations between

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *Adiuntura Generalna Naczelnego Wodza*, T.7, t.2, k. 102-103, s. 3. (Joseph Piłsudski Institute, New York). Cited in Janusz Cisek (editor), *Sąsiedzi wobec wojny 1920 roku. Wybór dokumentów* (London: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1990), pp. 159-160.

²⁶ PA AA: Büro des Staatsekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14395) 134. Stepanovski was an influential Ukrainian publisher, who had constant links with the Auswärtiges Amt. He was the publisher of a Ukrainian magazine, which appeared in Berne called '*L'Ukraine*'.

Germany and Russia. It did not clearly enunciate an anti-Bolshevik policy but it was quite clear from the terminology used that this was its specific aim: "The Russian-German Society, whose establishment displays no aggressive tendencies towards any state or any collection of states, wishes to include all shades of political opinion. Its political task is the reintroduction of ordered relations in Russia. With this aim in view all internal political differences must be overcome".²⁷ The Society also founded a newspaper and tried to influence German society, and particularly the German government towards supporting the anti-Bolshevik movement, and the White regime in Ukraine and southern Russia.²⁸

Also, in December 1919, the AA received a report from one of its officials, Johannes Schleuning, who had been based in Ukraine and southern Russia during the autumn and winter of 1919. Johannes Schleuning's report reached the AA on 1 December 1919 and is an interesting insight into the opinion of officials of the AA towards Denikin's regime, and on Germany's foreign policy in Ukraine. Schleuning wrote that Denikin's foreign policy was officially friendly towards Britain and France, and that British military missions were based in all the major towns in the region controlled by Denikin. The Entente had total control over all movement both in and out of the region. According to Schleuning, the White Officers were particularly resentful of the French, and held them responsible for the evacuation of Odessa, and Sevastopol the previous spring, and the subsequent abandonment of the Russian population there to the Bolsheviks. Denikin's staff was also angry with the British, because of what they perceived as the British encouragement of nationalist aspirations in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Schleuning also made clear however, that Denikin was totally dependant on the British for the supply of weapons, and that the British had given Denikin a guarantee of support for the policy of 'One indivisible Russia', which was the cornerstone of his policy.

The Russians, Schleuning wrote, were now keen to develop good relations with Germany, after many years of bad relations. Amongst Denikin's General Staff there was much talk of a future alliance with Germany:

One does not speak of an alliance with Germany in secret but with reckless openness. Organisations have even been formed whose task is the formation of an alliance. Orators travel throughout the land, who speak openly of the

²⁷BA: Reichskanzlei Akte. Russland, 131/20.

²⁸ Ibid.

necessity of an alliance with Germany and claim that the policies of the Entente towards Russia have thrown the country into chaos, and that in the future, England especially, would do everything possible to prevent the formation of Russia within its previous frontiers. This feeling is unanimous and the Germans have done nothing to encourage it, it flows from the soul of the Russian people.

Schleuning also claimed that the democratic and social democratic parties, which had been opposed to Germany under the Kaiser (as they regarded it as a reactionary militaristic state), now felt drawn towards the new German Republic. The Slavophiles, who he believed, had felt a danger for all Slavs in Germany's great power status during the war, no longer perceived the German Republic as a threat but as an ally, who was also in a perilous situation, because of the danger of Bolshevism within Germany and the provisions of the Versailles settlement. Schleuning saw the Slavophiles and the conservative Russian forces looking to Germany for assistance in the task of rebuilding Russia, because of Germany's highly educated workforce and her ability in all fields of technology and industry. He referred to many leading Russian politicians, who were convinced supporters of a rapprochement with Germany and claimed to have attended rallies, where the crowds were told that England was Russia's enemy and that only the defeated Germany could be her friend.²⁹

Schleuning continued to report that the White Russian press was completely controlled by the British and continually alleged that Germany was supporting the Bolsheviks with munitions, Germany was sending military instructors to Moscow and that Germany was supporting Petliura and the Ukrainian nationalists with weapons and money. It was the chief aim of this propaganda to demonstrate that Germany was Russia's main enemy:

The demand to know the truth about Germany and her attitude towards Russia is so great that the time is ripe for Germany to begin a programme of enlightenment in South Russia (...) I have been overcome by the deep conviction in South Russia that the idea of the formation of one, large and indivisible Russia will prevail (...) The separated parts of Russia will be brought together with certain privileges, which the regional conditions and national wishes demand. A Ukraine, such as Petliura and his associates

²⁹PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Russland. Innere Politik, Parlements- und Parteiwesen. (R84255) 19-21. Duplicate A 30922.

demand is a chimera and is recognised as such by all who have studied Russians economy, history, language and religion, which is the same for both Russians and Ukrainians. It must be Germany's task to recognise the state aim, which Denikin has set, and to support it with all means (...) Worthwhile negotiations must take place over the means of forming an alliance with Germany between us and Denikin or his representatives (...) The trade relations with Russia must now as soon as possible begin (...) We should under no circumstances wait until the Entente gives its 'placet' to these trading links. We must engage ourselves with the question for on its outcome hangs our future.³⁰

Schleuning's opinions reflected those of some in the AA and indeed in the government that Germany now throw in its lot with the Whites and reject any claims for Ukrainian independence.

The Entente, in the interim, kept up their policy of pressuring Soviet Russia and supporting the Whites as much as possible. At the beginning of October 1919 a request was made by the Supreme Council of the Entente for the German government take part in the blockade of Soviet Russia. The German government, while "fully conscious of the great danger threatening the culture and economic life of all peoples by the spread of Bolshevism", thought that the blockade would be ineffective and argued that it would not take part as it had no common frontier with Russia. The Entente did not press the demand. Britain (for one) was beginning to have second thoughts about supporting the Whites, particularly as Denikin's forces began to suffer a series of defeats in late 1919.

Krasin, the Bolshevik commissar, began to notice the change in mood in October 1919 and wrote in a private letter:

The prospect of carrying on the war indefinitely will not appeal to the Powers, and if Denikin has not settled our hash by the beginning of winter, which is hardly likely, then England for one would deem it acceptable in her own interests to overpower the Bolsheviks in the domain of politics by coming to some agreement and entering into peaceful relations with Soviet Russia.

³⁰ Ibid.

Perhaps this plan of conquering Bolshevik Russia would have more chance of success than the fruitless military campaigns of the last two years.³¹

It was becoming clear that the Entente were reassessing their policies towards both Soviet Russia and Ukraine. There was also the feeling in the new British policy that the 'one and indivisible Russia' might not be in the interests of the British Empire and that perhaps a divided Russia, which was more likely under the Bolsheviks was more desirable.

As the tide began to turn militarily against the Whites and the Bolsheviks inflicted defeat after defeat, the question of German support for an independent Ukraine became urgent once again. It was becoming evident that the Entente might be ready to support Polish efforts to establish an independent Ukraine. On 5 January 1920, Major Kundt, the military attaché at the German embassy in Vienna, telegraphed the AA in Berlin:

From Germany they expect moral and financial support for their plans. The formation of an eastern Ukrainian border state under the political leadership of the Entente and dependant on them is not in the interest of Germany, which can only support a German orientated independent Ukraine. The efforts of Dr B and Herr M would therefore be against German interests and would offer the possibility that German support would be dependant on an independent Ukraine being within the Great Russian realm.³²

The two figures mentioned were Ukrainians who wanted some form of support from Germany for an Allied backed Ukraine, but none was forthcoming. Some German attempts to win influence with the Whites and to increase German influence in Ukraine verged on the fantastic. Amongst these was the case of Hans von Homeyer, a German Ukrainian, who organised a German espionage network in the Crimea and Ukraine in the midst of Denikin's army. On 23 February 1920 von Homeyer sent a report to the AA detailing his efforts on behalf of the Reich in Ukraine. He began by outlining how he had set up a spy ring in the southern Ukraine and Crimea in late 1919:

The importance of this network grows in importance because of the fact that in the named area the rest of Russian intelligence sat, which proved to be the most difficult for a pro-German orientation. The whole apparatus is based on the greatest of trust for me and works without a pfennig of pay,

³¹ E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution. 1917-1923. Volume 3* (London, 1953), p. 156.

³² PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Russland. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14395) 63.

apart from meaningless private donations. It consists of 164 people who are engaged solely in carrying out my directives and that does not include the many others who carry out my directives indirectly. With the retreat of the Volunteer Army to the Crimea we established a political centre in Simferopol, which today one and a half months later has regional sections in Sevastopol, Yalta, Feodosia, Kertsch, Karasubasar, Dzankaj, Eupatoria, and Novorossisk and countless political agents right up to Denikin's headquarters...³³

Von Homeyer felt that Denikin was hostile to Germany but that Wrangel was more positive and saw Wrangel as Russia's main hope. He listed the members of the 'Political Centre' in Simferopol including German landowners and Kipczatski, the chief of the Tartar Church and Schupert the Catholic deacon in Simferopol.³⁴

This report was followed by a letter to the AA requesting the 'Political Centre' to be made official: "Under the leadership of Herr von Homeyer, these men have succeeded in giving Russian policy a direction which should lead to a harmony of relations between Germany and Russia, despite English resistance and the shortage of all material support."³⁵ The AA did not acknowledge von Homeyer's request but at the same time did not do anything to discourage his activities. His report also demonstrates that the German community in Ukraine was involved in the attempt to win over the Whites to a pro-German orientation.

In December 1919 the White army of Denikin was forced to withdraw from most of Ukraine and Soviet forces entered Kiev once again. On 21 December 1919, the Third Ukrainian Soviet government was formed. The Soviet government would remain in power until the summer of 1920, when it would be swept away by the Polish-Soviet war.

The final defeat of the Whites in Ukraine suggested strongly to the Entente that the White cause was lost and a fundamental change in their policy set in. This change in Allied policy would alter the policy of Germany also towards Soviet Ukraine. On 16 January 1920, the Allied Supreme Council, meeting in Paris, declared the blockade of Soviet Russia at an end. The Supreme Council went on to adopt a resolution providing

³³ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Russland. Innere Politik, Parlaments- und Parteiwesen. (R84255), s. 8.

³⁴ Ibid. The 'Political Centre' is listed by Von Homeyer but he does not explain its function, other than disseminating pro-German propaganda among the Volunteer Army officers.

³⁵ Ibid.

for “an exchange of goods on the basis of reciprocity between the Russian people and Allied and neutral countries”. As Stephen White commented in *Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution*: “It was insisted that this did not mean a change in the policy of the Allied governments towards the Soviet government; but it was difficult, on the face of it, to regard the Entente decision as anything other than a complete reversal of the policy which they had previously pursued towards the Bolshevik authorities. A policy of peace and commerce, it appeared, was now to succeed the hostile confrontation of the immediate post-revolutionary years.”³⁶

The lifting of the blockade was an event of great symbolic importance; it was greeted in Soviet Russia as a declaration of the ending of the war with the western powers. Petliura and the representatives of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic were alone against the Bolsheviks, with scarcely any military force behind them. There was no alternative but to turn to the only power in the region able to intervene directly in Ukraine - Poland. The price consisted of a renunciation of the Western Ukraine, and was carried out by means of a unilateral declaration of the government of the UNR in December 1919, and in formal terms by means of the political agreement with Poland in April 1920. In Germany, Freiherr Ago von Maltzan, the official at the AA responsible for Russian and Ukrainian affairs, argued that the defeat of the White armies was imminent and that further help from the Entente was not to be expected. Germany would have to come to terms with Soviet Russia or with a regime, which would succeed it. Maltzan argued that Russia was already abandoning its hard line approach to Germany and the other capitalist states, and that Britain had already recognised this and was changing its policies towards Russia. There was also pressure, he said, from German firms and interest groups to avail of the same opportunities in Russia and Ukraine as the British, if the government failed to act decisively then these interest groups would find their own way of dealing with the Bolsheviks. Finally, von Maltzan argued that there existed the necessity of securing raw materials necessary for the German economy in Russia and to find an outlet in Russia for the excess population in Germany.³⁷

The Foreign Minister (Müller) stated before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Reichsrat on 16 February 1920 that Germany should reopen diplomatic relations with Russia in a cautious way and should begin with the question of prisoners of war. The

³⁶ Stephen White, *Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution*. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979), p.3.

³⁷ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Russland. Innere Politik, Parlaments- und Parteiwesen. (R84255) 25.

major argument was, as had been put by Maltzan, that Britain had already stolen the lead and that other nations could deprive Germany of its trade role in the east. This argument was strengthened by a report sent to the President and the Foreign Minister on 17 February 1920. The report was drawn up by the Director-General of AEG, Rathenau, and Deutsch, the banker Alexander, from the German Orient Bank, and the former Chief Secretary in the Economics Ministry, Dr August Müller. The chief point of the report was that a country like Russia would not take forever to recover from the ravages of revolution and civil war and that Germany would have to ensure its share of the raw materials from the country.³⁸

Germany's chief enemy in the east remained Poland, and in early 1920 it gradually became obvious that Pilsudski was forming a military and political alliance with Petliura and the remnants of the Ukrainian nationalists. Pilsudski clearly envisaged a Ukraine under Polish control and influence and even dreamed of creating the 'Greater Poland' of the Middle Ages stretching to the banks of the Dneper, with Ukraine as a vassal state. Petliura, for his part, recognised that a last desperate gamble for Ukrainian independence was necessary, and the only remaining source of external support was Poland.

For Poland the Russian Civil War was a golden opportunity to both weaken Russia and to gain considerable influence in Ukraine:

Pilsudski did not wish for a quick defeat of Denikin but for a prolonged war between the Whites and the Reds that would weaken both of them and give Poland time to strengthen its own forces for any future war. According to General Tadeusz Kutrzeba, it was clear to Pilsudski that the lesser of the two Russian evils was Denikin's defeat. A Polish war against the Bolsheviks without Denikin would be a war about Poland. In Pilsudski's judgement, even if Denikin submitted to the Entente, and agreed to an independent Poland, he would not accept extending the Polish border beyond the Bug.³⁹

Germany watched uneasily in April 1920 as the first signs of the approaching Soviet-Polish war appeared. The military convention between the Ukrainians and the Poles was signed in April. It provided for combined operations, for the subjection to Polish command of all Ukrainian forces up to the Dnepr, for the provisioning of the

³⁸ Linke, *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen*, pp. 93-94.

³⁹ Michael Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance. 1919-1921*. (Edmonton: CIUS, 1995), p.87.

Polish army on Ukrainian soil by the Ukrainians, for the arming of the Ukrainian army by the Poles, and for the eventual withdrawal of all Polish forces. A few days later, Polish and Ukrainian forces crossed the Ukrainian frontier and marched on Kiev. They met little resistance and the Red Army fell back before them. Within less than two weeks, the Polish army entered Kiev and declared the establishment of the Ukrainian People's Republic, with Petliura at its head. It was the 15th regime in Kiev since February 1917. A Ukrainian nationalist regime had triumphed, albeit under Polish control.

The French, in particular, had supported Poland 100% in its drive into Ukraine and supplied officers, who advised the Polish forces during the campaign. In Moscow, Lenin was under no illusions as to the real reason for the invasion of Ukraine and the whole war. In a speech delivered in October 1920 he drew parallels between the treaties of Versailles and Brest-Litovsk and the treatment meted out by the Entente to Germany and Russia:

I believe that the present Polish war is the last attempt on Soviet Russia by the Entente (...) You know that the Allied imperialists – France, England, America and Japan – after defeating Germany, forced the Germans to sign the Versailles treaty, a treaty even more brutal than the notorious Brest treaty about which everyone cried so much. One reason this monstrous peace is maintained is that Poland splits Germany into 2 parts (...) The Versailles treaty has made Poland a buffer state, a state designed to safeguard Germany from Soviet communism, and which the Entente regards as an instrument to be used against the Bolsheviks. That is why, when the war against Poland broke out (...) it proved to be a war against the Entente more than did the earlier (interventionary) wars.⁴⁰

On 4 May 1920, a secret report from a German agent in Helsinki, reached the Undersecretary of State, Albert, in the Reichs Chancellery, that Marshal Mannerheim of Finland had arrived in Berlin, and that his visit was connected with the Polish campaign in Ukraine. The report suggested that the Entente at the Conference of San Remo had come to the conclusion that economic links between the Border States and Germany were to be encouraged in order to strengthen the belt separating Germany and Russia:

⁴⁰ Lenin, *Sochineniya*, xxvi, pp.15-16.

The plan is to include Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and Finland in this scheme. The plan appears even more necessary now that Brussilov has collected a strong Soviet army near Mogilev to engage in a counter-attack against Poland at the end of May. Mannerheim and General Malcolm are said to have discussed the possibility of former Russian troop detachments, which are currently in Germany, along with German detachments, who will not allow themselves to be demobilised being used in the scheme. Whereas the English want these troops to be sent to the Polish and Lithuanian front, Ukraine on the other hand, wishes these troops to be labelled 'German Defence' and to be sent to Ukraine to assist the German colonists there. Among the plans there is the possibility of the formation of a German-Ukrainian *Freikorps*. Some interested circles have recently begun to speculate about Germany's role in all of this. I have repeated that it is not the view of the German government that Germany should take part in a military campaign against Soviet Russia. Germany has also had enough costly and bad experiences with the von der Goltz and Bermondts affairs not to get involved in such an adventure.⁴¹

The report indicated the still cautious approach of the German government and the refusal to be drawn into the types of situations as had occurred in the Baltic in 1919.

There could be no doubt that the Polish backed Petliura regime would be a dictatorship, and far from the ideals of most Ukrainian intellectuals and nationalists. From Vienna, where he was in exile, the veteran Ukrainian nationalist Vynnychenko appealed to the German and Italian communists and revolutionary socialists not to recognise the new regime in Kiev. He particularly appealed to these parties to do everything possible to hinder the sending of Ukrainian prisoners of war in their countries to Poland and Romania, where they would be used to fight the Russian and Ukrainian Soviet armies.⁴² This appeal did not fall on deaf ears and to many German socialists the Petliura regime was a return to the evil days of the Hetmanate, with Polish bayonets supporting it rather than German ones. At the same time the White army in the Crimea under its new commander Count Wrangel was gearing up to intervene in the war on the side of Poland and Petliura. Wrangel had concluded that the old policy of 'one indivisible Russia' would not work, and was prepared to cooperate with the Ukrainian nationalists.

⁴¹ BA: Reichskanzlei Akte. Ukraine. (5186/20), s. 48/49.

⁴² PA AA Bonn: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Russland. Innere Politik, Parlements- und Parteiwesen. (R84255) 57. 24 April 1920.

On 4 March 1920 the German representative in Sevastopol, Otto Schalbert, contacted the AA to report that pro-German feeling in the White army was growing, and that Wrangel hoped for better relations with Germany and for Germany to use its influence on the Bolsheviks and Petliura.⁴³ Wrangel hoped to recover the waning influence of the Whites in Western Europe by appealing to Germany as a mediator.

In Berlin the newspaper of the SPD, *Vorwärts*, published an article on 23 April 1920, which referred to Petliura as a dictator and called on the government, and particularly the SPD, not to lend any encouragement or support to the anti-Bolshevik war in Ukraine. The article led to furious protests from Ukrainian nationalists based in Germany and they demanded that the SPD as a fellow socialist party withdraw the reference to Petliura as a dictator.⁴⁴ There is no evidence that the SPD did so.

The government in Berlin was under pressure from many sections of the Left (mainly the SPD) not to support the Polish-Ukrainian venture; whereas the Right was also opposed to intervention on the grounds that Petliura's friend was Germany's enemy. Reventlow, a leading German nationalist, published an article in the paper of the German National Party, *Die Tageszeitung*, demanding a campaign against "the real enemies of the working class, against the Entente, which has bound the proletariat in chains of slavery". Reventlow later claimed that he had tried to win over leading German politicians to the idea of military cooperation with Soviet Russia against Poland.⁴⁵

The true attitude of a German diplomat was expressed in a telegram from von Dirksen at the German embassy in Warsaw to Blücher at the Auswärtiges Amt on 28 May 1920: "Over all pertaining to the east a quiet waiting is the best, also as regards the border states a cautious approach is called for. In any case any negotiation with Lenin is ruled out while the anti-Bolshevik flag is carried aloft."⁴⁶

Victor Kopp, the semi-official diplomatic representative of the Soviet government, was at this time in Berlin and making contact with German armament firms and trying to interest them in the production of weapons for Russia. Any contact with the German government was however, out of the question. The commander of the German Army, Seeckt, had six months previously stated: "I refuse to support Poland even in the face of the danger that she may be swallowed up. On the contrary I count on

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ PA AA: Büro des Staatsekretärs. Politische Beziehungen der Ukraine zu Deutschland, (R84244) 1-7.

⁴⁵ Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, p. 197.

⁴⁶ PA AA: Büro des Staatsekretärs. Politische Beziehungen der Ukraine zu Deutschland, (R84244) 34.

that: and even if we cannot at the moment help Russia to re-establish her former imperial frontiers, we certainly should not hinder her.”⁴⁷

A crucial change in German thinking on foreign policy was brought about by the Kapp putsch in March 1920. The putsch was led by the military representatives of the old regime, and the *Freikorps* detachments, which marched on Berlin, were the same troops who had been fighting the Bolsheviks in the Baltic in 1919. As E.H.Carr commented:

They were irreconcilable anti-Bolsheviks who still believed in a restoration in Russia as the necessary prelude to a reconstitution of the German-Russian alliance. The attitude of the new Reichswehr was quite different. Its clever leaders had not only come to accept the Weimar Republic as a suitable facade behind which they could work for the recovery of German military power; they were also prepared to accept Bolshevism in Russia as a potential partner to promote this end. The Kapp putsch ended in the relegation to the lunatic fringe of German politics of those who still believed in the crusade against Bolshevism, and the emergence of military leaders who were ready to do business with Soviet Russia as an equal power.⁴⁸

This was, of course, to alter the whole perspective regarding Ukraine. Official Germany would distance itself from Petliura and the nationalists, and increasingly regard Rakovsky and the Ukrainian Bolsheviks as the de facto government of Ukraine.

Von Dirksen, the German ambassador in Warsaw, contacted the AA on 28 May 1920, to enquire about what was happening in Ukraine. He complained that very little information was available in Warsaw but could confirm that several representatives of the Russian Whites were in Warsaw seeking to negotiate with the Poles, and the Ukrainians. It was von Dirksen's opinion that the Poles were quite happy to have the White Russians on board, and were planning imperialist dreams regarding Soviet Russia: “Oh yes, one has a good appetite here in Warsaw. Their quiet dream is the division of Russia into small states and the whole thing under Polish control, what do the Berlin Russians say to that?”⁴⁹ From the tone of his report it was evident that he had little time for the Polish aspirations. In June and July 1920 the Red Army struck several

⁴⁷ Carr, E. H., *The Bolshevik Revolution. 1917-1923. Volume 3*, p. 323.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁴⁹ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Politische Beziehungen der Ukraine zu Deutschland.(R84244) 80. The “Berlin Russians” were the Russian White émigrés in Berlin.

decisive counter-blows against the Polish and Ukrainian forces, and the Poles retreated from Ukraine along with the discredited Petliura, leaving only some Ukrainian partisan bands to harry the victorious Bolsheviks. Many historians have seen this as the end of the struggle for Ukrainian independence and militarily it certainly was so.⁵⁰ The Red Army followed the Polish/Ukrainian forces into Poland, and indeed to the very gates of Warsaw. The German response to this series of events was a widespread rejoicing that the Poles had been defeated, and the fate of Ukraine seemed very much secondary. Once again, it appeared that Germany's enmity with Poland was to be the major factor in forming her foreign policy on Eastern Europe.

The Soviet representative in Berlin, Kopp, gave an assurance that the Red Army would not cross the German frontier. On 22 July, he forwarded a proposal from Simons (the German Foreign Minister) to Chicherin that normal diplomatic relations be resumed.⁵¹ On 2 August, he arranged for a representative of the German government to be attached to the Soviet IV Army, to settle any incidents on the frontier. On the other hand, Ludendorff offered to lead an army of liberation into Poland, on condition that Poznan be returned to Germany.

Lenin defined the situation at the time rather well in a speech at the 8th Congress of Soviets of the RSFSR in December 1920:

Under such circumstances, Germany naturally is inclined towards an alliance with Russia. When the Russian troops were approaching Warsaw, the whole of Germany was seething. The desire of Germany, which is strangled, but which has a chance to start up some of her gigantic productive forces, for a union with Russia has produced something of a political mix-up in Germany. The German Black Hundreds are inclined to be sympathetic with the Bolsheviks and Spartacists. This can be easily understood, for it grows out of economic conditions, and it also creates for us the basis of our entire economic position and our foreign policy.⁵²

There were even reports of thousands of German volunteers wishing to join the Red Army in order to fight Poland and overturn the Versailles Treaty.

⁵⁰ Palij, Wilson, Subtelny, Magosci.

⁵¹ Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution. Volume III*, p. 324.

⁵² Lenin, *Sochineniya*, xxvi, 14-15. German anti-Polish feeling was so pronounced that all spectrums of political opinion from Communists to Nationalists were united in the hope that Poland would be conquered and thus the humiliation of the Versailles settlement for Germany avenged.

On 16 July 1920, Margolin, the representative of the UNR government in Britain, wrote to the Foreign Minister of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic about Germany's perceptions of Ukrainian independence. Margolin noted that Petliura's alliance with Poland had led to the alienation of the British Left, but that the effect in Germany was even more negative:

From the first hour on, all the German parties, the government and the whole public have adopted a wholly negative orientation towards Ukraine, because they believe that the Polish-Ukrainian military alliance is a part of France's anti-German policies in Eastern Europe.

Margolin went on to state that he saw the efforts of the Ukrainian missions abroad as pointless in view of the terrible strategic situation in Ukraine, and that he did not believe that the Allied Conference at Spa would listen to the case of the Ukrainians.⁵³

It seemed that Ukraine was in a hopeless situation, for although it might be viewed by the Germans as being a pawn in France's power game, it was viewed by the British unsympathetically for the opposite reason. The German ambassador in London informed Berlin, on 4 November 1920, that there was little sympathy in Britain for Ukraine because the independent Ukraine was still regarded as a German imperialist creation, whereas there was a lot of sympathy for a lot of the other former states of the Russian Empire.⁵⁴ The shadow of the Hetmanate was still long in 1920, and this influenced both British and, to a lesser extent, French thinking on Ukraine.

The Soviet armies were repulsed by the Poles in the course of September 1920, and shortly afterwards, the Bolsheviks and Poles concluded an armistice. The Soviet-Polish war was over.

With the end of the war in late 1920, the Soviet government of Rakovsky was firmly ensconced in Kharkov, although still not recognised by Germany or the Entente. Petliura and the remnants of the Directory were in exile in Poland, and still trying to influence German policy but it was clear by the autumn of 1920 that the attempt to win Ukrainian independence had failed, but Germany was unwilling to recognise Soviet Ukraine. The AA continued to receive pleas of support from the diplomatic representatives of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic, which Germany still recognised as the successor government to the Directory of 1919.

⁵³ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine auswärtige Politik. (R84241), s. 1-2.

⁵⁴ Ibid, s. 3.

On 21 September 1920, Makarenko, the diplomatic representative of the UNR, sent the Foreign Minister of Germany an unctuous letter of thanks full of pro-German sentiments:

The Ukrainian people, represented by their honourable leader, has long ago expressed its thanks to the German Reich for all its active help in the liberation from the centuries long yoke, and also their wishes that the Ukrainian people and the German people remain in the closest association⁵⁵

Matters were further complicated by the fact that there was still a sum of 400 Million gold Marks in Berlin, held in trust by the German government. The money had been the property of the Hetman's government in 1918, and the diplomatic view of the German government was that the money could only be given to the legitimate *de jure* government of Ukraine. Both Rakovsky's government in Kharkov, and the exiled Petliuran regime in Warsaw claimed the money as theirs. On 31 October 1920, Makarenko wrote to the German Foreign Minister from Vienna, and protested that his government had been compared in a report of the AA as only one of many seeking the 400 Million Marks.⁵⁶

After the fall of the Hetmanate, Skoropadskyi resided in Berlin, together with his entourage, until the end of 1920. He sought to influence the German Foreign Ministry, and also to gain control of the 400 Million Marks in the *Reichsbank*, which had been credited to "the Ukrainian government" for grain deliveries in 1918. Skoropadskyi was occasionally consulted by the German authorities in order to ascertain what the situation was in Ukraine, and for a time was considered as a possible Ukrainian leader. Skoropadskyi was rejected however by the Ukrainian "National Centre" in Vienna, led by his former Foreign Minister, Dmitro Doroshenko. Also, the Germans realised that his main object in Berlin was securing control of the Ukrainian funds in the *Reichsbank* and they lost interest in him in the course of 1919. He only returned to prominence with the rise of the "monarchist" movement in 1921.⁵⁷

Here it is necessary to enter the murky and extremely complex world of Ukrainian nationalist exiles in Berlin. Vienna was the centre of Ukrainian émigré activity before and after the First World War, but because of Germany's central involvement in Ukrainian affairs during 1917 and 1918, and also because of its apparent support for the

⁵⁵ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Beziehungen der Ukraine zu Deutschland. (R84244), s. 15.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Williams, *Culture in Exile*, p. 148.

Ukrainian nationalist cause, more Ukrainian activists drifted towards Berlin from 1918 onwards. In late 1918 the representatives of Petliura's government in Kiev, led by the Galician scholar Roman Smal-Stocki, arrived in Berlin and took control of the Ukrainian embassy. Smal-Stocki developed a relationship with the *Auswärtiges Amt*, and visited Wipert von Blücher, an official from the Eastern Section of the ministry, to report on developments in Ukraine and to protect Ukrainian interests against the supporters of the Russian White generals in Berlin. He also attempted to gain control of the funds in the *Reichsbank* but the Germans doubted the stability of his government. He constantly tried to present his government as the last line of defence against Bolshevism, which he also told British diplomats in Berlin; but this did not gain him much support from the Foreign Ministry who listened to him politely but did not act.⁵⁸

The alliance of Petliura with Poland in 1920 meant a rapid cooling in the relationship of his government and of his diplomats in Berlin with the German authorities. Germany had hoped that an independent Ukraine would be a counterweight to both Russia and Poland. Smal-Stocki attempted to explain the alliance as merely a tactical manoeuvre, but the Germans were not impressed. The Foreign Ministry also rejected Petliura's request for military advisers from the *Reichswehr* in the summer of 1920. It is certainly true that the Polish alliance was a major factor in this decision. In late November 1920, with the defeat of Petliura in Ukraine and the exile of his government in Poland, the Ukrainian embassy in Berlin was formally closed. Smal-Stocki continued to occupy the building however, in the name of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic, until he was forcibly removed by the Berlin police in November 1922.⁵⁹ It was an ignominious end for Petliura's chief representative in the German capital.

The Germans were aware that Smal-Stocki had also been conducting negotiations with the British, and also that Petliura's representative in London, Arnold Margolin, had been trying to get British support for the Ukrainian nationalist cause there. None of this impressed them, and the alliance with Poland was the final straw. It was clearly not in the interests of Germany to co-operate in any way with forces which it deemed to be unreliable and, furthermore, actively pursuing alliances with Germany's enemies.

The Daily Telegraph gave a rather colourful description of the situation in Ukraine on 29 October 1920:

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.149.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

To sum up, Ukraine reminds one of those cakes with numerous multi-coloured layers of different materials superimposed. Red, Ukrainian Nationalist and simply peasant, they are all there, fighting each other all over the country in ever-varying combinations. The latest news (...) is that Lenin and some of his colleagues, despairing of their rule in Ukraine, are ready to give it a full measure of independence, on condition that an alliance is concluded with the Bolsheviks against external enemies.⁶⁰

It is certainly true that Soviet rule in Ukraine was not finally secured until 1922, as Makhno and the Anarchists remained active in the south, and partisans supporting Petliura harried the Red Army in the west. Polish military intelligence supported White Russian and nationalist forays into Soviet Ukraine until late autumn 1921. In May 1921, Boris Savinkov prepared a plan for a rising in Ukraine, and in June he established the Union for the Defence of Fatherland and Freedom in Warsaw. It envisaged the separation of Ukraine from Russia. Savinkov's co-operation with Petliura is dealt with elsewhere in this study. All of these attempts to destabilise the Soviet regime in Kharkov (mostly launched from Polish territory), assured that the *Auswärtiges Amt* was in no haste to recognise Soviet Ukrainian diplomats in Berlin, or to hand control of the embassy building to Rakovsky's government. Only Rapallo, and the final consolidation of Soviet power in Ukraine changed the diplomatic equation.

The Daily Telegraph's report on Lenin's approach to Ukraine was also partially true but there was no question of independence, instead a form of federation would be the Soviet solution. Russian leaders moved in 1920 to tighten state relationships between Russia and Ukraine. At the Fourth All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets in May 1920, a position was adopted favouring the closest possible ties between the two Soviet republics and acting as if the two were already joined in a federal union. In a resolution of June 19 1920, the Russian Central Executive Committee authorised the Ukrainian government to appoint thirty representatives from Ukraine to join as members of the Russian Central Executive Committee. Subsequently, in December 1920, a Treaty of Alliance between the UkSSR and the RSFSR was concluded. The independence and sovereignty of both sides was recognised but a close military and economic alliance was formed. The alliance unified seven Russian and Ukrainian commissariats; military and maritime affairs, foreign trade, finance, labour, and communications, the councils

⁶⁰ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Politische Beziehungen der Ukraine zu Deutschland,(R84244), s. 6.

of national economy and posts and telegraph. The heads of the unified commissariats were to sit as members of the Russian Council of People's Commissars and were to report to it. It became clear that the work of the commissariats was to be directed and controlled by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.⁶¹

The Treaty of Alliance left under Ukrainian jurisdiction four areas - foreign affairs, agriculture, justice and education. Russian leaders wanted to maintain the appearance of independence for Ukraine, and a foreign ministry with embassies abroad helped. The Ukrainian Commissariat of Foreign Affairs was headed by Rakovsky, and he stated his opinions in December 1920:

The tendency of Socialistic revolution is political and economic centralisation, provisionally taking the form of international federation. Of course, the creation of this federation cannot be effected by the stroke of the pen, but is the result of a more or less extended process of elimination of particularism, provincialism, democratic and national bourgeois prejudices.⁶²

Rakovsky's government once again demanded recognition from Germany as both the *de facto* and the *de jure* government of Ukraine. A memorandum of the AA on 19 November 1920 from an official named von Kopp, supported the policy of no change: "A recognition of Soviet Ukraine, that means the government of Rakovsky, would demand a departure for us from our position of caution and is not called for at present (...) Also the troops of Pavlenko and the government of Petliura are still present in a part of Ukrainian territory."⁶³ As long as there was the slightest possibility of Rakovsky's regime being overthrown, Germany would not commit itself. Von Dirksen in Warsaw advised the AA on 21 October 1920, that Germany should not alienate the sympathies of the Russian Whites because it was still uncertain how long the Bolsheviks would remain in power. He also argued that Germany should remain involved in what he termed 'the South Russian game'.⁶⁴ The underlying theme was caution and a wait until the final victor in Ukraine became clear. In the meantime only a minority like the geopolitician Paul Rohrbach continued to argue the case for Ukrainian independence.

⁶¹ Shapiro, *Soviet Treaty Series*, I. p. 83-84.

⁶² Sullivant, *Soviet Politics and the Ukraine* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1962) p. 61, where he cites from *Soviet Russia* of December 11, 1920.

⁶³ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Politische Beziehungen der Ukraine zu Deutschland. (R84244), s.11. General Pavlenko was the military commander of the UNR army, whereas Petliura was the political head.

⁶⁴ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine auswärtige Politik. (R84241), s. 6/7.

On 2 December 1920, in a memorandum an official of the AA recounted his conversation with Smal-Stocki, the representative of Petliura in Berlin. Smal-Stocki complained bitterly that an ungrateful Western and Central Europe had left the Ukrainian nationalists to their fate, and that now the last barrier against Bolshevism had been removed. The supporters of Petliura had held the flag of anti-Bolshevism high for too long and the moment had come for others to take up the challenge.⁶⁵ There is no evidence to suggest that the Germans would take up the challenge and this was the beginning of the end for diplomatic relations between Germany and the Ukrainian nationalists.

On 27 October 1920, the German ambassador in London contacted Maltzan of the AA to inform him that Margolin, the diplomatic representative of the Ukrainian Peoples Republic in London, had been to visit him. In the course of the report the ambassador stated his opinions on diplomatic relations between Germany and Soviet Ukraine:

The basis for an ordered economic relationship between Germany and Ukraine is the creation of legal relations. The present situation without any treaty is impractical, because everything depends on good will, beside which certain distrust can be concealed. Even though as a result of the close co-operation of Russia and Ukraine, many aspects of economic life in Ukraine are decided in Moscow, yet this huge and rich economic area is essentially independent in its possibilities, and grows increasingly jealous over its rights.⁶⁶

Obviously, the German ambassador was of the belief that relations between Germany and Ukraine needed to be placed on an official basis, rather than acting via Moscow. This was because the Ukrainian Soviet government was quite jealous of its powers and especially regarding external relations.

By May 1921 the situation was still not clarified regarding Germany's relations with the UkSSR, and in a memorandum from Von Maltzan the AA pointed out the ridiculous situation. The Petliura regime, which was still in Poland, was not being recognised by Germany but its representatives had seized the old Ukrainian embassy in 1919. The embassy had no diplomatic powers, in the eyes of the AA, for the

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Politische Beziehungen der Ukraine zu Deutschland. (R84244) 4.

government it purported to represent was not *de jure* and also controlled no territory in Ukraine itself.⁶⁷

The continued possibility of war between Poland and Germany was referred to in a report from von Dirksen in Warsaw on 28 May 1921. He reported that Soviet troops were collecting along the Romanian and Polish frontiers, and it was his opinion that if war did break out the Bolshevik army would immediately enter Poland.⁶⁸

On 24 June 1921 the German Republic formally recognised the government of Soviet Ukraine in Kharkov as the *de jure* government of Ukraine.⁶⁹ The Soviet Ukrainian government now demanded the return of the Ukrainian embassy buildings in Berlin, and of course the 400 Million gold Marks.⁷⁰ With the embassy building they were successful, but the struggle over the money continued for years. The Germans were careful however to continue to keep their lines of communication with the Ukrainian nationalists open.

The AA sent a telegram to the German ambassador in Warsaw on 12 September 1921, requesting him to enquire from Smal-Stocki, who had now become the UNR diplomatic representative in Poland, what Petliura's plans were in Ukraine. Smal Stocki was en route to visit Petliura. The closeness of the relationship was something quite strange, as for example on 5 November 1921, when Von Dirksen in Warsaw reported on a peasant nationalist uprising in Ukraine and went on to allege that Smal-Stocki had already warned him of this in September.⁷¹ So it is clear that despite the newfound acceptance of the Soviet regime in Ukraine, even at this stage, Germany was maintaining a cautious approach to the nationalists. These contacts would bear full fruit after 1933 and the beginning of the Third Reich and, indeed, relations with Skoropadskyi and the monarchists became closer after 1921.

In Germany key industrialists such as Felix Deutsch and Hugo Stinnes were arguing for better German-Soviet economic relations, because even under the NEP policies of Lenin there was a Soviet monopoly of foreign trade. These pressures increased in late 1921 and early 1922, when the World Economic Conference at Genoa

⁶⁷ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine auswärtige Politik. (R84255). Aufzeichnung, 47.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Politische Beziehungen der Ukraine zu Deutschland. (R84244), s. 1-3.

⁷⁰ Ibid, s. 4.

⁷¹ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine auswärtige Politik. (R84255) 32.

created the prospect that Germany would be forced to accept a limited share of Russia's and Ukraine's business as a member of Britain's projected international consortium.⁷²

The consequence was the Treaty of Rapallo signed in 1922, creating solid links between Germany and Soviet Russia and, of course, Soviet Ukraine. The treaty also contained articles on military co-operation between the *Reichswehr* and the Red Army. The German-Soviet agreement did not commit German foreign policy to an excessive reliance on Soviet Russia; but the German nationalists, the military, and heavy industry made sure that the link with Russia was maintained. Its signing (and the recognition of Soviet Ukraine) sealed the fate of the Ukrainian nationalists in Germany for another 11 years, until a new regime in Berlin would again play the Ukrainian card.

⁷² Hiden, *Germany and Europe*, p. 110.

CHAPTER 6

UKRAINE AND GERMAN ECONOMIC POLICY

In November 1918 a shattered and demoralised Germany still represented a considerable economic force in Europe. The productive potential of German industry in 1918 was nothing like as limited as it would be in 1945. The war had not touched German soil, and there had been no air war over German cities, with the end result most German factories and industries were in a position to begin manufacturing, once the conditions of peace returned. The problems were: the conditions attached by the Allies regarding the payment of reparations, and that German industry lacked raw materials and also lacked markets for its products. The German colonies were removed from the Reich, and obviously most of Western Europe now depended on France and Britain and were in no mood to do business with Germany. Many German industrialists began to look east, first to Ukraine and then secondly to Russia.

There was a clear division between the interests of some industrial sectors and others. The main sectors with an interest in Ukraine were the traditional heavy industries of coal mining, mineral smelting and shipbuilding. These were led by firms such as Krupps and Thyssen.¹ These companies had been happy with the economic situation in Ukraine prior to November 1918, and had no desire to see Ukraine lost as an economic market. There are indications that German economic policy towards Ukraine during the war continued to have an influence. An example of this is the telegram sent by Undersecretary of State von dem Bussche to the German ambassador in Kiev, Mumm, on April 30, 1918. He wanted Ukraine to not only fulfil the economic obligations to Germany stipulated in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk but its economy was to be closely linked to that of Germany in the future. Bussche envisaged an important role for German capital and skilled labour in Ukraine's economic growth. This was to be marked by the establishment of an advanced transportation network, further development of its industrial potential and the modernisation of agricultural production.²

At the beginning of the Hetmanate, fifteen leading industrial leaders from Germany met at Stahlhoff near Düsseldorf to discuss how to establish economic and

¹ Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht; Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland, 1914-1918* (Düsseldorf, 1961).

² Oleh S. Fedeyshyn, *Germany's Drive to the East and the Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1918* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: 1969), p.191.

financial domination of Ukraine. On June 4, a conference of government officials and representatives of companies such as Krupp, Stinnes, Warburg, and Die Deutsche Bank took place in Berlin and decided to form two financial syndicates, one for Ukraine, and one for Russia.³ There was also a plan to establish airlines between Germany and Turkey via Ukraine but nothing came of it because of the war.⁴ A limited airline service was set up in 1919, but came to nothing because of the fighting in Ukraine. On 19 January 1920, the German firm *Deutsche Luftreederei* (German Air Navigation) wrote to the Foreign Ministry in connection with the construction of an aerodrome in Ukraine:

In accordance with the Ukrainian Finance Commission in Berlin, and its plans to improve air transport with Ukraine, we have sent Herr Karl Klinkermann the aerodrome manager and the engineer Robert Jüling to Kamenets-Podolski in order to build an aerodrome there. After the capture of Kamenets by the opponents of the Petliura government, we have received no further news from these men. The Ukrainian Finance Commission cannot tell us anything about this as they themselves have lost communication with Ukraine.⁵

This did not augur well for trade relations with Ukraine, but it is true that the Civil War was still raging, and the Soviet-Polish war was about to begin.

Although the regime changed in late 1918, these same industrialists dominated economic policy in the new republic, and many of the government bureaucrats involved in these plans now served the new government. The block to these schemes becoming reality was the presence of a Soviet government in Kharkov. However, if there was an independent Ukraine, or even a White Russian regime, then there would be every possibility of implementing long term economic plans.

Big business, and particularly heavy industry, played a major role in German governments at the time – and even in the government headed by the SPD. This can be gauged by the fact that the early phases of Germany's reparations policy were chiefly determined by the entrepreneurs and big banks. They insisted on the closest possible interpretation of Wilson's Fourteen Points in the interest of limiting Germany's liabilities, and in order to maintain at least the economic power base of the German state.

³ Ibid, p.193.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14395) 87.

Hiden makes the point that much of German foreign policy in the early years of the Weimar Republic was driven by economic factors:

Finally, not too much time will be given to the point that in modern states many parts of the specialised administrative apparatus influence foreign policy. Obvious examples in Germany were the Reich Economic Ministry and the Ministry of Finance. Because of the enormous importance to the Weimar Republic of economic recovery and the complexity of international economic agreements, the Economic Ministry was certain to play a major role, for example, particularly in policy-making towards Russia and East Europe after 1919, since here there were important new markets to be captured and developed.⁶

The tense situation with Poland over the loss of former German territory, and the demands of the Poles for compensation, caused a major problem regarding trade and exports in the east. The Allies had agreed that the populations of German-settled areas in Poland would vote in plebiscites on whether they would finally become part of Poland or Germany. This led to serious disturbances in Upper Silesia and to the disruption of transport links with Ukraine.⁷ A cursory view of the map of Ukraine will reveal that most rail lines, and the railway was in 1918/19 the most important method of industrial transport, ran from Germany through post 1918 Polish territory. There was however one major rail line running north to the East Prussian city of Königsberg on the Baltic Sea, from where Ukrainian produce could be exported to Germany proper.

Thus it was no accident that the major industries pressing for continued trade with Ukraine were the coal mining industry in Silesia, and the shipping interests in Königsberg.⁸ Those interested in Ukraine were not surprisingly those industries lying in the east of the Reich, and who traditionally had traded with the former Russian Empire and the Border States. However, it would be false to suggest that firms such as Krupps, with their manufacturing base in the Ruhr in western Germany, were not also very interested in Ukraine, and what they regarded as its vast potential market. The problem was with whom must they deal. Who was the legitimate government of Ukraine – and what was the attitude of the government in Berlin towards these contacts?

⁶ Hiden, *Germany and Europe, 1919-1933*, p. 35. These ministries were the Reichswirtschaftsministerium and the Reichsfinanzamt.

⁷ Wipert Blücher, *Deutschlands Weg nach Rapallo* (Wiesbaden, 1951), p.110.

⁸ BA: Reichswirtschaftsministerium. Handels- und Wirtschaftspolitik. (601) 1169. In a letter from the Head of the Feldeisenbahnwesens (Military Railway Service) in Berlin, dated January 10th 1919, to the Minister for Public Works entitled 'Economic Relations between Ukraine and Germany', the need for ongoing rail links with Ukraine for both of these interest groups is set out.

In February 1919 the Directory was still in control in Kiev, although shortly the city would fall to the Bolshevik forces. The Economics Ministry in Berlin (*Reichswirtschaftsministerium*) received a report from one of its representatives in Kiev, Grunow, setting out ideas on transport to and from Ukraine, and on the economic perspectives for Germany there. He suggested that a Ukrainian embassy be established as soon as possible, and also that relations with Poland could be improved by means of this embassy, because although Poland and Ukraine had their differences in some spheres, they also had common economic interests. The representative also believed that through such representation, an agreement of some sort (a treaty perhaps) could be signed between Germany and Poland, which would help to iron out some of their outstanding problems. It is worth bearing in mind that at this stage Poland and Germany were in a state of almost armed conflict.

Grunow appealed for the Army Command to organise the withdrawal of all German railway wagons and trains from the rail line Prostken-Goloby, and the outlying lines – because the Poles were using the shortage of railway engines and wagons as a stick to beat the Germans with. The Foreign Ministry was requested to do everything possible to begin negotiations for Ukrainian representation in Berlin, and the relevant Prussian and German authorities would attend the negotiations:

In the course of the discussion Dr Treuenfels suggested that the question of the export of Upper Silesian coal to Ukraine in German wagons through Sosnowitz be negotiated. From the Prussian⁹ side it appears vital that in any future agreement it be clearly set out that the Poles should, at the unloading of the coal in Sosnowitz, return the same amount of empty wagons to Prussia as they receive.¹⁰

It is also interesting to note to whom copies of this report were sent, to C.Schiller of the *Transitkontor Express* in Kiev, and also to the representative of the Ukrainian Rail Ministry, Dr Treuenfels, former representative of the *Kriegskohlengesellschaft A.G.* (War Coal Company), and representative of the Ukrainian Trade Ministry for Coal Purchase in Germany, and Theodor Schott, an industrialist in Russia and representative of the *Reichswirtschaftsamt* (Economics Department) in Kharkov. All of this suggests a large network of people and organisations involved in the supply of coal, and in trade

⁹ The State of Prussia within the Weimar Republic. Federal States continued to exist during the Republic.

¹⁰ BA: Reichswirtschaftsministerium. Handels - und Wirtschaftspolitik. (601), 1169. Aktenvermerk, 4 February 1919 from Representative Grunow.

contacts between Germany and Ukraine in early 1919. It is also clear from the report that the strained relations between Poland and Germany at this time were already causing extensive problems for the economic relationship between Germany and Ukraine.

Here it is worth noting that a major factor in German economic thinking towards Ukraine during the years preceding 1922 was the fear that the large Ukrainian market would be lost to the Poles, the British, or the French. The Directory's economic agreement with the French, and the Polish-Ukrainian alliance in 1920, heightened these fears. If Poland or France penetrated the Ukrainian and Russian markets, then Germany would be truly constrained, labouring under the reparations, without colonies, and barred from Western European markets.

What was the economic situation in Ukraine in early 1919? The worst damage of the Civil War had not yet occurred. Although the Anarchist Movement led by such figures as Nestor Makhno had already begun to show its hand, there was also in Ukraine a rich tradition of peasant co-operatives and credit co-operatives. In June 1919 at the Co-operative Conference, a fringe conference of the Versailles Peace Conference, M. Issayevych, the representative of the Central Organisation of Ukrainian Co-operatives, gave a glowing account of the situation in Ukraine:

In the villages Credit Unions and Co-operative banks are being formed to help the people. Every peasant who has some money places it in the bank. In this way the villages can organise their own credit. The war brought a lot of money to the peasants, on the one hand because of their supplies of cattle to the army, and on the other hand because of the alcohol ban. The large estates saw their expenses reduced and could afford to invest more money in the peasants own Credit Co-operatives. One can understand the phenomenal growth in the number of Co-operatives in Ukraine after the Revolution when one compares the figures for the co-operatives for 1914 with those of 1918, and sees that in 1914 there were 10 such co-operatives in the whole of Russia, of which 7 were in Ukraine, and at the end of 1918 there were 250, and no fewer than 15,000 co-operatives of all kinds.¹¹

¹¹ BA: Reichswirtschaftsministerium. Beziehung zur Ukraine. (601),1389/19. Report of the Delegate from the Central Organisation of the Ukrainian Co-operatives, M. Issayevych to the Co-operative Conference in Paris. June 1919.

The war referred to was, of course, World War I, and the army was the German Imperial army. This glowing account of the agricultural sector of Ukraine probably refers to the period before the Bolsheviks began to implement War Communism in Ukraine. The policies of the co-operatives were fairly close to those of the Ukrainian Directory, and one can only wonder how fruitful the agricultural sector of Ukraine would have become, were it not for the intervention of the Bolsheviks and the Civil War.

The food shortages at this time in Soviet Russia were terrible, and cities such as Moscow and Petrograd had slid into a state of near famine. Ukraine now assumed for the Bolsheviks even more importance. With the Soviet conquest of Ukraine in February 1919, the principles of War Communism began to be introduced in Ukraine. The Supply Commissariat (*Narkomprod*) acquired powers to obtain and distribute food; and they began, with the help of workers' detachments and the *Cheka* (secret police), to seize stocks of food held by alleged hoarders throughout Ukraine. The campaign against the so-called rich peasants (kulaks) also intensified and Lenin and Rakovsky saw this as vital for spreading Soviet power into the villages. The class war was to be bitterly fought in the villages and many kulaks had land, equipment, and livestock, as well as 'surplus grain' confiscated. Gradually, the compulsory deliveries of food were systematised and given the name of *prodrazverstka*. The state demanded all that the peasant had, above a minimum requirement for him and his family. The peasants resisted and in Ukraine turned to the anarchists or began to form their own defence forces. The peasants turned much of their hatred against the towns, from where they saw their tormentors come. Gradually, in the course of 1919, Ukraine began to resemble Soviet Russia more and more. For the Germans, hoping for Ukrainian foodstuffs, and also for increased trade with Ukraine, all of this was a disaster.

In the midst of the chaos of the Bolshevik occupation of Kiev, the administrator of the Raw Materials Centre, Frau Rausch, reported her impressions to the Economics Ministry in Berlin. Frau Rausch had been in Kiev until 12th April 1919 when, because of the breakdown of trade and Bolshevik hostility, she and several other German officials reported to Berlin:

Trade and transport have come to a complete halt. All around Kiev there has been lasting peasant uprisings against the Bolsheviks. Some groups have been fighting each other as well as the Bolsheviks (...) The feeling is against

the Entente and is once again friendly to us, with several exceptions. In Kiev there was, apart from the Bolsheviks, a *Spartacus* group, which had formed itself out of German, Czech, Hungarian and many Jewish elements, and which terrorised the Germans. This group is supposed to have been finally overthrown by the Bolsheviks and so it is possible that Herr Thielmann has been set free. Kleinov has liquidated the affairs of the Raw Materials Centre with the exception of the Tobacco Centre. From other positions the Wool Department (7 members) and Herr Florian from the Metal Department are still working; and they want to return later.¹²

The overall feeling is of an economic mission winding down, and this was indeed the case in Soviet Ukraine in 1919. There is still the reference here of anti-Entente feeling and this would appear in all the German reports and correspondence of 1919 and 1920.

The French, in the meantime, who still considered Ukraine to be in their zone of influence, had entered into an economic agreement with the Directory which would have had the effect of turning Ukraine into a French economic colony. This of course, was resented by the Germans, and led to a cooling of relations between the Directory and Germany. On 8 April 1919 the Danish paper *Folkets Dagblad Politiken* published an interview with the Soviet Ukrainian leader Rakovsky, which he had given the paper in February 1919 in Kharkov. Rakovsky spoke there of the Directory being the creation of the Entente, and listed the economic agreement with France as being one of its worst acts:

A short while ago the Directory signed an agreement with France, which gave France the concession on all Ukrainian railways for 50 years. So the whole economic life of Ukraine would have been ruled by French capital.¹³

The Soviet Ukrainian government would use this agreement as a strong propaganda weapon to suggest that the nationalists were the agents of the Entente in Ukraine, and were prepared to hand over its rich economic resources in exchange for military assistance.

German heavy industry was no stranger to political machinations, and they acted in several spectacular ways in the course of 1919. In the absence of official funding from Berlin, the army was financed by German heavy industry. They believed in the

¹² BA: Reichswirtschaftsministerium. Handels – und Wirtschaftspolitik. (601), 1169. Report of Frau Rausch.

¹³ BA: Reichswirtschaftsministerium. Presseberichte zur politischen und wirtschaftlichen Lage in der Ukraine. (209), 57844.

policy of overthrowing the Bolsheviks to open up the Russian market, and they were unimpressed by the more cautious approach of the government.

Although nothing as dramatic as this was to take place in Ukraine, there were clear indications that German heavy industry was still interested in having a major stake in the region. On 7 September 1919, the Ministry of Economics was informed that the Upper Silesian coal industry was interested in the development of closer relations between Germany and the Ukrainian government. This could either refer to the Petliura nationalist regime, the Whites or the Soviet regime, but judging from the politics of German heavy industry in 1919 it is more likely to apply to the nationalist government, then fighting a desperate rearguard action to recover Ukraine from the Bolsheviks:

From the point of view of the Upper Silesian coal industry; the efforts of the Ukrainian government to lay the basis for a closer relationship with the German government are being viewed with great interest. Already before the war, the relations between the Upper Silesian coal industry and Ukraine were very close. It was especially the iron ore, which for years came to Upper Silesia (...) The closing off of the Ukrainian ore is very much to be regretted because the iron ore from Krivoi Rog is one of the most valuable.¹⁴

As mentioned before, the iron ore deposits in Ukraine were the largest in the world at that time, and German industry was very interested in gaining access to them. This was especially important because the Ruhr was under French occupation, and the Saarland had been lost to France. Thus, the only viable source of iron ore for German industry was Ukraine.

One of the other concerns of the German authorities was the question of German property and goods, which still remained in Ukraine after the German withdrawal in December 1918; this was to cause serious problems with the Ukrainian Soviet authorities, but even in 1919 there was evidence that the Soviet government in Ukraine was prepared to make deals with the Germans (and vice versa). The problem was compounded however, by the fact that there was no diplomatic relationship between Soviet Russia (or Soviet Ukraine) and Germany. Germany was still carrying out the policy of the Allies of diplomatically isolating Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine, and supporting the blockade. On 2 May 1919, a report reached the Office of Economic Affairs (*Reichswirtschaftsamt*) from the War Ministry, that an economic agreement had

¹⁴ BA: Reichswirtschaftsministerium. Presseberichte zur politischen und wirtschaftlichen Lage in der Ukraine. (209) 57473.

been drawn up by the representatives of the Armistice Commission on the Black Sea¹⁵ and representatives of the Soviet government (presumably the Ukrainian):

After the rupture of diplomatic relations between Germany and Russia an official settlement of affairs under the present circumstances is not possible. The issue was raised however if it would be possible to leave to the initiative of the private individualistic sector to save the wares and raw materials. This would be done by the named firms being allowed to import these goods from Russia without any difficulties.¹⁶

Indeed several German businessmen in Ukraine, or more usually Ukrainians of German extraction, offered their services to act as go-betweens with the Soviet authorities there, and to offer their expertise and knowledge of Ukraine to German business.

A Bank for Trade and Industry had been founded by the Germans in Ukraine and in May 1919, one of the leading members of the business community in Ukraine, Josef Fonfe, had offered the German Office of Economic Affairs to act as an intermediary, and to improve trade and exports between the two countries. This person was also very involved in running a major tinning factory in Kiev and other foodstuffs factories in both Warsaw and Kiev. One of the firms founded by Fonfe was the purchasing centre of the War Supplies Office for all goods coming from the east.¹⁷ It is worth noting that even in May 1919, a German economic ministry still carried the prefix 'war'. The dispute over the goods of German companies remaining in Ukraine continued throughout 1919. With the Soviet conquest of Kiev most German officials and ministries were withdrawn, and the individual German and German-Ukrainian businessmen now came into their own. On 26 June the *Reichswirtschaftsamt* was advised that those German businessmen remaining in Ukraine could continue to inform Berlin by telegraph of what was happening. The Foreign Ministry advised caution however, if any of these businessmen tried to conduct negotiations through either Rakovsky, or another Ukrainian minister Ego: "The latter in this situation would not

¹⁵ This body was established by the Reichswirtschaftsamt to settle outstanding financial issues resulting from the war on the Black Sea between the Germans and Soviets. There are few references to it but it seems to have consisted of German civil servants and Soviet Ukrainian officials.

¹⁶ BA: Reichswirtschaftsministerium. Wirtschaftsangelegenheiten mit der Ukraine. (2418), 31. 01. Telegram from the War Ministry. Berlin. 2 May 1919.

¹⁷ BA: Reichswirtschaftsamt. Wirtschaftsangelegenheiten mit der Ukraine. (2418), 31.01. Telegram to the Bank für Handel und Industrie, Berlin.

regard himself as a member of the Soviet government but as a competitor”¹⁸ Obviously the Foreign Ministry was not convinced that the Soviet Ukrainian government was to be trusted in business affairs. In this respect they may have been correct, for the Soviet government of Ukraine was still in its revolutionary phase, and believed that the capitalist governments would soon be swept away by the forces of revolution in Europe.

As mentioned above, German industry was behind several attempts to liquidate Bolshevism once and for all, and things came to a head with the Kapp putsch in 1920 where, although most of German industry adopted a position of neutrality, some industries went so far as to support the attempt to supplant democracy in Germany with a form of military dictatorship. An industrial group, based around the figures of Stinnes and Hugenburg, now entered politics in the Weimar Republic directly, and many large and middle scale industrialists joined the DNVP (German National Peoples Party) or the DVP (German Peoples Party); on 6 June 1920 some were even elected as members of Parliament for these parties and took their seats in the Reichstag. Throughout the 1920s, in coalition governments, which would frequently include their members, the industrialists pushed through foreign and economic policy - often with opposition from the SPD.

In Soviet Russia, and the part of Ukraine occupied by the Bolsheviks, foreign trade had virtually collapsed, due not only to the conditions of ‘War Communism’ but also to the blockade which was being imposed by the Allies all around the Soviet area. The economic chaos in Soviet Ukraine is best defined by Alec Nove’s description of ‘War Communism’ in Soviet Russia in 1919:

Kritsman called the resultant confusion ‘the most complete form of proletarian natural-anarchistic economy’. Anarchistic because of conflicts between different administrative instances, and because of lack of any coherent plan. Anarchistic too because of the ‘shock’ (*udarnyi*) of campaigning methods, by which the authorities rushed from bottleneck to bottleneck, creating new shortages while seeking feverishly to deal with others. He claimed that it was ‘heroic’. He knew and said that it was chaotic.¹⁹

¹⁸ BA: Reichswirtschaftsamt. Wirtschaftsangelegenheiten mit der Ukraine. (2418), 31. 01. Report from the Auswärtiges Amt. Berlin. 26 June 1919.

¹⁹ Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR*, (London, 1969), p. 70.

In the course of 1919, the political situation altered several times in Ukraine in the summer Denikin's White Russian Forces captured Kiev, and for a time it looked as if Ukraine would become the centre of a White Russian administration which would go on to rule all Russia. In October 1918 Colin Ross (a German agent in Ukraine) had sent a report on all aspects of Ukraine to the Reichs Chancellory in Berlin, and although this was still during the period of German occupation, many of the economic factors involved still held true in October 1919 (and indeed into 1920).

One of the greatest problems for trade between the Central Powers and Ukraine is the full devaluation of the currency. The financial situation of the country is fully chaotic. The currencies of various governments circulate in the country and these currencies are not stable and have no securities and the currency of the present government is also worthless, as it is not backed up by taxation or by any receipts. As a result the rouble has sunk to a tenth of its value. The prices are fantastic in the same way. Everyone right down to the street cleaners and the vagabonds and de-commissioned soldiers work only for valuables; and the slightest form of physical labour e.g. the unloading of rail wagons is paid between 30 and 50 Roubles per day.²⁰

These were in the relatively stable conditions of late 1918; by the time that Denikin's White armies entered Kiev in the summer of 1919, Ukraine was already well on the way to the situation which would lead to chaos in the agricultural sector. This was heavily compounded by the anarchism rampant in the countryside, which meant that rail lines were not safe for the transport of goods, and the foodstuffs upon which the Ukrainian economy relied, were also not being supplied, or were being plundered by marauding armies. For German industry and importers the question was, of course, who to do business with; the Bolsheviks under Rakovsky, the nationalists led by Petliura, or the White government of Denikin. There were tentative attempts to establish economic links with the White government in Kiev; but by November 1919 the White forces were in retreat and the Soviet forces recaptured Kiev. The Germans were now faced with doing business with the Soviet regime to which there seemed to be no alternative.

Already in July 1919 the Soviet regime in Kharkov was approaching the Germans in order to establish links. Arthur Moos, the Liquidator for the Central Railway Office

²⁰ PA AA: Stellvertreter des Reichskanzlers. Ukraine, Report of Colin Ross. Bd 4 (29).

in Kiev, and the representative of the War Ministry, contacted the Foreign Ministry with the news that Rakovsky was interested in having closer links with Germany and was forming trade commissions in order to deal with it. Moos had been asked by the Ukrainian government to open negotiations with the German government on the issue.²¹ Skoropadskyi, the former Hetman of Ukraine, gave the Germans his opinion on future contacts and on the work required to rebuild Ukraine. A telegram from Vienna to the Foreign Ministry outlined what Skoropadskyi had been saying to German officials. He fully understood that Germany was not in a position to do anything militarily or financially about Ukraine:

It can however, make its political ideas known about the future relationship with Russia and Ukraine, which will form the western part of the future Russian Federation, and inform them if the German government will take part in the work of reconstruction in which he is thinking of playing a part, or whether they regard their role in Ukraine as being finally played out.²²

Skoropadskyi's ideas would seem to suggest a White victory in the Civil War, or some form of nationalist regime in Kiev, but it was clear that he believed that Germany still had an economic role to play.

The Allied blockade of Russia had a major effect on all trading links with the Soviet Ukraine, or at least that part of it occupied by the Bolsheviks; but in January 1920 the Allies finally accepted that the 'pariah' state could no longer be economically isolated. On 16 January the Allied Supreme Council lifted the blockade of Soviet Russia. No nation was prepared to supply the necessary funding for fighting the Bolsheviks. The Supreme Council adopted a resolution providing for "an exchange of goods on the basis of reciprocity between the Russian people and Allied and neutral countries". Commerce was to be allowed to rule rather than armed intervention but as Stephen White points out, the change was more apparent than real:²³

Other than formally, in fact, there had been little change in British or Allied policy; for what the Supreme Council's decisions represented was not so much the adoption of a new and no longer anti-Bolshevik strategy, but rather the selection of a new and, it appeared, more promising tactic by which that strategy might be pursued. This new tactic, in the words of a

²¹ PA AA: Büro des Staatsekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14394). 68. Bericht, 9 July 1919.

²² PA AA: Büro des Staatsekretar. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14392). 120. Telegram, 10 July 1919.

²³ Stephen White, *Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution*, p.3.

Foreign Office memorandum, was designed to provide an “opportunity of testing the theory frequently advanced of late that the lifting of the blockade would do more to oust or modify Bolshevism than armed intervention ever accomplished.”²⁴

In November 1920 General Wrangel’s forces, the last great hope of the White cause, were defeated and driven from the Crimea. It had already been felt for months in Germany that the Soviet regime in Kharkov was the only one that could be negotiated with, and Wrangel’s fall merely confirmed this.

The old rivalries with Britain and France would continue; and in a spirit of post-Versailles revanchism, the German Foreign Ministry closely watched all economic agreements with Soviet Ukraine. The representative of the nationalist Petliura regime in London, Margolin, had contacted the British with regard to their relations with his government and Soviet Ukraine. He reported his conversation with the British to the German embassy, which contacted Berlin. Margolin was of the opinion that Ukraine had nothing to expect from France, and that its two natural trading partners were Germany and Britain, on the grounds that:

Ukraine needs machines of all kinds from Germany, which can be exchanged for raw materials, and especially engineers are also needed, and the role of England is vital for she controls the Black Sea and all the routes to Ukraine.

Margolin had told the British that the Germans should be allowed to be the dominant power in the Baltic States, whereas Britain should protect Ukraine. He did not mean that Germany would be excluded from Ukraine, on the contrary Ukraine estimated that it would meet most of its industrial requirements in Germany, and furthermore with the support of Britain. He was received by Lord Hardinge on October 21st, who asked if the Soviet government would recognise the independence of Ukraine if the Entente also did.²⁵

This was obviously the opinion of the Ukrainian nationalists and also of the Germans on the economic links between their countries. The Soviet regime in Kharkov was also keen to begin trade links with Germany; as the Allied trade blockade was

²⁴ PRO: Birse Memorandum, 21 January 1920, Foreign Office Papers. 371/4032/172292.

²⁵ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Russland (R39505K). 90. Aufzeichnung. Deutsche Gesandtschaft, 26 October 1920.

withdrawn, the way was now finally open for Germany to begin trade relations with Soviet Ukraine.

When the Soviet government was firmly established in Ukraine, after the ending of the Soviet-Polish War and the Treaty of Riga, the German government and industry were finally ready to begin economic negotiations with Moscow and Kharkov. It is significant that the first Soviet economic delegation to Berlin, in the early months of 1922, included Rakovsky. The leader of the delegation was, of course, the Soviet expert on Germany, Karl Radek, but the other members were Krasin and Rakovsky. Maltzan from the AA arranged for Radek to meet the industrialist Hugo Stinnes, who had also been involved in the planning of German economic war aims in Ukraine in 1918.²⁶ Thus it can be seen that some of the economic themes of the period 1918-1920 would emerge again after the consolidation of Soviet power in Ukraine, and Rakovsky was at the heart of them. Germany had found a new partner with whom to do business in the East. Germany became an equal trade partner with Soviet Ukraine, and the relationship would blossom after Rapallo.

²⁶ E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923. Volume 3*, p.369.

CHAPTER 7

PAUL ROHRBACH AND THE IDEAS OF THE UKRAINOPHILES

“History proves that the German people owes its existence solely to its determination to fight in the East and to obtain land by military conquest. In general terms land in Europe is only to be obtained at the expense of Russia. The German Reich must therefore follow in the footsteps of the Teutonic Knights in order to guarantee the nation its daily bread through occupation of Russian territory.” (Mein Kampf)¹

These words written in 1924 by Adolf Hitler bear a strong resemblance to ideas expressed by Paul Rohrbach less than ten years before and which he continued to express in the early years of the Weimar Republic. Indeed Rohrbach would live to see Hitler come to power and, although he had many differences with the Nazis, he was very much a radical thinker of the German Right. Hitler and the Nazis drew their ideas, and indeed some of their ideology, from a wide collection of German and French writers and thinkers. Rohrbach's importance is that he was the major German figure concerned with Ukraine, along with others such as Arthur Dix, and various members of the Pan German League. Rohrbach was to write several books (particularly during World War I), which found tremendous resonance within political and intellectual circles in Germany at the time.

Although now almost forgotten in Germany, his ideas carried considerable weight during World War I and in the early years of the Weimar Republic. By late 1918 Rohrbach had lost much of his influence, but his ideas continued to play a role for some on the German Right. He was broadly sympathetic to the Ukrainian nationalists, whereas the attitude of the Foreign Ministry and 'official' Germany was far more cautious. He is also important in that he left a body of work, whereas many of his contemporaries have faded into obscurity. German war aims in World War I were essentially based on nothing but the traditional *realpolitik* or sheer imperialism, whereas those of World War II were ostensibly based on racial, Social-Darwinist and *Lebensraum* theories. It is also true that many of the far-reaching plans for territorial

¹ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London: Hutchinson, 1969), p. 128.

acquisitions in World War I have been uncovered only since the 1970s, with the work of historians such as Fritz Fischer, and have only become known to historians since that time. It is certain however, that Rohrbach's works would have been known to Hitler, and in particular to Rosenberg, and in my opinion led in no small way to the development of early National Socialist *Weltanschauung* on the East.

Paul Rohrbach was born in 1869 in Livland (modern Latvia) and he died in 1956. He studied theology, history and geography in Berlin, and in 1894 he became a German citizen. He always considered himself a Balt. As George Fischer noted, there was a distinction between the educated middle-class Russian Germans from St.Petersburg and Moscow and the irredentist Balts, many of who became German nationalists in Germany.² Rohrbach recalled: "Our consciousness of being German was so strong that we did not understand why people at first considered us 'Russians' in Germany."³ A contemporary of Rohrbach's, and also a Balt, was Alfred Rosenberg, the framer of the Nuremberg Articles, and one of the earliest members of the Nazi party. However, Rohrbach did not display anti-Semitism in any form; but, in common with the Nazis, he was bitterly opposed to both the Poles and the Bolsheviks.

Robert C. Williams pointed out the dilemma faced by the Baltic Germans in their relationship with Germany and Russia:

Thus the process of assimilation, of 'becoming German', could mean either hostility or attraction towards Russia, depending on the German environment. For Germany itself, as Thomas Mann suggested, was a land in the middle, neither Eastern nor Western, torn as to its identity and its future. In this sense the Balts found in Germany no solution to their problems of identity but a mirror of their own dilemma. Yet in the end they did have a choice, as Shubart noted, because of their German culture, as to the message they would convey and the Germans they would seek out.⁴

From 1901 he became the editor of Friedrich Naumann's weekly magazines *Hilfe* and *Zeit*. In 1903 he became Imperial Commissioner for Settlement in German Southwest Africa. During World War I he was the most widely read commentator on colonial and foreign policy theses in Germany. His most famous books were *Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt* (The German Idea in the World) published in 1912 (with

² George Fischer, *Soviet Opposition to Stalin: A Case Study in World War II*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), pp.76-77.

³ Paul Rohrbach, *Um des Teufels Handschrift*. (Hamburg, 1953), p.9.

⁴ Williams, *Culture in Exile, Russian Emigres in Germany*, p.369.

a later edition in 1920), and *Die Geschichte der Menschheit* (The History of Humanity) published in 1914

Even the titles of the books indicate the sweep of ideas with which Rohrbach was concerned. He developed, in a synthesis of Christianity and Politics, a theory of German cultural imperialism. He was opposed to annexation in Europe, and was much more attracted to the concept of the German cultural mission being fulfilled through economic spheres of influence. During the First World War, Rohrbach was working in the Central Office for Foreign Affairs, where he was very active producing war propaganda. Rohrbach was a believer in the support and expansion of the German idea in the world. He did not share some of the ideas on territorial expansion of the *Alldeutsche*.

Rohrbach's form of German Protestant faith influenced his ideas considerably, and with concepts such as '*To colonise is to missionise*', Rohrbach thought of cultural contributions, which, he saw as an aspect of the German 'Cultural Mission'. The spreading of German ideas was for Rohrbach not only in the interest of the German people, but also a major contribution by Germany to the whole of humanity. Thus he believed, during World War I, that Germany should liberate those European peoples being held down by England and its ideas, and to assist the smaller nations to develop their own cultural and intellectual resources. One can understand how this would have had significance *vis a vis* Russia and Ukraine.

Even after the war Rohrbach continued to believe in his theory of 'Manifest Destiny', and he sought to expound his ideas further; but in the atmosphere of the early Weimar Republic they found no real following, and it was only in *völkisch* and extreme right wing circles that his ideas were taken seriously in the 20s. Although Rohrbach was not a Nazi, many of the Nazi aims in Eastern Europe were in effect his also.

In the foreword of his book *Russland und Wir* (Russia and Us), published in 1915, Rohrbach had written of: "the threat to Germany and European culture from the eastern barbarism".⁵ In 1920 the barbarism from the east was to his mind similar, though it might carry a different name - Bolshevism. One can see a straightforward continuity in his ideas from the height of World War I to the end of the Russian Civil War - and long after it. The basic ingredients of the *mélange* were; fear of Russia, protection for Germany's eastern frontier, markets for German products, the cultural mission of

⁵ Paul Rohrbach, *Russland und Wir* (Stuttgart, 1915), p.4.

Germany, and the role of Ukraine as a counterbalance to Poland. All of these ideas would of course have circulated among the German right, and would have been known to Hitler and his disciples. Rohrbach's concepts of the German cultural mission, and on the eastern barbarism of Bolshevism may be noted in *Mein Kampf*, where the author wrote of the likely collapse of the Russian state. This echoed Rohrbach's view that the former empire would disintegrate into its constituent parts, especially in the Baltic and Ukraine, and that this was something, which Germany should encourage.

Whatever the likelihood of a Bolshevik collapse in 1924, when Hitler's words were written, it was far more likely in 1919 and 1920 at the peak of the Russian Civil War. Nothing, it appeared, would stop the dismemberment of the former Russian Empire, and Rohrbach and others would ensure that Germany was prepared.

Rohrbach had been interested in Ukraine since long before World War I, but the events in Ukraine in 1918 and 1919 allowed him to put some of his theories into practice. With the German occupation of Ukraine in 1918, it seemed to Rohrbach that many of his cherished nostrums could be realised. He duly established a German-Ukrainian Society to promote understanding and friendship between the two peoples, and became a supporter of the Hetman, and later of the Directory. He was to remain a supporter of Ukrainian nationalism all his life, and would endeavour to bring the two countries closer together, always in the interests of Germany.

During the period of the German supported Hetmanate, in May 1918, when the German Foreign Ministry required representatives to be sent to Ukraine who were trusted by the Ukrainians, Rohrbach was selected as one of them. The other was Axel Schmidt. The two Germans were not impressed with the Hetman, and criticised both the Hetmanate and Germany's policy in Ukraine. Rohrbach produced a twenty-three page "Rohrbach Report", which was submitted by the German Ambassador in Ukraine to the Chancellor. The report contained the following statement:

The present Hetman's cabinet is of Great Russian orientation and is endeavouring to lead Ukraine back to Moscow. It simply cannot be trusted, since it is composed mainly of the Kadets. These people have clearly shown themselves as enemies of Ukraine not only during the Tsarist regime but since the Revolution as well.⁶

⁶ Fedysyn. *Germany's Drive to the East and the Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1918*, p.153.

The German ambassador in Kiev, Mumm, gave his opinion of Rohrbach's report, and outlined his views, which he regarded as similar to Rohrbach's:

As far as Dr. Rohrbach's practical proposals are concerned, they are essentially identical with the position I have already adopted. In a few days, I expect to have the opportunity of stating officially that the German government will continue its support of the idea of an independent, democratic, Ukraine. I shall urge the new Ukrainian government to carry out an immediate and thoroughgoing agrarian reform as well as the establishment of a national Ukrainian education system.⁷

In a new edition of his book, *Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt* (1920), he wrote of his ideas on Ukraine, and some of the other Border States of the former Russian Empire. For Rohrbach, in the context of the Russian Civil War, the most important fact was that the former Russian Empire had ceased to exist. He went on to argue that neither Finland, nor Poland, nor the Baltic States, nor Ukraine, would remain with Russia in the long term. It was vital for Germany to accept the reality of this situation and to change its foreign policy, and its economic policy, accordingly. He believed that Germany's position in relation to Ukraine was a far more favourable one than that of the Entente, and he went on to write that the biggest fear of the Entente was that Germany and Russia would find each other some day. Thus it is clear that Rohrbach shared the opinion, prevalent in the German officer class for example, that the Allies were petrified of a German-Russian rapprochement. He also believed (as did Lenin) that a Russia without Ukraine would be a poor land indeed, especially if also cut off from petroleum deposits in the Caucasus. Rohrbach continued:

The most powerful among the Border peoples are the Ukrainians. With 40 million people they occupy a country one and a half times the size of Germany. They are linguistically, physically and intellectually separated from Russia and today no longer politically forced together with them. A forced attempt at union will not quench the national individuality of the Ukrainians. The second enemy of the Ukrainian is the Pole.⁸ Because of the Polish campaign of robbery and oppression, strengthened and encouraged by the Entente, the German and Ukrainian peoples are natural allies. None of the changes brought about by the World War in Eastern Europe is so

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The first being the Russian.

important for us as the independence of Ukraine. It is the fact, which makes it impossible in the end, for us to be encircled and attacked with overwhelming strength from West and East at the same time. An understanding of the Ukrainian problem is essential for the understanding of a major aspect of Europe's future. Failures of perception that are made here are mistakes of the political intellect. As President of the German-Ukrainian Society I have taken it upon myself, since the days of the signing of peace between Ukraine and Germany, to work for the coming together of the Ukrainian and German national interests. Also for Ukraine, German is the language of communication with Europe, and neither English nor French are in a position to compete. The English and the French will remain as aliens to the Ukrainians, just as the Russians, and their policy of exploitation, will not make them any more popular.⁹

He went on to write, that for Germany a study of the Slavonic world would pay tremendous dividends, and was as important as a study of the Orient, or East Asia, and would bear twice as much fruit. It was necessary for Germany, he believed, to spread its culture, its national idea; and to do that it was only necessary to seize the initiative and to negotiate.

It can be seen at once the attraction that an independent Ukraine would have had for Rohrbach; and the period of most promise were the years 1918-1920, when it seemed that Ukraine would indeed achieve its independence, and become a major player on the stage of Eastern Europe.

Arthur Dix was a contemporary and fellow thinker of Rohrbach. He was born in 1875, and died in 1935 in Germany. Dix was an economist and journalist, a leading member of the National Liberals, and the German Peoples Party (DVP). In the *Nationalliberale Korrespondenz*¹⁰ on 16 February 1918 Dix wrote of the importance of Ukraine, in an economic sense, for Germany. "What is Russia to us?" he asked. His answer was that Moscow and St Petersburg were relatively unimportant compared to the eastern part of *Mitteleuropa*, namely Ukraine. His argument was that Ukraine was of far more economic importance than far off northern Russia:

⁹ Paul Rohrbach, *Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt* (Berlin, 1920), p. 143.

¹⁰ The magazine of the National Liberals.

Ukraine will be of even more economic importance when she develops her own independence and no longer has to work to hold the finances of Russia in check. And Ukraine will develop its independence, not for any Utopian reasons but purely for reasons of *realpolitik* (...) Ukraine, soon to be rich, in the future is for us far more important as a supplier and as a market, especially when the whole cultural development begins to improve, which it will as soon as the land is liberated from the influence of Moscow and St Petersburg. In order to counteract the resentment of the Poles it must be our policy to strengthen Ukraine and Lithuania.¹¹

Dix argued that Ukraine had always been threatened by Polish aggression, and that the role of Germany must be to become an ally of Ukraine. He regarded the disintegration of Russia as being unstoppable, and argued that it would continue apace. Like Rohrbach, he argued for Germany not to be excluded from these developments in Ukraine, and that Germany had to take responsibility there. He continued: "The solution to the Eastern problem does not lie in Moscow or St Petersburg, and not in economically destitute Russia, it lies far more in the bordering areas, which have the potential to be significant areas of world economic production, it would not be a good idea to destroy the old pots without forming new vessels."¹²

The difference in emphasis between Dix and Rohrbach is perhaps deceptive. Whereas Dix's arguments are based more on economics and hard *realpolitik*, Rohrbach's seem to be grounded more in the spheres of culture and nationalism. It is also significant that Dix mentions the Poles as being the chief enemy of Ukraine, and suggests a German-Ukrainian alliance against them; Rohrbach also believed that the Poles stood between Ukraine and nationhood. This was the case in East Galicia, but in the rest of Ukraine had no basis except in historical terms. It was much more a product of German resentment against Poland for the Polish Corridor, and the Polish seizure of land, which the Germans considered German in 1918. One sees here the beginnings of the Eastern Pentagon, a concept in historical terms of the relation between Germany, Russia, France, Poland and Ukraine. This envisages the relationship as an alliance between France and Poland on one side, and Germany and Ukraine on the opposite, with Russia at the apex waiting for its opportunity. This was the thinking of many involved in framing German foreign policy in the early 20s, that an alliance with

¹¹ BA: Arthur Dix Akten, (90. Di. 2), 381. Nationalliberale Korrespondenz. Nummer 2. Bd 12. February 16, 1918.

¹² Ibid.

Ukraine was necessary as a counterbalance to the French-Polish alliance. The final absorption of Ukraine into the Russian orbit in 1921, and the alliance between the Ukrainian nationalists and the Poles in 1920 somewhat upset the plan.

Apart from the German-Ukrainian Society, Rohrbach was also a leading light in the Ukrainian Studies Institute in Berlin. The affairs of the Institute lie outside the scope of this thesis, as it was only founded in 1926, but it is noteworthy that its first Director was the former Ukrainian Foreign Minister, D. Doroshenko. It is no coincidence that the Institute was financed by the German Reich after 1934. Thus, we can see the link between Rohrbach's writings in 1918/20, and the later policies of the German Reich *vis a vis* Ukraine. He laid out a system of ideas on Germany's 'civilising' role in the East, and also on the political and economic importance of Ukraine to Germany - these ideas were to become the new orthodoxy in Germany after 1933.

On 1st March 1919, Rohrbach wrote to the Foreign Minister, Count Brockdorf-Rantzau, announcing a new journal called *Ukraine* being published by his German-Ukrainian Society, and made several comments on German foreign policy in Ukraine. The journal, Rohrbach wrote, would contain several criticisms of German policy up until that date, and particularly military policy, but he felt these criticisms were justified. He appealed for a proper German representation in Ukraine, in order to avoid misunderstandings in future:

The idea that Ukraine in a political and national sense has no individual future is, for anybody who knows the true state of relations, a ridiculous one. A German policy which would allow itself to be led by this viewpoint, would bring down destruction upon itself (...) The relationships are that, Germany as regards the Ukrainian question, needs to do nothing other than quietly and carefully cultivate the Ukrainians, in so far as the present circumstances permit; and to give the Ukrainians the impression that Germany is interested in them in the long term.¹³

Rohrbach went on to draw a parallel between the situations in Ukraine and Armenia, and argued that the reason why the Armenians were successfully defeating the Bolshevik armies in the Caucasus was that they had German diplomatic support. The national will of Ukraine to be free of Russia must be encouraged, he believed.

¹³ PA AA: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14391), Bd 32, 1-2.

“The most damaging policy of all in the long term is to swing between Russians and Ukrainians” continued Rohrbach, and finally appealed to the Foreign Minister to intervene decisively in the situation.¹⁴

The irony is, that the swinging between the Russians and Ukrainians was indeed to be the foreign policy of Germany from 1919 to 1921, and the other factor was that Brockdorff-Rantzau had far more important issues to be concentrating on in March 1919 than Ukraine. One such was the Peace Terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which Germany was being asked to accept unconditionally.

The journal attached (that of 23 November 1918 Nr 3) contains references, which seem quite left wing in tone. The issue is mainly concerned with the meeting of the Ukrainian National Assembly in Kiev, and is virtually a verbatim report of the statements issued by that body, in overthrowing the Hetman's government, and appointing the Directory as the government of Ukraine. The report speaks of overthrowing the reactionary governments in Western Europe, and welcomes the coming to power in Europe of democratic and peoples' governments. It goes on to attack the old government of Ukraine, and the landowners, who were its major supporters:

However, groups of large landlords are forming in order to protect the old cabinet. These people have no support within the democracy and, as a result of traditions of old Russian absolutism, they are alien to every people's democracy, and to the traditions of Ukrainian statehood; they organise every hindrance possible in order to block the path of Ukraine to a healthy democratic development into statehood.¹⁵

From the language contained in the report it is clear that the German-Ukrainian Society, at least, welcomed and supported the demands of the Directory; and it comes as some surprise to see Rohrbach's group supporting what was, in effect, a Social Democratic government in Ukraine. This would lead one to assume that Rohrbach was quite liberal and, indeed, progressive in his views. Such an interpretation would be too simplistic however, as one must first gain a perspective of the alternative choices as viewed by Rohrbach in 1918. It was clear to both the German Supreme Command, and to Rohrbach, that the Hetman's government would not survive; and the alternatives

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ PA AA Bonn: Büro des Staatssekretärs. Allgemeine Angelegenheiten [Ukraine]. (R14391) 492. Deutsch-Ukrainische Gesellschaft. 23 November, 1918. Nr. 3.

were either the Directory composed of mainly Social Democratic and left of centre elements, or the Bolsheviks. There was clearly no choice about the options. It can safely be alleged that, although Rohrbach was in every sense a German patriot, and always placed the needs of the Reich first, he also genuinely supported the Ukrainians and the ideals of Ukrainian independence. An example of this is a letter, which he sent to Arthur Dix on 10 September 1918, with regard to an exchange of articles between them. Apparently Dix had also established a journal on Ukraine, although Rohrbach does not mention the title. The journal established by Dix seemed to be in several languages (German, Russian and Ukrainian), and Rohrbach appealed for more sensitivity regarding the Ukrainian language. Dix had, apparently, not placed Ukrainian as the first language in the publication, and Rohrbach set out his ideas on the subject:

In my opinion the following order of languages would be best – first Ukrainian, then German as the language of the political ally, then Russian. At the moment there is a magazine *Oko*, which is supposed to be a Ukrainian propaganda sheet; but is in reality a magazine attacking, and making fun, of the Ukrainians, because of the fact that Russian is the main language and Ukrainian is in second place. Perhaps then, you can be so kind as to tell me, if your magazine internally, and externally, will take a clear Ukrainian position. Part of that, would be the rejection of all Moscowphilia, and support for the lasting independence and sovereignty of Ukraine. If that is the case, then I am prepared to cooperate with you.¹⁶

Rohrbach laid out his position clearly – no cooperation with Moscow at any cost. In Rohrbach's case his Russophobia was in no way confined to the Bolsheviks; indeed, from his writings before 1917, it is obvious that he was just as opposed to the Russian Empire, and that his views of Soviet Russia were merely an extension of those which he already held on Tsarist Russia.

By 1920 Rohrbach was involved with Axel Schmidt in publishing *Die Ukraine*, a quarterly journal describing itself as dealing with German-Ukrainian economic, political, and cultural policies, and the official organ of the German-Ukrainian Society. Axel Schmidt recommended the independence of Ukraine as the only means of limiting

¹⁶ BA: Arthur Dix Akten (90 Di. 2) 381. Letter from Rohrbach to Dix, 10 September, 1918.

Russia's expansion in Europe and the peril to Germany's Berlin-Baghdad commercial connection in the years of World War I and the period preceding it.¹⁷

In the journal, one encounters the familiar themes of economics, culture, and Germany's mission in the East, being emphasised and interwoven. The journal contains a report on the publication of *Izvestiya* in Kiev, where the Bolshevik publication claims that the independent Ukraine was dead, and that only the Red Soviet Ukraine lived. The reply from *Die Ukraine* was: "Away with all enemies. Russians and Poles. Our mother Ukraine will live!"¹⁸ Once again the traditional enemies of Ukraine were listed, the Poles, Bolsheviks and Russian Whites and, of course, it followed that Germany was the true friend of Ukraine. The next article dealt with Britain's changing policy towards Ukraine, and alleged that England was coming around to the view of supporting independent states along the Black Sea and, that as it had already supported Georgia, that Ukraine would be the next country to be recognised.¹⁹

The magazine also contained a report from Vienna on Vynnychenko, the Ukrainian socialist, and earlier leader of the Rada, who subsequently joined the Bolsheviks. Vynnychenko had managed to leave Soviet Ukraine, after having become disillusioned with the Soviet government there, although he himself held cabinet rank in it. The article about Vynnychenko is written by Axel Schmidt, and it is quite apparent that it contains the views of the German Right, or at least sections of it, on Ukraine:

The policy of Greater Russia towards the other peoples of the former Tsarist Russia, especially Ukraine, is the old policy of 'the one and indivisible Russia'. Where is there a state, which treats public opinion so cynically? Verbally the right to self-determination of the peoples is openly accepted. In reality however, the 'one and indivisible' Moscow centralisation carries out the exploitation and the suppression of the peripheral areas. It is not surprising therefore, that not only communism, in its Muscovite form, is discredited with the people, but also socialism has lost its allure.²⁰

Here is seen what would be expected to be the more natural ideology of a reactionary German – a rejection of communism, and socialism. Indeed, it is important to make clear that, although most Ukrainian nationalists regarded themselves as

¹⁷ Axel Schmidt, *Das Ziel Russlands: Mit einem ökonomisch-politischen Kapitel von G. Herman* (Stuttgart, 1916)

¹⁸ BA: Reichsarbeitsministerium, *Wirtschaftliche Beziehung zur Ukraine* (1620), 39.01. *Die Ukraine*, October 1920. No 10, s.1-20.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

socialists until 1922, in the years following, when it seemed that Soviet power had triumphed in Ukraine, many turned away towards more right wing nationalist ideas; and saw the nationalist right as the force in Germany which would rescue their country from the clutches of Russia. By contrast, the socialist ideals of Vynnychenko and Petliura, seemed to have failed to dislodge the Bolsheviks, and the Social Democrat government in Berlin was regarded as having been too disinterested.

Die Ukraine continued with a financial report on Ukraine. This was at a time when big business, especially the steel and coal industries, were playing a large role in the framing of foreign policy in Germany, and the journal considered it important to appeal to their interests. *Die Ukraine* declared the intention of the Ukrainian Nationalist government to try and reconstruct Ukraine after 6 years of war; and stressed the damage caused in different parts of the country, by both Denikin's White forces, and the Bolsheviks. The creation of a new Ukrainian currency is outlined. The Ukrainian Nationalist government had stressed the importance of foreign aid in order to put the country on its feet again.²¹ Finally, the journal applies its attention to a new book about Germany, written in the Ukrainian language, with contributions from Rohrbach (amongst others):

This book will inform the Ukrainian people about the German land, about German work, and German culture, and strengthen and deepen the intercourse begun between the two peoples after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. For though Germany may have made many mistakes in its Ukrainian policy (...) it should not be forgotten, that it was firstly the German victory over Tsarist Russia, which gave the Ukrainian nationalist movement the opportunity to bring its old ideal of statehood closer to fulfilment. With the ill luck, which the Versailles Treaty has brought to both the German and Ukrainian peoples, it is doubly important to protect ourselves against an unfriendly environment.²²

The themes of common defeat, and the treachery of the Allies, appears again, and the article continued with the argument that, although Germany may have been cut off from its former colonies, and although the Allies may have been blocking Germany's access to other markets in the world, that it was necessary for Germany to look to the east – for its salvation, and for the great untapped market of Ukraine: "Industrial

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

Germany and Ukraine, rich in raw materials (food, cattle, iron, wool and leather) are called upon to support each other.”²³ The article finally claimed that the book would teach German politicians, industrialists, and traders more about the little known land – Ukraine.

Rohrbach and his colleagues, especially Axel Schmidt, began with the viewpoint that Ukraine was always in the position to achieve statehood as a fully-fledged sovereign state. They were also of the opinion; of course that Ukraine would act as a barrier state and protection for Germany against the Russian colossus, which, though weakened by the war, was only waiting for its moment of revenge. From this basic concept Rohrbach and Schmidt developed their policies on Ukraine in 1918. They did not, in any way, criticise the German military intervention in 1918 and, indeed, in many ways welcomed it as the fulfilment of their plans. Their only criticism was with subsequent German policy.

They regarded support for the Hetman as having been a major mistake on the part of Germany - because his supporters; the large landowners, were riddled with the Great Russian idea, and they regarded the socialist nationalists as better potential allies. By supporting Skoropadskyi, the Germans had alienated themselves from the Ukrainian peasantry, and left the way open to the Bolsheviks.

²³ Ibid.

CHAPTER 8

THE PERIOD OF HOSTILITY.

POLAND AND UKRAINE, NOVEMBER 1918-JANUARY 1920

Frequently it is alleged by Polish historians, such as Zbigniew Karpus and Barbara Stoczewska,¹ and particularly during the 1990s, that Poland and Ukraine were allies in their joint struggle against the Bolsheviks. This is far from true and the history of Ukrainian-Polish relations during this period can be divided into three separate phases. There is the initial period after the establishment of the Polish Second Republic and the concurrent formation of the Directory in Ukraine and the first Soviet invasion of Ukraine, which was a period of considerable hostility between the two countries. Then there is the short rapprochement from January 1920 until the Soviet-Polish armistice in the autumn of 1921, and finally a period of recrimination and distrust from the signing of the Treaty of Riga until late 1922.

The establishment of the Second Polish Republic left the country with insecure frontiers on all sides. The final arbiter of some of these disputes would be the Peace Conference in Paris but the eastern frontier with Ukraine was the most uncertain, and the writ of the Entente powers did not run there. Matters were further deeply complicated by the fact that East Galicia had declared itself independent and had joined Ukraine. This implied that the Ukrainian nationalist government in Kiev recognised East Galician independence, and as such could be regarded as an ally of the Galicians. The Directory in Kiev did indeed recognise East Galicia as part of its territory, but had no desire to declare war on Poland and, even if it had wanted to, had not the military or economic resources to support such a struggle. For the Directory the main enemy was Soviet Russia, followed as a close second by the White forces of General Denikin. Furthermore, the Ukrainians were desperate for the support of Britain and France and knew that any anti-Polish campaign would be regarded with deep suspicion by Poland's ally France.

The Poles however had no reservations about hostile manoeuvres and propaganda against the Ukrainians. From the viewpoint of the government in Warsaw, the Directory was aiding and abetting the Galicians and as such was a threat to Polish sovereignty.

¹ Barbara Stoczewska, *Litwa, Białoruś, Ukraina w myśli politycznej Leona Wasilewskiego* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 1998).

The first indication of Polish attitudes towards the new Ukrainian republic is in the press reports from the Polish newspapers in Kiev. On January 30 1919, the Polish press in Kiev was predicting the reconstruction of "historic Poland from sea to sea", a clear reference to the Polish Commonwealth of the 17th century, which stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea.² This suggests resurgence of Polish expansionism and not of any sympathy for Ukraine. This was soon compounded by a torrent of black propaganda against the Ukrainians. The main objects of this propaganda were the governments of the Entente powers, and the charges against the Ukrainians were that they were the allies and instruments of both the Bolsheviki and the Germans, and that they were responsible for the most terrible anti-Semitic outrages.

In the summer of 1919 the Polish Foreign Ministry (MSZ) formed a press agency in London, with the aim of disseminating Polish propaganda both from the ministry and from the Polish press. The agency was first named the Polish Press Bureau but by October was renamed the Eastern European News Service, which was probably intended to seem a more objective name. The bureau covered the Ukrainian nationalist struggle against the Red Army and Denikin, as well as the war in East Galicia. On June 26th 1919 the bureau reported: "According to *Kurjer Poranny* of June 26, the Ukrainian-Bolshevik campaign is being carried out under German direction, and at the head of the General Staff is the German staff officer Lideker. Many German officers command units in the Ukrainian army and the offensive is being carried out with German system and thoroughness."³ It is not clear if this refers to the campaign in Galicia, but in all the reports there is not much differentiation between the forces of the Directory and the Galicians. This may be because the main element of the Ukrainian army was the Galicians. On June 27th the bureau quoted an article from the Polish paper *Dziennik Powszechny*: "According to this article the Ukrainians three times appealed to the Bolsheviki for help against the Poles and, finally, an agreement was come to at Kiev by which Eastern Ukraine was to be joined to Bolshevik Russia and, in return, the Bolsheviki were to cease attacking the Western Ukrainians and were to send help against Poland."⁴ German involvement was again raised on July 11th in a report that the Germans were responsible for the recent ending of the armistice concluded between the Galicians and the Poles on June 20th.⁵ The Ukrainian Soviet government

² Archiwum Akt Nowych, Warsaw (hereafter AAN): MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny. (7961A), s.181.

³ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s. 48.

⁴ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s.49.

⁵ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s.227.

had been in power in Kiev since the spring and now the bureau reported on atrocities being carried out against Poles there. According to the reports in July many Poles had been arrested and the arrests, trials and executions were being carried out under the supervision of Germans.⁶ This may refer to the German Spartacists in Kiev but it is more likely to be an allegation that Berlin was acting as an ally of the Bolsheviks. It would seem that the Germans were active in both East Galicia and Ukraine, according to the Polish perspective.

As if to emphasise this point, the Prime Minister of Poland, Paderewski, appeared before the Paris Peace Conference on June 5th to answer central questions about Western Ukraine (East Galicia) in an exchange with Lloyd George. When Lloyd George asked Paderewski if Polish forces were still advancing in the Ukrainian part of Galicia, the Polish leader replied that there were two Ukraines and only one Galicia. Paderewski claimed that the Ukrainians were under the influence of Germany. He continued that the population of Galicia consisted of 3,300,000 Ruthenians and 4,700,000 Poles.⁷

At this crucial point in Ukrainian history the Directory, sensing that they were losing the war against both the Red Army and Denikin's White forces, looked to Poland as a possible ally. On May 27th the Directory signed a secret agreement with Paderewski in Warsaw. In return for renouncing all claims to East Galicia and Volhynia as far as the Styr River, Poland agreed to recognise an independent Ukraine.⁸ The Galicians were outraged and forced the Directory to annul the agreement but it showed the cracks in the Ukrainian nationalist movement, which would widen further in the following year.

The stream of anti-Ukrainian propaganda from the Polish Press Bureau continued in the summer and autumn of 1919. On July 22nd a reported speech by Dr. Galecki, the Polish General Delegate to East Galicia, referred to the Ukrainian leaders as: "Blind instruments of the Germans, who are the enemies not only of Poland but of all Slavonic races."⁹ The bureau also reported on Bolshevik atrocities against the Poles in Kiev and the surrounding provinces, that many thousands had been arrested, and that some had

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference 1919. Vol VI, p.194.*

⁸ M.Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance, 1919-1921. An Aspect of the Ukrainian Revolution* (Edmonton CIUS: Edmonton, 1980), p. 68.

⁹ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s. 227.

been placed in concentration camps in the interior of Russia, others in Darnica, and the rest in Kiev.¹⁰

The tide of war began to change in Ukraine and both the nationalists and the Whites began to force the Bolshevik forces back. The Galician troops, seeing that the war in East Galicia was lost, at least temporarily, joined Petliura and added 40,000 men to his army and enabled him to march on Kiev. On 30th August the nationalist army re-entered the city only to find that the Whites under Denikin were also occupying the capital. As Denikin's military strength was far greater than Petliura's the nationalists abandoned the city the following day. The East Galicians were well aware that Petliura had been negotiating with Poland and agreed to join Denikin's army on the condition that they would not be engaged in any action against Ukrainians.¹¹ Petliura, in turn, signed an armistice with Poland on September 1st.¹² The Ukrainians had divided into two camps, one hostile to Poland the other neutral.

The Polish Press Bureau continued its unrelenting torrent of anti-Ukrainian propaganda and its object was not only the Galicians but Petliura and the Directory also. In August the focus switched to the alleged anti-Semitic outrages committed by the nationalist forces. On August 7th 1919 a state telegram was sent to the Polish Press Bureau from Warsaw:

A graphic account of the Jewish pogrom which took place in Ploskirow a town in Podolia a hundred kilometres to the east of Tarnopol is given in the Lemberg paper *Ślowo Polskie* for August sixth. When early this year Ataman Petliura's troops had given up Kiev to the Bolsheviks without firing a shot, they began to retreat to the west organising massacres of the Jews in every larger town on their road. On the second day, after their arrival in Ploskirow, shots were heard in the early morning near the railway station. The Jews, expecting a pogrom, had planned a Bolshevik rising, which failed, and about noon all was quiet. The organisers of the Bolshevik rising had fled from the town and the Ukrainian troops, which mostly consisted of Cossacks, proceeded to take revenge on the Jews who remained. Ataman Semesenko's brigade received the order "Don't waste bullets. Spare nobody. Don't plunder." Cocaine was dealt out to the soldiers and at two o'clock

¹⁰ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s. 377-378.

¹¹ John Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p.290.

¹² Ibid, p.294.

four companies fully armed started for the town (...) The Cossacks marched in fours and sang as they marched and when they reached the streets of the Jewish quarter they were told off in small groups to different houses. They entered quietly, after which spasmodic weeping and groans were heard, the soldiers came out sprinkled with blood. Their officers questioned them. 'Have you finished: Yes. All of them: Yes. All right...' Jews who were wounded and left for dead relate that when the Cossacks entered a Jewish house they usually found the family assembled around the table, the old men in their Sabbath dress praying before lighted candles, all sunk in a kind of fatalistic resignation. The leading Cossack Ukrainian said 'Say goodbye to each other', and then the work began. If money was offered to the soldiers, they said; 'We want your lives and not your money.' Continually came the command from the officers: 'With the bayonet.' A Russian Orthodox deacon who tried to stop the slaughter was at once murdered, and at twilight the work was finished and Ataman Semesenko entered the town in triumphal procession, with the Ukrainian standard carried before him and torch bearers to light his way, while the soldiers cried: 'Little father. Little father. Honour to him.' Then plundering began.¹³

This detailed description of a pogrom would obviously have caused deep revulsion and disgust in Britain and also influenced American and French opinion. I do not intend to enter the disputed territory of the history of pogroms in Ukraine but this example, whether factual or not, is interesting. It is claimed to be an eyewitness report, the behaviour of the troops is bestial and no details remain excluded. What is most pertinent is that the allegations are made against Petliura's forces. There were of course numerous pogroms carried out in Ukraine during this period and some were the work of Petliura's forces, although he personally forbade it and later claimed no responsibility for what happened.¹⁴ It was one of the major propaganda weapons used against the Ukrainian nationalists and played a large part in the alienation of liberal opinion in Western Europe from the nationalist cause.

In a response to a report on pogroms by the Committee of Assistance to Pogrom Victims of the Russian Red Cross in Kiev, Arnold Margolin, the UNR Deputy Foreign

¹³AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s. 380. I am giving this detailed description of a pogrom contained in the Polish propaganda accounts, in order to give an impression of the likely impact of such a description on British public opinion.

¹⁴A. Margolin, *Ukraina i politika Antanty* (Berlin, 1921).

Minister wrote: „In this report it is pointed out that under the Ukrainian Central Rada, under Hetman Skoropadskyi, and during the first two months of the Directory, there were no pogroms. Pogroms began after the defeat of the armies of the Ukrainian Directory by the Bolsheviki (...)”¹⁵ The Poles were continually using charges of committing pogroms against the Ukrainians at the Paris Peace Conference and elsewhere. What is ironic is that the Jewish press reports, widely disseminated in the United States and Britain, suggest that the Jews in Poland and in East Galicia were accusing the Poles of carrying out pogroms and of constant harassment of Jewish communities.¹⁶

This account is only one of many released by the Polish Press Bureau and its successor the Eastern European News Service. Together with the charges of pro-German sympathies and of collusion with the Bolsheviks, it substantially damaged the reputation of the Ukrainian nationalists and lost them almost totally any support in the Entente countries. This was the primary aim of Polish propaganda. The lurid reports of pogroms were further supported by accounts of massacres carried out in East Galicia on the Polish civilian population, and particularly on landlords and priests. To the Polish press and government this bore all the hallmarks of Bolshevism¹⁷, and when the Ukrainians were not dancing to Moscow’s tune they were dancing to Berlin’s.

When one considers that, within a few months Petliura would be the gallant ally of Poland this is quite curious, but it also demolishes the theory of any alliance, or even of any sympathy, towards the Ukrainian cause existing during most of 1919, as the flow of propaganda from the government controlled news agencies indicted not only East Galicians of atrocities and pro-German sympathies but also Petliura’s government.

Despite the apparent anti-Ukrainian position taken by both the Polish press and government during 1919, there is the important question of what the opinion of Pilsudski was. Pilsudski’s role as Commander in Chief of the army and leading statesman was central. It has always been considered that Pilsudski was pro-Ukrainian and the architect of the alliance with Petliura in 1920. What were his views during most of 1919?

For most of 1919 Pilsudski considered the White Russian forces to be his major enemy in the east. Denikin’s policy of ‘one and indivisible Russia’ was regarded as far

¹⁵ A. Margolin, *The Jews of Eastern Europe*. (New York, 1926), pp. 126-28.

¹⁶ AAN: MSZ. Ambasada RP w Berlinie 2411, 2412, k. I, 2414, 2413.

¹⁷ Polish reports of Bolshevik and Ukrainian massacres always concentrated on attacks on priests, nuns, landowners and other figures associated with the Polish state.

more threatening to the Polish state than the Bolsheviks. As Denikin's army won more and more victories in Ukraine in the summer and autumn of 1919, Piłsudski became more alarmed. Now Poland was threatened on two fronts, by the war of independence in East Galicia and by the advancing White army. The major cause of Polish alarm was that, although Denikin recognised Polish sovereignty, he envisaged it as extending only as far as Przyslinsk that is within the same boundaries as Congress Poland in 1815, and would not include the borderlands. Piłsudski's view was that the boundaries of the Polish state should include the much larger area prior to the First and Second Partitions, which would include ethnographic Lithuanian and Ukrainian territories.

Piłsudski's interest in Ukraine was long standing. One of his closest colleagues reported that he had a deep knowledge of Polish-Ukrainian relations and could quote from memory long passages of the Hadiach agreement of 1658. He believed that the partition of Poland in 1667 marked the beginning of Poland's decline and Russia's rise as a great power.¹⁸ In his collected writings he wrote that he believed that the Galician war was disastrous for both sides. He believed that most Ukrainian socialists - most Ukrainian nationalist leaders were socialists - were still unwilling to take orders from Moscow, despite the pro-Bolshevik factions within both the Ukrainian Social Democrat and Socialist Revolutionary parties. Piłsudski believed that the Ukrainian movement was a national struggle far more than a class one.¹⁹

In January 1919 Piłsudski discussed his ideas on Ukraine with Lieutenant R.C.Foster of the U.S. army and with the diplomatic correspondent of the Italian paper *Il Secolo*. To the American he intimated that it would be easier to negotiate a settlement with the Ukrainians than with the East Galicians and to the Italian he expressed his hope for an understanding with the Ukrainians: "I cannot tell you how the future frontier between us and the Ukrainians will be drawn. There is a strong trend among the Poles to incorporate the whole of East Galicia into Poland and thus establish a common frontier with Romania in order to have a connection with the Black Sea, which is desirable for economic reasons. I think that, in the future, an understanding between us and the Ukrainians will be reached."²⁰

There was a fundamental difference in perspective in Poland in 1919 between Piłsudski and his supporters in the Polish Socialist Party and the National Democrats

¹⁸ M.K.Dziewanowski, *Joseph Piłsudski: A European Federalist, 1918-1922* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), p.244.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.245.

²⁰ Ibid, p.246.

led by Dmowski. For Piłsudski Russia would always represent the main danger to Poland's sovereignty and independence, and the decline of Poland as a great power was intrinsically linked with the rise of Russia. An essential element in this rise was Russia's acquisition of Ukraine.

Already in January 1919 there were signs that certain sections of the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic were seeking Polish support for their war effort. On January 18th Piłsudski met a delegation from the Ukrainian nationalist government at the Belvedere Palace in Warsaw and discussed Polish-Ukrainian relations. Piłsudski counselled them that there would be no security for Ukraine as long as the Bolsheviks and Denikin were determined to destroy it and that Ukraine's only strength would lie in a union with Poland²¹ To emphasise the point the Polish ambassador to the nationalist government, B.Kutyłowski reported to Warsaw from Odessa that the Ukrainians had no hope of defeating the Bolsheviks unless the troops were withdrawn from Galicia and that in order to do that the struggle against Poland would have to end.²² The role of the Galician troops in the nationalist army was essential, and it can be understood that while these forces were engaged in Galicia itself the Ukrainian struggle in East Ukraine was fatally weakened. This was Petliura's dilemma, to make peace with Poland in order to free his forces to fight Denikin and the Bolsheviks, or by making peace with Poland to alienate his Galician troops and also lose the support of the government of Western Ukraine, thus dividing the nationalist movement. Polish overtures to peace must be seen in this perspective. They were designed to withdraw Kiev's support for East Galicia and to encourage the Ukrainians to continue the war against the Russians, both Red and White.

By July the Polish forces had effectively defeated the East Galicians driving them across the frontier and into Ukraine proper, where they were to play a major part in Petliura's army. The nationalists continued to be pushed back, however, first by the Red Army and then by the Whites. Petliura's situation was becoming more and more desperate in the summer of 1919 and in August he made a secret agreement with Piłsudski.

In May 1919 Piłsudski had written to Prime Minister Paderewski expressing the view that Poland was completely dependant on the goodwill of the Entente and that the

²¹ Przemysław Hauser, 'The Federal Vision in the Ideas of J. Piłsudski and the Attempt to Apply it 1918-1921', in *Polska i Ukraina*, ed. Z. Karpus et al. (Toruń: Michael Copernicus University Press, 1997), p.127.

²² Ibid.

only thing preventing an outbreak of hostilities with Germany was that goodwill. It was a necessity for Poland to secure a federation in the east and most importantly to become the leading power in Eastern Europe.²³ The plan was to include the vital co-operation of the Lithuanians and the Belorussians. Unfortunately for Pilsudski, the Lithuanians had no idea of entering a Polish federation and wanted to consolidate their own sovereign state. This meant that Pilsudski's grand design would be completely dependant on Ukraine.

The first contacts between the Poles and Ukrainians began as ceasefire negotiations in Galicia in early 1919 and mainly concerned the problems of that region. These negotiations were often at the behest of the Entente powers and frequently controlled by them. Each time negotiations collapsed over the issue of the borders of East Galicia. When they started again, Poland was always in a stronger position both militarily and politically. There were several attempts to secure peace with Poland throughout 1919 by Petliura, but these attempts became more desperate as the military situation worsened for the Ukrainians in the autumn of 1919. On the 9th September Petliura proposed military and political co-operation. A delegation from the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic led by the former Minister for Communications Philipchuk was sent. The kernel of the proposition, which the delegation brought from Petliura, was that, in exchange for peace and possibly future support, the Ukrainian People's Republic would renounce East Galicia. Petliura, with Kiev lost to Denikin, and his forces without ammunition and suffering from typhus, agreed to the Polish terms.

The Polish propaganda machine now turned its attention towards the East Galicians who had joined Denikin's army. What is also interesting though is that the whole Ukrainian cause continued to be undermined by this, suggesting that the armistice with Petliura was not wholly accepted by the Poles. On September 10th, the Polish Press Bureau reported:

Reports from Kiev, which has lately been occupied by General Denikin's troops, state that the East Galician force, which has deserted the Ukrainian ataman Petliura and gone over to Denikin, is composed of former Russian POWs in Germany and Austria and is officered exclusively by Germans.

Kurjer Poranny of today's date reports that the character and discipline of

²³ Ibid.

these troops is typically German, that they were only loosely connected with Petliura and get their instructions and orders direct from Berlin. They have good camping arrangements, good artillery and German discipline; they formed the only really reliable unit in Petliura's army, which after their desertion must inevitably fall to pieces.²⁴

A further report on September 17th stated that proof of Ukrainian negotiations with the Bolsheviks was in the hands of the Polish military. It claimed that a Hughes apparatus had been captured on which was recorded a conversation between Podkominskyi, the chief of the Ukrainian mission at Dubno, and Joffe, the Chief Inspector of Bolshevik forces in Kiev. From the conversation it could be deduced that a Ukrainian delegation, composed of three people, passed through the Bolshevik front for the purpose of entering into negotiations with the Bolshevik government in Kiev, which was to supply the Ukrainian army with ammunition. The delegation was supposedly given full powers to sign an agreement by the Ukrainian army chiefs and with their authority acknowledged Soviet supremacy, stating that the sympathies of the West Ukrainian army were altogether on the side of the Bolsheviks.²⁵

This report seems full of contradictions. There is no evidence that the Galicians were sympathetic towards the Bolsheviks, though the Bolsheviks hoped that they might be. When they could not fight for Ukrainian independence, the Galicians joined Denikin's army in the struggle against the Reds. Certainly, by the end of 1919 and the apparent defeat of the Ukrainian cause, some Galicians, frustrated by the lack of Entente support for the independence of East Galicia and Petliura's alliance with Poland, did begin a flirtation with the Bolsheviks. It was not the case this early in the war. It is just another aspect of Polish anti-Ukrainian propaganda and another theme emerged in a report by the Polish Press Bureau on September 22nd: "A document has come into the hands of General Bredoff by which the Germans agreed to send the Ukrainian army before the 27th August a certain number of aeroplanes. Bredoff also asserts that the Ukrainian missions abroad are in German pay, including the representative of Ukraine in Paris."²⁶

This was not only an attack on the Ukrainian forces but also on the diplomatic representation of the Ukrainian People's Republic, and therefore of Petliura and his

²⁴ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s. 507-508.

²⁵ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635^A, s. 546-547.

²⁶ AAN : MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635^A, s. 593.

government. The allegation against the diplomat in Paris was particularly sharp as this was the person arguing the case for an independent Ukraine at the Peace Conference. General Bredoff was Denikin's governor in Kiev and it demonstrates that the Poles were prepared to join forces with the Russian Whites, at least for propaganda purposes, against the Ukrainians. These charges played on the Entente fears that an independent Ukraine was a German idea and strengthened the French in particular in their anti-Ukrainian position. There is no attempt here by the Poles to exonerate Petliura and his government from the charges laid against the Ukrainians in general. The Polish position seemed to be that Petliura was held to be, at worst, a collaborator with the pro-German and pro-Bolshevik views of both the Galicians and the other Ukrainians and, at best, a powerless marionette in the hands of others. This latter view emerges in a report by the East European News Service on October 17th, which stated:

So that Denikin is quite well able to deal with them and his object is to capture the two atamans²⁷ with their ministers and officials, which would put an end to the so-called Ukrainian republics. Though Petliura formally keeps to the armistice concluded with the Poles he has but little power and Petrushevych's²⁸ troops are hostile to Poland. The Ukrainian peasants are tired of the atamans and do not wish for a separate Ukrainian state.²⁹

On November 12th the Eastern European News Service reported that Petliura had fled after Denikin's forces had captured his staff, and Poland's stance on Denikin's regime receives an interesting interpretation in a report on November 13th. The report states that Polish enterprise is taking a prominent role in what it refers to as "South Russia" with a Polish bank in Kharkov and several other enterprises in Ukraine. It describes how a Polish economic mission to Russia under the direction of M.Ivanowski, the former Minister of Labour in Poland, has succeeded in coming to a preliminary agreement with Denikin's government.³⁰ There are certain parallels here with the attempt by the Germans to form economic links with Denikin's regime, and of course this policy would have found much favour with the Entente powers who were all for supporting Denikin. It must be borne in mind that Denikin's position seemed defensible and the Poles were jostling for position in the economic opportunity, which

²⁷ Petliura and Petrushevych

²⁸ Petrushevych was the Head of State of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR), i.e. East Galicia.

²⁹ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s. 854.

³⁰ Ibid.

Ukraine offered. None of this however, suggests any support or, indeed, sympathy for the aims of an independent Ukraine.

Finally, the agency reported the total collapse of Petliura's army and of his political hopes: "November 21st, Warsaw. Petliura's army is broken up. The Galician regiments have come over to the Poles and the Dnepr Cossacks have joined Denikin. Twenty-nine of Petliura's staff have come to Lemberg (...) as well as the secretary of the Ukrainian government Holubovych. Amongst the fugitives was the German Captain Klein, who is at present a high dignitary under Petliura."³¹ Even in Petliura's moment of defeat Polish propaganda continued to emphasise his German connections. None of the above suggests a Poland in league with, or even remotely supportive of, the struggle for an independent Ukraine, and although Piłsudski may have been personally sympathetic, the government's mouthpiece certainly was not. Again it must be stated that this propaganda was intended for the Entente states, and was meant to undermine the position of the Ukrainian delegation at Versailles, and its minister in London; so it is even more surprising that within a few months the Ukrainians would be called Poland's gallant allies.

At this time Poland was uncertain whether Denikin and the Whites would be victorious in Ukraine. This turn of events would be anathema to Piłsudski, who believed that a Soviet victory would be the lesser evil for Poland. The Germans were also of the opinion that Denikin would win and, despite desperate pleas for aid from Petliura, were relying on a White victory. The Poles were aware that the representatives of the Ukrainian People's Republic were seeking German support, and they redoubled their propaganda effort to undermine the Ukrainian cause and cast the nationalists as German pawns. The most serious allegation against Germany was that a German plane had been captured in Silesia; on the plane were 40 million marks, which the Germans had been carrying to the Ukrainians, thereby, encouraging them to continue the struggle.³² There is no evidence of such outright support from the Germans and, indeed, at this period the German Foreign Ministry was heavily discouraging any form of aid for the Ukrainians.

At this crucial juncture in the Civil War – the autumn of 1919 – Piłsudski showed his hand regarding Ukraine. Denikin was prepared to have peace with Poland and made efforts to form a joint anti-Bolshevik front. Piłsudski insisted on Russian renunciation

³¹ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s. 894- 895.

³² AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s. 600.

of Belorussia and Ukraine as far as the Dnepr. He also rejected the proposed frontier drawn up by the Peace Conference – the Curzon Line – as it excluded territory, which he considered to be within the Polish sphere of influence. It was now clear that there would be no co-operation between the Poles and the Whites. Each had a very different agenda.

Both Germany and Poland regarded the Ukrainian cause as lost in the last three months of 1919. Petliura was without resources, his army defeated and stricken with typhus.³³ His diplomats had harried both Germany and the Entente powers for support and recognition but without success. By sheer force of geography and military strategy he was at the mercy of Poland. The price of an armistice, or any minimum support, would be to divorce his cause and his government from that of the East Galicians. Petliura could see that the Galicians had been defeated by the Poles; and if he was to salvage anything from the wreck of Ukrainian aspirations he would need to make peace with Poland. He crossed the Galician frontier in December 1919 and placed himself and his ministers at the mercy of the Poles. It was the end of the second part of the Ukrainian war of independence, but certainly not the last act. If it was any consolation to Petliura, Denikin was also defeated in December and Bolshevik forces once again entered Kiev. On the 21st December a new Soviet Ukrainian government was formed, but its period in office would be short.

On 5th December 1919 Petliura took refuge in Poland, but before leaving he made General Omelianovich-Pavlenko commander of the Ukrainian army, and Isaac Mazepa acting head of the government in Khmelnik. The Ukrainian army acted as a partisan group in the winter of 1919-20 harassing the Soviet forces.

In January 1920 Ukraine was for the most part under Soviet control. Soviet Russia presented peace proposals to Poland which were as follows:

1. Russia recognises without reservation the independence and sovereignty of Poland, basing this on the principle that each nation has the right to decide its own destiny, and all relations with Poland will be based on this recognition.
2. The Red Army will not cross the present front line.
3. The Soviet government has not concluded any agreement or treaty with Germany or any other country, directly or indirectly, harmful to Poland.³⁴

³³ Isodore Nahawesky, *History of the Modern Ukrainian State 1917-1923* (Munich: Ukrainian Free University, 1966), p. 200.

³⁴ Y. Markhlevsky, *Voyna I Mir mezhdhu Burzhnaznoi Pol'shoi I Proletarskoj Rossiei* (Moscow, 1921), pp. 12-15.

This was an important and significant offer from Moscow. Soviet Russia recognised without reservation the right of Poland to exist as an independent state. Many Poles were also tired of constant war since 1914. The National Democrats favoured the acceptance of the Bolshevik proposals. The other states in the region, which had formerly been part of the Russian Empire – Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, favoured peace. Their delegates met the Polish delegation in Helsinki and firmly argued for peace.

Pilsudski would not countenance peace with Russia. He was convinced that the Bolsheviks were merely playing for time and would eventually attack Poland. His fears were strengthened by intelligence reports from the front indicating that the Red Army was increasing the number of troops on the Ukrainian front. The Bolsheviks also distrusted Poland and they observed that Polish forces were being strengthened on the Ukrainian and Belorussian fronts. Pilsudski wanted a strong victory over Russia, which would consolidate Poland's position as the leading power in Central Europe and extend its boundaries considerably to the east. The Bolsheviks were still uncertain about Wrangel's White forces in the Crimea and so would not be able to position all their armies on the Ukrainian front. The moment seemed opportune to attack and fulfil Poland's ancient dream of reclaiming Lithuania and Ukraine. However, in order to disguise the war as being something other than an imperialistic one, Pilsudski required an ally. Petliura seemed the obvious choice. He was already in Poland and was still the head of the nationalist government based in Khmelnik. In Ukraine his partisan units were active and there were anti-Soviet uprisings in some parts of the country. Petliura was still regarded by many Ukrainians as their national leader and it was possible that he could play a major role in leading an anti-Soviet national revolt, and encourage the Ukrainians to support a Polish-Ukrainian army. Also, there were many Ukrainian prisoners of war in Poland and several divisions could be formed from them.

The two major factors militating against any agreement were the opposition of the National Democrats and the division amongst the Ukrainians. Roman Dmowski, the leader of the National Democrats was also the chairman of the Polish National Committee, which represented Poland at the Paris Peace Conference. In June 1919 Dmowski expressed his views on Ukraine in a memorandum issued by the committee, which argued that territories which had been a part of the Polish Commonwealth before the partitions with a mixed population should be included in the territory of the Polish

state. He was absolutely opposed to the creation of new independent states in the region, arguing that it would only emphasise their non-Polish character and encourage the Entente powers to offer them to Russia.³⁵ He was concerned that East Galicia could be included and could eventually be united with a Russian federal state. The National Democrats had considerable power in the Sejm and also in the counsels of the Entente powers.

The second problem was that the leader of the East Galicians (Western Ukrainians), Dr Petrushevych, was implacably opposed to any agreement with Poland and had already split with Petliura on the issue of the armistice with Poland. He was in Vienna, along with other members of the government of the People's Republic of Western Ukraine, and appealing to all Ukrainians not to support any form of agreement with Poland. He was particularly influential in Germany and Czechoslovakia, both of whose governments were suspicious of Polish plans for aggrandisement in Eastern Europe. Petrushevych also had the support of many leading members of the Ukrainian Left and in particular the veteran socialist and nationalist Vynnychenko, who regarded Pilsudski's plans with great suspicion and appealed to the Ukrainian People's Republic's government not to enter into any form of agreement with Poland. Petrushevych was also sending agents into East Galicia to encourage sabotage and other forms of resistance against the occupying Polish forces.

Finally, the Entente powers were also opposed to any form of agreement between Ukraine and Poland. Britain, in particular, was concerned about Polish ambitions in the east and did not want to see the formation of a new Polish empire. France was more sympathetic towards Pilsudski's ambitions but chiefly as a weapon with which to strike the Bolsheviks. Both countries however were opposed to the concept of an independent Ukraine and still clung to the idea of a reconstituted Russia. This was despite the fact that the Whites were clearly losing the Civil War and Wrangel was the only remaining White leader in the field. Bolshevik peace offers were received well in Britain, and the British government now wanted peace in Eastern Europe and the resumption of trade with Russia. Anything, which would disturb the equilibrium, was not welcome.³⁶

On 2 December 1919 Petliura had accepted the Polish-Ukrainian frontier as being on the Zbruch and Horych rivers. The East Galicians had refused to recognise the agreement, and it became obvious that any future agreement would have to be made

³⁵ R. Dmowski, *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa* (Warsaw, 1925), p. 463-77.

³⁶ *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939: 1st Series*, iii (1949), pp. 803-5.

between Poland and the Eastern Ukrainians alone. From January onwards Pilsudski sought to persuade Petliura to enter a military alliance and thus for Poland to recognise the claims of Ukrainian nationalists. The lack of a single Ukrainian national government controlling both the Polish and Russian 'fronts' was a major barrier on the road to any agreement. It was a historical tragedy for the Ukrainians that East Galicia, which was the most advanced region politically, socially and culturally, was unable to take part in the struggle with Russia in 1920.

Soviet Russia began to suspect that Pilsudski had no intention of making peace and was bent on some sort of campaign in Ukraine. Soviet agents had also probably informed Moscow of the ongoing negotiations between Pilsudski and Petliura. Accordingly, early in January 1920, the Soviet high command created a new front, the southwestern, and three armies - the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth, were diverted to protect Kiev from possible Polish attack.³⁷ From Berlin Litvinov sent news that Poland was preparing for general mobilisation; and Marshal Foch and several other anti-Bolshevik leaders were expected in Warsaw, where they would organise a new White army to attack Russia.

The withdrawal of the White army in Ukraine left a military vacuum and in late December and early January the Polish army advanced to form a new front based on the Uszyca River, Proskourov, Starokonstantinov and the Sluch River. The Poles opened a direct rail line from Warsaw to Kamenets-Podolski and reinforced the army.³⁸ Pilsudski hoped to place newly occupied territory under Ukrainian administration and planned to move Petliura and his government from Kamenets-Podolski to Vinnitsa. The French government also decided to supply Poland with military supplies in order to attack the Bolsheviks. The stage was set for the coming conflict; only an agreement with Petliura barred the way.

Petliura's attitude at this time seems to have been somewhat contradictory, at times very optimistic about any future venture with Poland, and at times extremely pessimistic. These are borne out by two letters he sent between December 1919 and January 1920. The first was written on December 18th 1919 and sent to Margolin, the representative of the Ukrainian People's Republic in Britain:

³⁷ *Adiutantura Generalna Naczelnego Wodza*, T.21, t.1, mnps. , niepag., s. 3. Cited in *Sąsiedzi wobec wojny 1920 roku*, pp. 146-7.

³⁸ See Appendix 4.

We have in Germany 50,000 prisoners. If England would not prevent the transportation of these prisoners at least into Poland, where we hope to begin organising them, adding to these the prisoners in Poland and in Rumania too, we could after 2 or 3 months enter Ukraine with this army and begin to establish order and peace in our country. I should think that the confidence that I have enjoyed up until now among our population would guarantee the possibility of this organised power and gain for it success.³⁹

This suggests a leader full of confidence and totally prepared to enter a military campaign and re-enter his country with every possibility of success. However, the letter sent to Count Tyszkiewicz, the UNR representative at the Paris Peace Conference, on January 19th 1920, presents a very different scenario:

The role of a prophet is difficult. Nevertheless, I should imagine that the Bolsheviks are not a weak enemy. In the recent operations against Denikin they had 38 divisions at their disposal. The Poles will have to fight the Bolsheviks on the Ukrainian territory, where the former have not won sympathy owing to their occupation policy. On the contrary, they have mobilised against them the peasants, who are indignant at the requisitions and the strong measures of the Polish troops. Furthermore, the Jewish population regards the Poles with high disfavour. The Bolsheviks could, therefore make use of these feelings and then the Polish army would be in the same dangerous position in Ukraine as the Germans were in their time.⁴⁰

This proved to be a very prophetic pronouncement indeed and events followed almost as Petliura had predicted, but it also shows that Petliura was racked with doubt about a joint campaign with Poland. The letter continued, pointing out Petliura's reservations about the Poles and what role the Ukrainians were playing:

The same milieu of the Polish population and of the Polish General Staff are not warlike; but we do not know here whether the minister Patek was given in Paris the mandate of the Entente to re-establish order in Eastern Europe. It is necessary to warn the Entente against repeating disastrous experiments. I do not know whether or not you have had a meeting with Patek on this question; but I should consider the undertaking of a new *demarche* in his

³⁹ AAN: MSZ.Ambasada RP w Londynie 427, s.24.

⁴⁰ AAN: MSZ.Ambasada RP w Londynie 427, s.28.

direction as a very necessary step, pointing out that the Eastern problem cannot be solved without Ukraine.⁴¹

The letter was subsequently published in the Ukrainian nationalist journal *The Ukraine*.⁴² Here Petliura is demonstrating a determined resistance to the notion that he and the Ukrainians are merely to be pawns in the greater game being played by Poland. It indicates that distrust was not limited to the Poles and, after the events of 1919, it would be surprising if Petliura did not harbour doubts about Poland. The publication of the letter further suggests that he wanted the Entente powers to be aware that the Ukrainian cause was not merely a side issue. However, within three months Petliura would enter a military alliance with Poland and the period of hostility between Poland and Ukraine would formally end. It would be a marriage with an unstable beginning and an unhappy end.

⁴¹ AAN: MSZ. Ambasada RP w Londynie 427, s. 28.

⁴² Ibid.

CHAPTER 9

THE ALLIANCE AND THE SOVIET-POLISH WAR, JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 1920

The situation of the Directory in the winter and spring of 1919-1920 was a confused and complex one. Petliura, who was the Supreme Commander of Ukrainian forces, was in Poland, Mazepa, the Prime Minister, and the rest of his ministers were in Ukrainian territory occupied by the Polish army; and other important members of the Directory were in Western Europe seeking aid from the Entente powers. Almost alone, Petliura signed a major treaty with Poland on April 21, 1920. Before examining the agreement itself, it is necessary to question whether Petliura was authorised to act independently of the rest of his government – and to what extent he was pressurised by the Poles, considering that he was in effect a refugee in Poland.

In November 1919 two major members of the Directory – Shvets and Makarenko – went to Western Europe. In an act passed by the Directory on November 15 1919 it was agreed that there was to be a separation of powers between them and Petliura. Point four of the act stated that the function of Shvets and Makarenko was “the conclusion of preliminary agreements and political-military treaties with other states in the name of the Ukrainian People’s Republic”. Point three of the act gave them the powers of exercising the final control over the acts of all official bodies of the Ukrainian People’s Republic abroad. Petliura’s role was seen as remaining in Ukraine and carrying on the military struggle there in the name of the Directory. Professor Serhi Shelukhin in his work *Varshavi Dohovir mizh Poliakami i S. Petliuriou* (Prague, 1926), took the view that any agreement entered into by Petliura was not binding on the other members of the Directory, because they had not been consulted. The treaty would cause deep division within the Ukrainian nationalist movement; not just between the Galicians and the Eastern Ukrainians, but also between Petliura and those Ukrainians deeply opposed to any pro-Polish orientation.

Before examining those divisions and their consequences a reading of the treaty itself is required. The treaty was signed in Warsaw and was later referred to as the Warsaw Treaty or the Warsaw Agreement. Jan Dombiski of the Polish Foreign Ministry

signed on behalf of Poland, and Liviskyi signed on behalf of the Ukrainian People's Republic.¹

One of the main reasons for Petliura signing the treaty was the desire to obtain French assistance against the Bolsheviks. During the winter of 1919 and the spring of 1920, a French deputy, M. de Gailhard-Bancel, had made several speeches in the Chamber of Deputies supporting Ukrainian independence. These speeches had received the support of the right and the centre but they had not altered French government policy.² Petliura had also appealed to the Allied Supreme Council on January 22, 1920, asking for a lifting of the blockade of Ukraine to allow the shipment of medical supplies. The Supreme Council had not even replied.³ It probably seemed to Petliura that the only hope of gaining French support was by becoming the ally of Poland, France's closest partner in Eastern Europe. The opposition to the treaty from other Ukrainian nationalists, and from later Ukrainian historians, was bitter. An example of this is John S. Reshetar's "The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920. A Study in Nationalism" (New York, 1972), where Reshetar states:

This treaty was in complete violation of the centuries-old animosity, which prevailed between the Poles and Ukrainians, and Petliura in consenting to it issued his own political death warrant. In his fear of Russian imperialism he surrendered himself to a people whose extremists have been equally imperialistic in their demands for a Poland, which would dominate the area between the Baltic and Black Seas. During the negotiations the Poles did not hesitate to remind the Ukrainians that they were not dealing with equals, since the latter possessed neither territory nor *stabilité du gouvernement*.⁴

This view that Petliura had been cajoled, tricked, or seduced into signing the treaty with Poland became the dominant one among Ukrainian émigré historians and indeed among the nationalists of his own day. It is only recently being revised. The questions of whether Petliura fully realised what he was doing, and what the treaty itself meant for the Ukrainian nationalists need to be addressed first before returning to examine its consequences.

The evidence from Petliura himself is contradictory. Reference has already been made to two letters, which he sent to his own diplomats abroad, one highly supportive

¹ See Appendix 1.

² Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, p.300.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, p.303.

of the treaty and optimistic about its results, the other far more reflective, pessimistic and prophetic. Petliura knew that any agreement with Poland would totally alienate not only the Galicians but also large sections of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, especially the left. He was however in a political and military cul-de-sac. Without Polish assistance, and possibly the support of France as a result, all hope of an independent Ukraine would be lost.

It can be argued, of course, that he was totally at the mercy of the Poles. He himself was a refugee in Poland, most of the Directory was based in Polish-occupied territory and many of his potential army were in Polish prison camps. There was also the problem of military logistics. He no longer commanded an army, even though partisan activity was continuing in Ukraine, and Poland had the only army in Eastern Europe capable of smashing the Red Army. The period from January to April 1920 was an agonising one for Petliura, as he desperately sought a way out of his dilemma. He knew that any agreement with Poland would be one where the Poles dictated the terms, and that they would drive a hard bargain.

The talks had been underway for some months. There had been preliminary agreements between Petliura and the Polish government several times in the course of 1919; it was however only after his total defeat by the Bolsheviks, and his residence in Warsaw, that the situation changed. Formal negotiations for a treaty of alliance were started on March 11, 1920. Representing Ukraine was the head of the Ukrainian Diplomatic Mission and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Liviskyi. He was a Social Democrat lawyer and one of Petliura's strongest supporters. General Danilchuk, a military expert, assisted him. On the Polish side were two diplomats, August Zaleski and Roman Knoll. The ensuing talks were long and bitter, and it is not surprising that this was the case. The Ukrainians were being asked to permanently renounce East Galicia and to accept a Polish frontier prior to 1772. Compromise on some of the issues would be extremely difficult for both sides.

The Polish historian M.K. Dziewanowski in his biography of Pilsudski took the opposite view to Reshetar and argued that both sides were restrained by the demands of their respective political situations, and that the Poles tried to compromise with the Ukrainians:

Both sides realised what was at stake. Pilsudski realised that the fate of his East European plans were largely dependant on the success or failure of the

planned Ukrainian venture. Petliura knew that without Polish help he was lost; but he also knew that to obtain this help he would have to make substantial political concessions to the Poles in East Galicia. He was aware, too, that any alliance between a group of Ukrainian nationalists and Poland must result in some gains that would bolster his position as a national leader. Without these benefits, a Polish alliance would destroy him and his cause. Consequently, the Ukrainian delegates fought hard for some sort of compromise in the East Galicia issue, although they realised that they possessed very limited bargaining power and that Pilsudski had very little leeway in the matter in view of the state of Polish public opinion.⁵

There was considerable opposition to any Polish-Ukrainian agreement – and not only from the Ukrainians. As late as February 1920 a police report from Vienna to the Austrian Foreign Ministry gave a long list of Ukrainian ministers and diplomats resident in the city, and the various hotels in which they were lodged. The report went on to state that although there were two main groups among the exiled Ukrainians, a pro-Soviet group hoping for an autonomous Ukraine and a group supporting outright Ukrainian independence, both groups were vehemently opposed to any agreement with Poland.⁶

The Warsaw Treaty was regarded by other Ukrainian nationalist leaders, such as Hrushevskyi and Vynnychenko, as evidence that Petliura had abandoned socialism in favour of a reactionary type of nationalism, which would only serve his own interests. Vynnychenko, who was in Vienna and about to return to Soviet Ukraine to make his peace with the regime in Kharkhov, launched a vicious propaganda attack against Petliura and the Poles. He labelled Petliura as: “a pernicious and filthy gladiator-slave of the Entente” and “an unhealthily ambitious maniac, soaked up to his ears in the blood of pogromised Jewry, politically illiterate, willing to accept all reaction in order to preserve his power.”⁷ Furthermore, it must be remembered that Vynnychenko commanded considerable respect on the left throughout Europe. He had many contacts, particularly in the German and Austrian Social Democrat parties and to a lesser extent in the French Socialist Party and the British Labour Party. On April 22 1920, he issued an open letter to the communists and socialists of Western Europe and America, stating

⁵ Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski*, p.269.

⁶ Theophil Homykiewicz. *Events in Ukraine 1914-1922. Their Importance and Historical Background. Vol IV.* (Philadelphia, 1969), p.114.

⁷ Volodimir Vynnychenko, *Ukrainska Derzhavnist.* (Vienna, 1920), pp. 22, 27.

that Petliura's government and its diplomatic missions were illegal. He contended that the Directory had been nonexistent since February 1919, and that the Directory's failure to control Ukrainian territory deprived it of the right to call itself a de facto government. He went on to state that Ukraine could only be liberated by a world revolution, which would establish a world federation of Soviet socialist republics.⁸

This was especially damaging criticism from the former leader of the Directory, and severely weakened the legitimacy of Petliura's government and of the Warsaw Treaty in the eyes of the Western European left, including the Social Democrat government in Germany. Of course, it must be pointed out that Vynnychenko returned to Soviet Ukraine, firmly of the belief that Lenin and the Soviet government would respect Ukrainian national identity and autonomy, and within a matter of months was in exile in Western Europe, completely disillusioned with the Soviet experiment. So it could be legitimately stated that whereas Petliura may have been deceived by the Poles, Vynnychenko was equally taken in by the Bolsheviks.

For the supporters of Pilsudski, the Warsaw Agreement was a basic breakthrough in the relations between Poland and Ukraine – a continuation of the policy of the Hadiach Treaty in the 17th century – and the first step on the road to the recreation of the Polish Commonwealth. Indeed this is the view of many contemporary Polish historians and politicians. Writing in 1969, Dziewanowski concluded:

From a perspective of almost half a century, the Pilsudski-Petliura agreement appears as an important milestone, a continuation of the policy initiated by the union of Hadiach. The pact represented the attempt to transcend the bitterness created by the struggle in East Galicia and reconcile two neighbouring Slavic peoples. It was an attempt to set an example to the other nations of Eastern Europe and to prove that cooperation, not contention, should be the hallmark of the future.⁹

This was by no means the view of all Poles at the time however, and the agreement was heavily attacked by many journalists and politicians. They were of the opinion that the agreement would provoke Russia, and was therefore a serious mistake. Many in Poland had serious misgivings about a full-scale war against Soviet Russia,

⁸ Volodimir Vynnychenko, *Politichni Listi*. (Vienna, 1920), p. 142.

⁹ M.K. Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski*, p.277.

especially one where Poland's only ally was its erstwhile enemy, and where much public opinion in Western Europe was not sympathetic.

Along with the main treaty a military agreement was signed on April 24. The agreement stipulated that there would be joint military operations under Polish command east of the existing Polish-Soviet frontier. Polish military operations would end at the Dnepr.¹⁰ This indicates that Pilsudski did not intend to liberate all of Ukraine, but merely the Right Bank. The Poles promised not to divide the Ukrainian forces into any more, small, isolated units than was necessary for operational purposes and agreed to merge them as soon as possible. The Ukrainians promised to supply the Polish forces in Ukraine with meat, fats, grain, fruits, sugar, oats, hay, straw, and other commodities as well as horses and transport. These supplies were to be requisitioned from the peasants in return for a receipt. The Polish Command was also to establish the rate of exchange between the Polish and Ukrainian currencies, and set it initially at ten to one in favour of Poland, but later it was changed to five to one.

The Poles were also to operate the Ukrainian railways. Petliura would organise his own civil and military organisation; but Polish police and troops were to protect the rear, and Polish liaison officers were to be attached to the Ukrainian civil administration. Following the completion of the military operation, the evacuation of Polish forces was to begin with the proposal of one of the signatories, but the technical administration of the evacuation was to be based on a mutual agreement between the Polish and Ukrainian Commands.¹¹ The Poles agreed to arm and equip only three Ukrainian divisions. Reshetar commented that this limited the number of Petliura's forces because he would be unlikely to obtain aid elsewhere, and that altogether it was a humiliating military convention for the Ukrainians.¹² Like the main treaty the convention was to be kept secret, and only the Polish text was to be considered authentic. The Polish timescale of any Polish military withdrawal from Ukraine was also vague, and would be very dependant on Polish policy. One can immediately understand how many Ukrainians were suspicious of Polish motives.

The Soviet government was aware of the prospect of imminent hostilities on the western frontier and began to make proposals for joint action against Poland to the German government. In April and May 1920, the Soviet government considered the

¹⁰ Archiwum Ogólne, druk. Cited in Janusz Cisek, (ed), *Sąsiedzi wobec wojny 1920 roku*, (London: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1990), pp. 165-169.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, p.308.

possibility of a total reorientation of foreign policy, away from an agreement with Britain and towards an agreement with Germany, as they believed that the Entente, particularly Britain, were behind the Polish offensive. This is, of course, reflected in Germany's stance towards the Ukrainian nationalists. Soviet overtures were not responded to, as it was not seen to be German policy. Berlin was concerned about antagonising the French by attacking Poland, and was watching the British position carefully. The Soviet government soon realised that the British were not behind the Piłsudski-Petliura agreement, and ended their overtures towards the Germans.

On 25 April 1920 the Soviet-Polish War began with a joint Polish-Ukrainian attack on the Red Army. On the Soviet side there were two armies; XII Army to the south of the Pripiet River and the XIV Army further south. According to Soviet sources there were 83,000 troops but that 28,000 only were prepared for combat. On the Polish side there were three armies; II Army commanded by General Listowski, III Army commanded by General Smigly-Rydz, and the VI Army commanded by General Iwaszkiewicz. Some historians claimed that the Poles had 300,000 troops¹³

The Ukrainians had two infantry divisions; 2nd commanded by General Udovychenko and 6th commanded by General Bezruchko. They were formed from Ukrainian prisoners of war and from volunteers. There were 556 officers and 3348 soldiers. There were also the forces of General Pavlenko, which consisted of about 6000 troops. His troops had completed a march behind Soviet lines and reached Mohylev in spring 1920.¹⁴

Both Piłsudski and Petliura issued proclamations to the Ukrainian people as the offensive began.¹⁵

The style of the proclamation was typical Piłsudski – florid, heroic, and with a touch of chivalry.¹⁶ Piłsudski, of course, had been raised with the traditions of Polish aristocratic heroism, and although the language of the proclamation may now seem incredibly dated, in 1920 in Poland it would have seemed quite natural.

Petliura for his part issued his own proclamation. He referred to the three-year struggle for freedom for the Ukrainian nation, but although Ukrainian forces had liberated Kiev there had been disagreement between the East Ukrainians and the

¹³ Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance*, p.100. Piłsudski in his account of the year 1920, *Rok 1920*, claimed that the Polish strength was 50 percent lower than in the reports. This would suggest that there were probably around 150,000 Polish troops.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Tadeusz Kutrzeba, *Wyprawa Kijowska*. (Warsaw, 1937), pp. 83-86.

¹⁶ See Appendix 3.

Galicians and the Galician army had betrayed the struggle and joined the enemy. Now, he announced, the situation had changed:

The Polish nation, represented by the Head of State and Commander in Chief Jozef Pilsudski, and by the Government, has respected the Ukrainian right to create a free Republic and has recognised the independent state. There is an Agreement between the Ukrainian and Polish Governments and eventually Polish and Ukrainian forces will enter Ukraine as allies to fight the common enemy. After fighting the Bolsheviks the Polish units will return to their homeland.

Sons of Ukraine mobilised in the army will be the real defenders of our state and freedom.¹⁷

The issue of Polish military withdrawal would be a sensitive one and one where Polish and Ukrainian interpretations differ considerably. Reshetar argued that Pilsudski could occupy Ukraine for as long a period as he wished.¹⁸ Indeed this was the suspicion of Vynnychenko and many other Ukrainian nationalists, particularly the Galicians, that the whole campaign was a thinly veiled war of Polish imperialist expansion. The Polish general staff argued that it would take about twelve weeks to organise six regular Ukrainian divisions, and that once they had been formed the Poles would withdraw their forces from Ukrainian territory and transfer them to the north-eastern sector of the front.¹⁹ This is the view of Polish historians, that the Polish invasion of Ukraine would be a temporary phenomenon, merely the helping hand of a trusted friend and ally.

How dependable an ally was Petliura for Poland? Whatever the views of Vynnychenko and the Galicians, for many observers in the spring of 1920 Petliura symbolised the best hope of obtaining Ukrainian independence. The Warsaw correspondent of *The Times* wrote on April 15, 1920: "Whatever may be said about Petliura, he has more influence in the Ukraine than any other person, and he is capable of making it a very uncomfortable place for anyone else (...) It is significant that neither the Bolshevists nor Denikin were able to get a very secure hold on the country or recruit troops there."²⁰ There was also evidence in the spring of 1920 of a renewed campaign of resistance against the Soviet regime by the nationalist forces within

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, p.308.

¹⁹ T.Kutrzeba. *Wyprawa Kijowska*, p.254.

²⁰ Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski* p.275.

Ukraine.²¹ Although these forces were labelled 'bandits' by the Bolsheviks, and though they were in effect partisans, they were still allied to Petliura and the Directory. The anti-Semitic outrages committed by some of these groups would later be charged to Petliura's account, although he had almost no control over their actions. Both the Bolsheviks and the Entente expected an invasion of Ukraine in April 1920, and they did not have long to wait.

There was considerable opposition in Poland to the Warsaw Treaty. Both the Sejm and the press warned the government about the dangers of the policy. The Left in the Sejm supported Pilsudski's policy; and the speech of the Socialist Party leader, Daszyński was particularly illuminating, as it probably illustrated Pilsudski's own thinking on the issue. Daszyński reminded the Sejm: "The Russian revolution had started the process of emancipation of the oppressed peoples of the Russian Empire. It would be contrary to Poland's political interests, as well as her moral duty, to interfere with the trend and cooperate with Soviet Russia in order to suppress this natural, logical, and progressive movement, as, for example, the National Democrats wanted to do." He went on to state that the question of East Galicia should not hinder the Poles from seeing the larger problem. Poland would be strengthened by the establishment of independent national republics on her eastern borders, especially the establishment of a free Ukraine.²² The Socialist Party passed a resolution at the Eighteenth Congress of the Party in late May 1920, stating that while the Party favoured an independent Ukraine, it opposed any attempt at pursuing the war further.²³

The Bolsheviks were convinced that the Polish-Ukrainian alliance was a policy thought up by the Entente powers. While it is true that the French in particular supported the policy, the policy was born in Warsaw and was not an extension of the Russian Civil War with Poland as a proxy for the Entente. Certainly, once it became clear that an invasion of Ukraine was imminent, the French agreed to lend their support. The British were extremely cautious and regarded the campaign as the beginning of a Polish imperialistic war in Eastern Europe, and did not welcome a further upheaval in Eastern Europe. However, the British government pledged to defend the borders of Poland against invasion.²⁴

²¹ Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance*, p.212.

²² Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski*, p.279.

²³ *Ibid*, p.280.

²⁴ PRO: Foreign Office Papers. 371/4058/207846. Curzon to Chicherin, 11 July 1920.

From the French perspective the Russian Civil War had not yet ended, and in April 1920 Wrangel had assumed command of the White Russian forces in the Crimea. Any attack on the Red Army, which would draw forces away from the Crimea and thus assist Wrangel, was to be welcomed. France was Poland's main ally, and Poland was dependant on France for supplies of military equipment. The leader of the French Military Mission in Warsaw, General Henrys, appeared to encourage Pilsudski to launch an attack on the Bolsheviks. There is also some evidence to suggest that the Poles lured Paris with the promise that a future Ukrainian economy would be oriented towards Poland, and would need French investment and assistance.²⁵ There had also been many French investments in Ukraine prior to the 1917 revolution, and this may have been another factor in French support. This newfound French support for an independent Ukraine seemed to bear out Petliura's theory that an alliance with Poland would almost automatically mean French support.

In the spring of 1920 the Bolsheviks were in optimistic mood. All of the White armies of Kolchak and Denikin had been defeated, and there only remained Wrangel's forces in the Crimea to deal with. Furthermore, the arms and equipment, which the Entente had given to the White armies, were in the hands of the Bolsheviks. Peace treaties had been signed with Estonia and Latvia. The only possible danger lay on the Polish front.

On April 25 1920, the Soviet-Polish War began with the joint forces of Poland and the Ukrainian People's Republic entering Ukraine. The Polish-Ukrainian forces advanced almost without resistance from the Red Army, and with the assistance of Ukrainian partisans. Petliura and Pilsudski followed the army into Ukraine. The Polish advance was swift - Zhitomir was captured on April 26 and the army moved on towards Kiev. The Soviet army retreated steadily, but in an orderly manner. Everywhere the peasants seemed pleased to see the Polish and Ukrainian forces, and partisans harried the retreating Soviets.

Within Poland the doubters expressed their concerns about Pilsudski's campaign. One of these had been the National Democratic politician Grabski. On 27 April 1920, he gave an interview to *Gazeta Warszawska*, where he issued a prophetic warning about the war: "Just as Poland needs Warsaw, so Ukraine needs Kiev; but to have Kiev in permanent possession, it would be necessary to go far beyond the Dnepr, and such a

²⁵ A memorandum of the Polish Foreign Ministry, in the Ciechanowski Deposit, Hoover Library, Stanford, California. Cited in Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski*, p.281.

march would threaten Poland with a defeat like Napoleon's in 1812." He went on to warn of the dangers of a resentful Russia and the consequences of Ukrainian nationalism for Poland: "It is better to be a neighbour with Russia than a newly created Ukraine, because we, as Poles, have more rights to the pre-partition lands lying east of the Zbruch than the Russians. Thanks to these rights we would have an easier situation than if we had next to us Ukraine which, on the basis of the self-determination of nations, would demand rights to Eastern Galicia."²⁶ These doubts regarding the campaign were swept away as the Polish-Ukrainian forces continued to advance east.

There were encouraging signs of Ukrainian resistance to the Bolsheviks – partisan activity increased – Trotsky later admitted that partisan actions significantly facilitated and accelerated the advance of the Polish troops.²⁷ The other major setback for the Bolsheviks was the mutiny of the three Galician brigades in the 14th Soviet Army, which Soviet military historians saw as being a decisive event: "The mutiny of the two Galician brigades totally broke the alignment of the 14th Army (...) Thus the mutiny of the two Galician brigades practically coincided with the beginning of the decisive advance of the Poles on the South-western Front; it not only reduced the already weakened forces of its Polish section, but proved totally disadvantageous for us and advantageous for the alignment of our opponent."²⁸ Palij ascribes this defection to mistreatment at the hands of the Cheka and the commissars, but considering that the Poles were the bitter enemies of the Galicians, it is also possible that there was a genuine awakening of nationalist fervour with the prospect of a Ukrainian government being in power in Kiev, even a Polish backed one – the increase in partisan activity would also point to this. As a result of these setbacks the Soviet 12th Army retreated to the east of Kiev and the Polish-UNR forces entered the city on 7 May.

The capture of Kiev and the installation of the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic there was a huge psychological boost for the nationalists and an apparent vindication of Petliura's policy. The Polish High Command made efforts to reassure the Ukrainians that it was not an army of occupation, and on 8 May issued a proclamation to the Ukrainian people:

²⁶ Kutzreba, *Wyprawa Kijowska* p.88.

²⁷ L.Trotsky, *Kak vooruzhalas revolutsiia: Na voennoi rabote, Vol 2 pt 2*. (Moscow, 1924), cited in Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance, 1919-1921*, p.102.

²⁸ N.E.Kakurin and V.A.Melikov: *Voyna s Belopolakami 1920*. (Moscow, 1925), cited in Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance*, p.103.

It is in the Polish interest to withdraw our troops from the occupied territories as quickly as possible and to establish good neighbourly relations with the newly created Ukrainian state, as in this way a significant part of our eastern border will be secured from the direct danger of the Bolshevik forces. The Polish occupation of Ukraine must be calculated not in years, but in months (...) The fewer the frictions and clashes with the Ukrainian authorities during the period of co-operation, the easier will Poland attain its ultimate aim.²⁹

There were already signs of strain between the two partners however. In early May, Pilsudski went on a tour of the front visiting Zhitomir, Kiev, and Vinnitsa. In Vinnitsa he met Petliura and the Ukrainian Prime Minister, Mazepa. Pilsudski promised to support Ukrainian independence and to release East Galician POW's. Pilsudski told the Ukrainians: "I want you to acquire experience by being pushed off the deck and being made to swim in deep water." Mazepa objected to the speech, and doubts began to form in his mind about the Polish-Ukrainian alliance. He later commented: "After my conversation with Pilsudski, I began to lean toward the idea that our representatives in Warsaw had been too accommodating in their negotiations with the Poles, and that with a different approach the Polish-Ukrainian agreement might have looked different."³⁰ The Central Committee of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party also came to the same conclusion and instructed Mazepa to resign from the government of the UNR. On May 25, Mazepa resigned. Thus the first cracks were showing in the alliance, but while the victory seemed assured they did not widen.

Some of the reasons for Mazepa's disillusionment with the alliance may have stemmed from the fact that the Poles had insisted in the Warsaw Agreement, that two ministers of the Ukrainian People's Republic be Poles. Also more pointedly, each of these ministries controlled very important areas of policy. The ministers were, Stanisław Stempowski (Minister of Agriculture), and Henryk Jozewski (Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs). These appointments were strong indicators that Warsaw would remain in control, and that the interests of the Polish landowners in Right Bank Ukraine would be observed.

During the course of the campaign other indicators emerged, which were ominous for the future of the UNR. One of the first was that the Galician brigades, which had

²⁹ Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance*, p. 104.

³⁰ I. Mazepa, *Ukraina v ohni i buri revolutsii*. Vol III (Munich, 1950-51), p.24.

deserted the Bolsheviks, were disarmed and interned by the Poles. One of the brigade officers later wrote:

Considering it our sacred duty to take an active part in establishing the Ukrainian state, we came over to this side in order to enter, with arms in hand, the ranks of the Ukrainian army. We stated that clearly to the Polish authorities, who, in spite of our action against the Bolsheviks, disarmed us and then interned us in a prisoner of war camp. We also stated our readiness to enter the Ukrainian army through a separate delegation to Petliura, the commander in chief.³¹

The three brigades were all interned at Tuchola camp in Poland, and the Polish press described them as defeated Bolsheviks.³²

What Petliura's response was to this is not recorded. It was clear that the Poles were not prepared to trust the Galicians. Further signs of the Polish policy towards the Ukrainians emerged with the treatment of the Ukrainian partisans by the Polish army. While many of these units were anarchic and loosely allied to the UNR forces, they were a valuable military ally in the war against the Red Army - they also had the support of the peasantry, and could rouse the country against the Bolsheviks. Makhno's forces for example, had already proved a veritable thorn in the side of the Soviet forces. The Polish army treated the partisans not as potential allies but as potential enemies. Throughout the Polish occupied area of Ukraine the partisans were disarmed. In one area south of Bila Tserkva, many villages were controlled by 15,000 partisans. They were friendly to the Polish troops but were disarmed, as the Poles feared that they might become a focus of resistance against requisitioning.³³ Palij also states that there was a very slow delivery of arms by the Poles to the UNR troops, and the arms taken from the Galician brigades were not passed on at all. In Palij's opinion the presence of the UNR forces was a political fig leaf: "Clearly the Polish government did not plan to assist the UNR government in building up a strong Ukrainian army. The Polish command simply needed the presence of some Ukrainian troops during its offensive in Ukraine, so as to appease the population, which was antagonistic to all foreign forces, and thus to make the campaign easier for the Polish troops."³⁴ The Poles also took

³¹ Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance*, p.211.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, p.112.

³⁴ Ibid, p.113.

control of the Ukrainian railways, contrary to the Warsaw Treaty, and anything of value was removed and transported to Poland, all of which was a contravention of the treaty.

The Polish distrust of the Ukrainians proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, and soon the peasantry began to resist the requisitioning, and the initial support for the Poles began to fade. On May 4, 1920, three days before the fall of Kiev, Vynnychenko issued an open letter to the world warning that: "The 'aid' of Poland and her aristocrats is the kiss of Judas and with this kiss the Ukrainian nation is being surrendered to a new Golgotha."³⁵

In the interim a new cabinet of the Ukrainian People's Republic was formed in Kiev on May 25. The new Prime Minister was Viacheslav Prokopovich, and Andrei Liviskyi as vice premier and Minister for Justice. Mazepa agreed to join the new government as Minister of Agriculture, but only after the transfer of Stempowski, the Polish appointee, to the health ministry. On June 3, the cabinet issued a call for the assembling of a parliament.

The period of the UNR administration in Ukraine is viewed very differently by Polish and Ukrainian historians. Palij interprets the Polish actions as clear evidence that Polish intentions were always suspect. Dziewanowski, on the other hand, attempts to explain Polish actions in a different light. He admits that Polish actions were somewhat suspect, but claims that the local Polish army officers did not follow the orders of the Commander in Chief. He also quotes a diplomatic report from an American observer who commented on the Polish actions:

The Poles have expressed their intention not to remain in occupation of the Ukraine a moment longer than is necessary to assure the proper organisation of the country. Such intentions are not always possible to fulfil (...) I was told that the Poles would have already turned over the actual administration of certain parts of the Ukrainian railways, but the Ukrainian administration was not ready to receive them (...) To prevent the descent of speculators upon a country where the valuta (currency) question is so acute as in the Ukraine, and also to discourage the return of Polish landowners, who might

³⁵ Vynnychenko. *Politichni Listil*, p.22.

complicate the agrarian situation, the Polish-Ukrainian frontier is to remain closed for an indefinite period.³⁶

Dziewanowski argues that the Poles were not responsible for the mistakes made during this period and that the new government did not have very much time to take root; therefore that a period of adjustment, with its concomitant disorganisation, was inevitable. Ukrainian commentators have not been as charitable. Palij however, does accept that Pilsudski's intentions were honourable and that it was due to other Polish officers and officials that they were not adhered to. Dziewanowski agrees with this interpretation.

In Poland the capture of Kiev, and the installation of the UNR government there, meant that Pilsudski's position was strengthened considerably. Opposition to the campaign from the National Democrats and the Right evaporated, and on Pilsudski's return to Warsaw he was treated as a conquering hero. The Sejm sent him a congratulatory telegram, and his exploits were praised by those who had criticised him bitterly only a few weeks before.

In Paris news of the victories were well received. Even the news about the new UNR government was well received by the French authorities.³⁷ This was quite a significant change in French policy, as France had been continually opposed to the concept of an independent Ukraine. In the Crimea, Wrangel observed the situation in Ukraine and began to consider the possibility of a White-Polish alliance; the stumbling block was Ukrainian independence. Whereas Wrangel was more open to some form of federal solution in the former Russian Empire than Denikin had been, he was still not prepared to cooperate with Petliura. Not until September 1920 did he send a representative to Warsaw to consider talks. French support for the Poles was a major factor in this, along with the realisation that the Entente were abandoning the 'one and indivisible Russia' policy. The British had accepted that the White cause was lost, and opinion in Britain was deeply divided over the Soviet-Polish war. Conservative opinion generally favoured the Poles, the Left was implacably opposed, and Lloyd George regarded the Polish war aims with deep cynicism. However, as long as the Poles were winning, the British would not get involved.

³⁶ Report of J.C.White to the Secretary of State, Warsaw, May 15, 1920; USNA, 860E. 00/35. Cited in Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski*, p.292.

³⁷ Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski*, p.293.

The entire situation was to change dramatically with the Soviet counterattack. The Bolsheviks could observe that the Ukrainians were not lending the Polish forces as much assistance as they had expected. Polish lines of communication were also stretched. The Red Army had been considerably strengthened by the return to its ranks of former Tsarist officers, who now rallied to the Russian standard against the hated Poles. Trotsky and the Bolsheviks proclaimed the message that the motherland was in danger, as she had been many times in the past, from the Polish menace. Not for the last time in Soviet history, Russian nationalism proved to be an effective recruiting sergeant. Petliura's appeals to the Ukrainian people to join the forces of the UNR had only resulted in a few thousand volunteers. So the forces of the new republic were very limited, and the Polish requisitioning had not been as successful as originally envisaged.

In early June, Budienny's Red Cavalry attacked the Polish lines south of Kiev. On June 5, the Polish lines near Zhitomir were broken. The Soviet forces then tried to surround Kiev, but the Polish-Ukrainian forces managed to break through and to retreat to the west. Petliura's government had only been in power in Kiev for four weeks. The Polish-Ukrainian forces retreated rapidly, and while attempting to defend their rear, were forced to abandon Ukraine. On July 3, a month after the offensive had begun, Soviet forces crossed the river Horyn in Western Volhynia, and moved towards Poland. Pilsudski's gamble had failed.

Polish and Ukrainian commentators differ on the reasons why the Ukrainian campaign of 1920 failed, but a major reason must have been the fear of the Ukrainian peasantry that a Polish occupation would mean the return of the Polish landowners in Right Bank Ukraine. The appointment of a Pole to the agriculture portfolio in the UNR government, confirmed the suspicions of many that the new regime would restore the land to the Polish landlords. Also, the UNR government had not issued any guarantees that the land would remain in the hands of the peasants. Bolshevik propaganda played effectively on these fears, and was a major reason why the Ukrainian peasantry did not support the new regime to the extent that they could have.

The hasty retreat of the Polish-Ukrainian forces into ethnographic Poland brought about a political crisis in Poland. Pilsudski's policy was regarded as fatally flawed and the government fell. The National Democrats, who had opposed the campaign from the outset, were now in the ascendant. On 24 June 1920, a new government, led by the arch

critic of the Ukrainian venture, Grabski, came to power. Poland itself was now in danger, with Soviet forces crossing the frontier. On 1 July, all power was ceded by the Sejm to a State Defence Council, who were authorised to make all decisions regarding war and peace. The Council consisted of 18 members – Piłsudski, the marshal of the Sejm, 3 ministers, three generals, and ten representatives of the main parties. Events moved on rapidly, and on 3 July, Piłsudski issued two proclamations in the name of the council. The first called on all Polish men to enlist to save Poland from Russian invasion. The second called on all soldiers to be brave defending their fatherland. On 5 July, the council appealed for assistance to the Allied Supreme Council at Spa. The British now forced the Poles to come to some agreement with the Bolsheviks, and to cease hostilities as soon as possible. Grabski, who had wanted no war with the Bolsheviks, signed an agreement with the Entente on 10 July, agreeing to a ceasefire and to peace negotiations with the Bolsheviks. Under the terms of the agreement, Polish forces were to withdraw to a line decided by the Supreme Council on 8 December 1919.³⁸ If the Bolsheviks did not agree to the negotiations, the Entente would send Poland military aid. A bitter argument broke out between Left and Right in Poland, with many recriminations against Piłsudski and his policy in Ukraine.

Grabski's government fell, and on 24 July a new government under Witos, the Peasant Party leader, with Daszyński, the Socialist Party leader as deputy, assumed power. This government would support Piłsudski's military and foreign policy. The situation was critical, as the Red Army, commanded by Tukhachevskii in the north, and Budienny in the south, had entered ethnographic Poland in late July. Approximately 178,500 Polish and Ukrainian troops faced a Soviet force of 177,900 men. It is interesting to note that even at this critical time, Wrangel, whose forces were moving on to the offensive in the Crimea, made no overtures to the Ukrainians for joint action.

Polish negotiators were despatched to Minsk on 14 August, to parley with the Bolsheviks, but Lenin and Trotsky were convinced that the Red Army had the upper hand and that a Soviet Poland would soon be a reality. The Bolshevik terms were extreme - the Polish ethnographic frontier would be recognised, but the Polish army would be limited to 50,000 men. Also a civilian workers militia would be organised of 200,000 men, to be controlled by the Polish and Russian labour organisations. This

³⁸ PRO: Foreign Office Papers 371/4058/208802, Curzon to Chicherin, 20 July 1920.

would be in effect a Red Guard within Poland.³⁹ It was obvious that Poland could not accept such terms, and in the interim the Soviet forces advanced deeper into Poland.

The troops of the Ukrainian People's Republic fought in southern Poland, near Zamość against Budienny's cavalry, and played a central part in the struggle for that town. On 15 August 1920, the decisive Battle of Warsaw took place, which Polish historians have ever since referred to as 'The Miracle on the Vistula'. The Red Army was defeated and began the long and disorganised retreat back to Soviet territory. The Ukrainians assisted the Poles in defeating Budienny in the south, and soon all Soviet forces had left ethnographic Poland, hotly pursued by the Poles and Ukrainians. A further Soviet defeat followed in September, at the Battle of the Niemen. The UNR forces under General Omelianovich-Pavlenko pursued the retreating Soviets in the south and crossed the Dniester on 14 September, and attacked the 14th Army. After four days of fighting, the Bolsheviks were defeated and pushed back 100 kilometres. On 18 September, the UNR troops formed a line along the river Zbruch. The policy of the UNR forces was to link up with Ukrainian partisans, and on 21 September they crossed the Zbruch. Both sides knew in October that an armistice was imminent, and fighting intensified as both the Bolsheviks and the UNR forces tried to capture territory before the cease-fire.⁴⁰ When the armistice agreement was signed on 12 October, with effect from 18 October, the Polish army sent units to the Ukrainian lines to indicate that it was a Polish front.

While the Ukrainians were still fighting the Bolsheviks with their Polish allies, the Poles were deciding on a delegation to attend the armistice agreement talks. The Council of State instructed the delegation to fix an eastern frontier for Poland, and to "provide for a fair harmonisation of the vital interests of both parties."⁴¹ Dziewanowski states that the delegation was instructed to press for an independent Ukraine, which was to be confederated with Poland. The Soviet army was to withdraw east of the 1772 frontier, and the troops of the UNR were to re-enter Ukraine. Dziewanowski continues; "Warsaw realised, however, that it would be extremely difficult to achieve these objectives without prolonging the war. Consequently, the Polish negotiators were not to insist on these conditions in the face of determined opposition from the Soviet

³⁹ *Peace Proposals Submitted by the Russian Delegation at the First Plenary Session of the Russian-Ukrainian-Polish Peace Conference at Minsk, 17 August, 1920. – Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy. (Edited by Jane Degras). Volume I, 1917-1924.* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 223.

⁴⁰ Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance*, p.136.

⁴¹ Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski*, p.323.

delegates. The Polish delegation was thus left free to decide what could actually be achieved without either prolonging the armed struggle unduly or breaking off negotiations.”⁴² Palij and other Ukrainian historians have a point in declaring that this was hardly in the spirit of the Warsaw Treaty, and a curious way of treating an ally still active in the field.

Petliura and the rest of the government of the UNR were at this time based in Tarnów, in southern Poland, to where they had retreated after the Soviet advance in July. Petliura was deeply concerned that the government of the UNR be represented in any armistice talks. The membership of the Polish delegation would be crucial. The delegation was divided between those who supported Pilsudski, chiefly Leon Wasilewski, and those who supported the National Democrats. The main representative of the latter was Stanislaw Grabski, the long time opponent of Ukrainian independence. The delegation was led by Jan Dąbski, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a leading member of the Peasant Party. The neutral venue of Riga, in Latvia, was chosen as the site for the peace talks, and they opened on September 21, 1920.

Typically of the Whites, it was only now, with the end of the war in sight, that Wrangel dispatched his representative, General Makhrov to Warsaw. Makhrov approached the Russian Political Council, a Russian socialist organisation led by Boris Savinkov, who was trying to organise Russian troops to fight the Bolsheviks in Poland. Savinkov told Makhrov that an agreement with the government of the UNR was imperative, whether or not Poland continued the war. His view was that Petliura was desperate for an agreement with Wrangel, and did not want to be isolated. Obviously Petliura could deduce that Polish and Ukrainian interests were about to part once again. Pilsudski told Makhrov that he had no time for the reactionary generals but looked forward to a third, democratic, Russia. Makhrov went on to send Wrangel a report urging him to approve Savinkov’s project on the formation of a Russian 3rd Army, and to begin negotiations with Petliura. Wrangel responded by accepting the formation of the 3rd army but was silent on the issue of a Ukrainian alliance. Savinkov announced that he would no longer wait for Wrangel’s decision on talks with Petliura, and would reach agreement with Petliura alone. Thus at a time when the Bolsheviks were at their weakest, the Whites still hesitated about forming a Ukrainian alliance. Wrangel only

⁴² Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski*, p.323. Report of Adam Tarnowski of September 25, 1953.

authorised talks with Petliura in November 1920, when his defeated forces were being evacuated from Crimea.⁴³

On September 28, at Riga, Joffe, the leader of the Soviet delegation, presented a draft of the preliminary peace proposals. The document asked for Polish recognition of the Soviet republics of Ukraine and Belorussia. It also stated that neither party would permit organisations or persons, which aimed to overthrow the government of the other party, to remain on its territory. This was clearly aimed at the UNR government among others. For the Bolsheviks control of Ukraine was vital. Joffe said that the Soviet government was not prepared to compromise on the issue of Ukraine.

The preliminary treaty was signed on October 12. Joffe wanted the text to read that Poland bordered on Russia. Dąbski rejected this, and stated that Poland bordered on Ukraine and Belorussia. Joffe allowed this to remain, the Bolsheviks needed a peace agreement at all costs, and especially as Soviet forces were needed to fight Wrangel in Crimea. However, these two republics would be Soviet republics, and the Polish delegation had effectively denied the claims of the UNR. Dąbski, in his closing address attempted to claim that the Poles had tried their best to recognise the principle of self-determination, because they had insisted on the recognition of Ukrainian and Belorussian independence.⁴⁴

Ukrainian historians have not been as charitable in their interpretation of the Polish delegates' actions. Palij comments:

According to the fourth article of the Treaty of Warsaw, the Polish government had agreed '*not to conclude any international agreement directed against Ukraine*'. But it did not consult the UNR government before accepting the Soviet Russian proposal to negotiate an armistice and a preliminary peace. While Ukrainian troops continued fighting the Bolsheviks alongside Polish troops, the Polish delegation after twenty minutes of negotiations, recognised the credentials of the representatives of the fictitious Soviet Ukrainian Republic. By this one act the delegation reversed the Polish policy towards Ukraine and ignored both the Treaty of Warsaw and Ukrainian loyalty to Poland.⁴⁵

⁴³ Anna Procyk, *Russian Nationalism and Ukraine*. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1995), p.161.

⁴⁴ Dziewanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski*, p.324.

⁴⁵ Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance*, p.201.

One of the key factors may have been that Grabski was a leading member of the delegation, and in the struggle between the Pilsudski supporters on the delegation and Grabski, his view triumphed. Certainly communications between Riga and Warsaw were difficult, and the delegation had been given quite a good deal of leeway. When Grabski was asked by a correspondent why the Polish delegation ignored the Warsaw Treaty, his reply was arrogant in the extreme: "it was merely a private agreement between Pilsudski and Petliura, personal friends, it was not ratified by the Sejm and therefore was not obligatory for the peace delegation."⁴⁶

The Polish government did not consult the UNR government over the peace negotiations. When the UNR government asked for representation at the negotiations, Prince Sapieha, the Polish Foreign Minister, referred the request to the Soviet government. His secret instructions to Polish diplomats were:

In our negotiations with the Bolsheviks the problem of Petliura will not be taken into consideration at all. Nevertheless, today I sent a message to Chicherin informing him that Petliura's government wishes to negotiate with the Russian delegation at Riga. This proposal, however, should not create problems for the departure of our delegation, even if Chicherin rejects negotiations with Petliura, which I think is certain.⁴⁷

It was clear that the Polish delegation, and government, had its own agenda with regard to Ukraine. The way now lay open for the Treaty of Riga, and the end of the Polish-Ukrainian alliance.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.138.

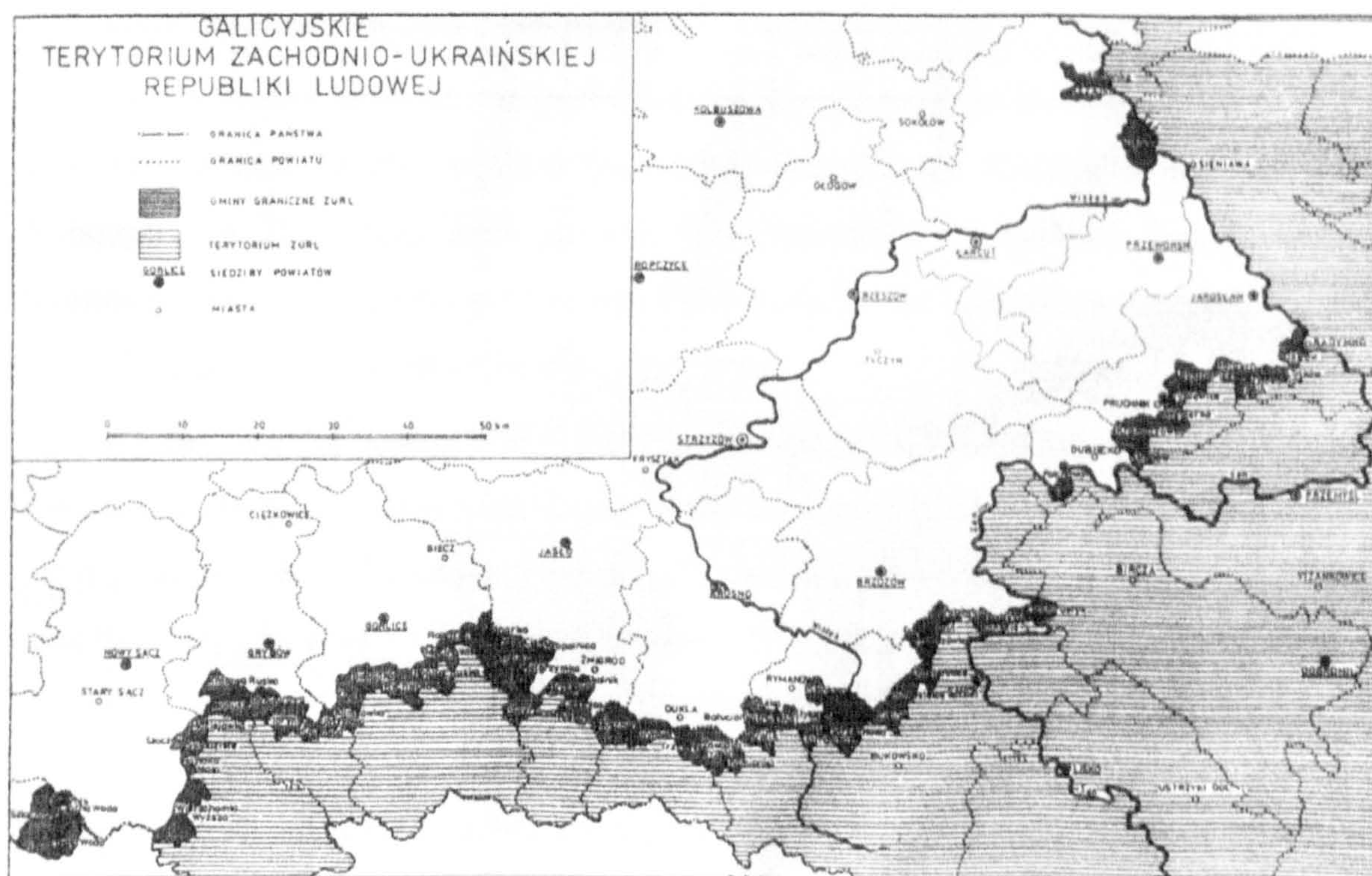
⁴⁷ Natalia Gasiorowski-Grabowska et al (Ed), *Dokumenty i Materiały do Historii Stosunków Polsko-Radzieckich, Vol 3.* (Warsaw, 1964), pp. 409/10.

CHAPTER 10

EAST GALICIA AND THE STRUGGLE FOR UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENCE, 1918-1921

In 1918 the province of East Galicia lay in the Austro-Hungarian Empire along with the province of Bukovyna further south (see the attached map). East Galicia's capital, Lemberg was regarded as a major centre of Ukrainian culture and scholarship, and had already become a focal point for the growing Ukrainian nationalist movement. The population of the province was very varied – the population of the towns, and particularly Lemberg (known in Polish as Lwow, and in Ukrainian as Lviv) – being mainly Polish and Jewish, and that of the countryside and the smaller towns Ruthenian (as the Ukrainians within the Austro-Hungarian Empire were then termed). The Ukrainians constituted by far the majority of the population in both provinces.

The University of Lemberg played a very large part in the development of Ukrainian national consciousness. Its members, as subjects of the empire had a great deal of contact with the German and Austrian universities, and the language of instruction was German until the middle of the 19th century, later it became Polish. It is interesting to note that in the struggle for Ukrainian independence in the last years of the Soviet Union, Galicia, once again played a major role.



Map of the Western Ukrainian Peoples Republic (ZUNR) in 1919. In Ludwik Mroczka, *Spór o Galicję Wschodnią 1914-1923* (Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP: Krakow, 1998), p. 222.

In an essay in *Nationalism and Empire. The Hapsburg Empire and the Soviet Union*¹, the Canadian historian Paul Magosci, outlined his views on the experience of the Galicians within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Magosci points out that geographically and demographically, East Galicia is a very small part of the ethnographic territory of Ukraine and that, even when combined with northern Bukovyna and Transcarpathia (the other Ukrainian provinces within the Hapsburg Empire), they only accounted for at most 12%-15% of the total land mass and population of Ukraine. He goes on to list a series of Austrian concessions to Ukrainians in Galicia, which dated from the 18th century onwards, and particularly after the 1890's, when the ethnic and cultural divisions within the empire began to become critical. Magosci makes clear however, that in East Galicia there was always a political balancing act being played by the Austrians in relation to the competing demands of the Poles and Ukrainians:

This is not to say that Galicia's Ukrainians got everything they wanted. The province was never divided into separate Polish and Ukrainian entities, nor was a Ukrainian university ever established, two of the group's long-standing demands. Nor did Polish domination of the upper and middle levels of the Galician administration ever change. Yet, while Galicia's Ukrainians did not fare terribly well in comparison with Galicia's Poles, in comparison with their national brethren across the border in the Russian Empire, the contrast could not have been greater.²

The contrasts between the two Ukraines would prove to be decisive in the Civil War period and fatally divided the wider struggle for Ukrainian independence. Although the Hapsburgs had granted the Ukrainians of Eastern Galicia limited autonomy, the fall of the empire in late 1918 brought the Ukrainians face to face with the traditional enemy in East Galicia – the Poles.

Already during World War I, there was evidence of a German plan, and of its ally Austria-Hungary, to detach East Galicia from the more Polish area of West Galicia, and grant it some form of autonomy within the Empire. However, this was an extremely sensitive issue, in view of the aim of the Central Powers to gain Polish support for their war effort, and to placate the Polish subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Thus, a

¹Richard Rudolph and David Good (editors), *Nationalism and Empire. The Hapsburg Empire and the Soviet Union* (University of Minnesota, 1992)

² Ibid, p.99.

secret agreement on the formation of a separate Ukrainian Crown land in East Galicia was included in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, on February 29, 1918. This committed Vienna to granting extra rights to its Ukrainian subjects. The agreement stated:

The representatives of Ukraine on their part take cognisance of the Imperial and Royal Government's decision to provide the Ukrainian people in Austria with additional guarantees for further national and cultural development that would go beyond those insured by the present laws. The Imperial and Royal Government will therefore propose to the State Council (*Reichsrat*), not later than July 20, 1918, a draft of a bill providing that the part of East Galicia with a Ukrainian majority be detached from this crown land and that the region together with Bukovina be organised into a special crown land. The Imperial and Royal Government will do all in its power to insure the enactment of this bill into law.³

However, this plan was dropped in the face of stiff opposition from the Poles in the Austro-Hungarian Empire who, together with the Hungarians regarded any form of autonomy for the Ukrainians within the empire as very threatening to their position.⁴ The suspicion that Germany had forced Austria-Hungary to include the agreement at Brest-Litovsk, led the Poles to believe that Germany was not only pro-Ukrainian but also intended to add East Galicia to any future Ukrainian state. This poisoned relations between Germany and the new Polish Republic, and would be referred to as proof of Germany's perfidy. In the event, although Germany generally took a pro-Ukrainian position in Polish-Ukrainian relations during the Hetmanate, Berlin had supported the Austrian position in withdrawing the agreement signed at Brest.⁵

In November 1918 the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire brought into being the independent state of Poland. The new Polish state laid claim to Eastern Galicia, while the Ukrainians finally seized the opportunity to declare an independent republic. East Galicia declared itself independent on November 1 1918, as the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR). The parliament of the new state was the Ukrainian National Council and it called on the three minority nationalities in the state (Polish, German and Jewish) to send representatives. The Polish minority refused and Poland declared war on the new state. Bukovyna joined the ZUNR.

³ Fedeyshyn, *Germany's Drive to the East and the Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1918*, pp. 281-282.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, p.174.

It was always the policy of the Ukrainians in the new republic to link up with the Ukrainians in the former Russian Ukraine. A preliminary agreement on unification was signed at Khvastiv on December 1 1918. The formal unification of the ZUNR with the Ukrainian National Republic was agreed on January 22 1919. The ZUNR was renamed the Western Area of the Ukrainian National Republic. It is interesting to note that East Galicia still retained its own government, and its own army even within the newly created unitary state.

In May 1919, Poland launched its military offensive against the East Galicians. Troops were used who had been organised in France and were supposed to be used in the war against the Bolsheviki. The Romanian army moved from Bukovyna against the Ukrainians into East Galicia. The Galicians looked to the Entente powers for support and sent a delegation to the Paris Peace Conference.

The major diplomatic and political perspective of the Entente was that the chief aims of foreign policy in Eastern Europe were first to block the spread of Bolshevism and second, at the behest of France, to support the new Polish state as much as possible. France wanted a strong and enlarged Poland at the expense of Ukraine in order to block any revival in Germany's power. The Entente powers also had adopted the policy of reconstructing the Russian Empire and therefore any claims to Ukrainian independence whether in Galicia or elsewhere were an obstacle. Only Poland and Finland were to be excluded from the new Russia.

In view of the actual situation in Galicia however, the Supreme Council of the Conference appointed a truce commission under General Barthelemy of France, which was sent to the headquarters of the Galician army in order to mediate with the Poles. The President of West Ukraine, Petrushevych, agreed to accept the commission.⁶ On February 28 1919, the commission proposed a truce agreement but the Council of State Secretaries of Western Ukraine rejected it as they viewed it as being far too favourable towards Poland. Western Ukraine demanded a radical change in the proposed borders between Poland and Western Ukraine. The Supreme Council of the Peace Conference in Paris then appointed a new truce commission led by General Botha. The government of Western Ukraine then entered into talks with the truce commission and accepted its

⁶ Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, p. 276.

truce proposal. Poland immediately rejected the proposal and proceeded to attack Western Ukraine.⁷

In the middle of May 1919, the Polish army defeated the Galician army and the Ukrainians were forced to retreat. The Western Ukrainian government protested to the Peace Conference, and the Allied Powers demanded that Poland cease its offensive. Poland refused to follow the resolution and accused Western Ukraine of having launched the offensive.

Despite the unification of the ZUNR with the rest of Ukraine, West Ukraine maintained a separate foreign ministry and its own diplomatic missions abroad. This division in terms of foreign policy was further compounded by the fact that the Directory in Ukraine refused to go to war against Poland, despite the war being fought against the Poles in East Galicia.

The position of the French on the whole issue of Ukrainian independence, and especially on the issue of Galicia, was crucial in determining the outcome. In March 1919 Marshal Foch had told the Allied Powers in Paris what he considered the Polish situation to be. According to Foch, Poland was endangered by a combination of Bolsheviks, Germans and Ukrainians; and the fall of Lvov to the Ukrainians would mean the end of the Polish state. Lloyd George disagreed with Foch's appraisal and did not view Poland as having the right to control Lvov.⁸

The truce commission under General Botha had been hearing from both Polish and Galician delegations in Paris. The Poles alleged that there were German officers in the Galician army. The Galicians admitted that a shortage of officers had led to their army using Czechs, Croations, Romanians, and Austrians as officers but not Germans. After the Polish offensive in Galicia on May 14 1919 the Ukrainian delegation sent a note to the President of the Peace Conference asking if the conference possessed the will and the ability to stop the Poles. The note went on to state that the delegation would regard its presence in Paris as useless if it could not obtain effective support from the Allied Powers. On 21 May the Galician delegation met the representatives of Britain, France, USA, and Italy together with the Truce Commission. Sidorenko, the leader of the delegation, denounced the Poles but stated that the Bolsheviks were Ukraine's major enemy. He also rejected the idea of union with Poland. Paneyko,

⁷ Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, p.277.

⁸ Ibid, p. 274.

another member of the delegation, assured Lloyd George that if the war with Poland ended, and then Galician forces would fight against the Bolsheviks.⁹

The delegates from both West Ukraine and Ukraine met with the French premier Clemenceau on May 22, who informed them that the Supreme Council was waiting to hear from the Poles about the military situation in Galicia. It became apparent to the Ukrainians that the Allied Powers would not stop Poland. There was a fear that if the government of Paderewski collapsed in Poland, the alternative would be a Bolshevik regime. General Botha of the Truce Commission and Lloyd George were both sympathetic to the Galicians and realised that the Poles were using the fear of Bolshevism to cover their own territorial designs.¹⁰ On May 23 the Peace Conference learned that the Poles had captured Striy and they called on Paderewski for an explanation but he did not reply until June 5. The Poles in the interim advanced eastwards and simultaneously the Galicians were given an ultimatum by the Romanians to evacuate Kolomeia and Stanislaviv. The Galicians abandoned Stanislaviv on May 26 and chose Chortkiv as the new temporary capital of West Ukraine.

The Galicians next decided that in view of the critical military situation it was necessary to appoint an overall head of government and of the army. Consequently on June 9 the President of the Ukrainian People's Council of East Galicia, Dr Petrushevych, was appointed dictator.

For the Bolshevik forces fighting in Ukraine the situation in East Galicia was of considerable military importance. The commander of the Soviet forces in Ukraine, Antonov-Ovseenko, wrote to Moscow in May 1919 giving his opinion on the situation in East Galicia:

The Galicians have not yet been liquidated (...) The Poles threaten from Kovel. If we succeed in arranging peace with the Poles and Galicians (...) we will still be able to give aid to the southern front (in the Don Basin against Denikin) and then complete the push to Romania and make contact with Hungary. Furthermore, we rely on Bessarabia and its insurgents whom we are organising to march against Romania, with support from Bulgaria and Hungary. Everything depends on peace with Poland and Galicia.¹¹

⁹ Ibid, p. 277.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 278.

¹¹ B. Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoi voine. Vol IV.* (Moscow, 1924), p. 46.

In early May the Soviet forces had reached the Galician frontier. The Russians did not want war with Western Ukraine and they began negotiations with both Poland and the Galicians. In Moscow the Sovnarkom decided to deal only with the government of Western Ukraine and not with the Directory, which had been forced out of Ukraine and taken refuge in East Galicia. This was because the Bolsheviks considered the nationalists in Ukraine to be a defeated force, whereas the Galicians still had considerable military forces at their disposal. Accordingly, Christian Rakovsky, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs of Soviet Ukraine, sent a note in late May to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Western Ukrainian Peoples Republic at Stanislaviv:

I consider it necessary to declare, in the name of the workers-peasants' government of Ukraine, that the question of political organisation of East Galicia is a matter for the Galician workers and peasants themselves. Taking into account that they have been taught by the experience of Russian and Ukrainian revolutions and are imbued with class-consciousness, they will realise a Soviet government with their own efforts. The Ukrainian Soviet Republic declares its own firm desire to refrain from all military actions on the territory of the Western Ukrainian National Republic, on the condition that the government of the Western Ukrainian National Republic declares its respect for the wishes of the working classes in regard to cessation of hostilities against the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic and in regard to an agreement for an armistice, as well as for the determination of a line of demarcation and boundary between the two republics. Upon it depends the end to the fratricidal war, which aids the imperialistic policy of the Romanian monarchy and Polish gentry. The Ukrainian workers-peasants government proposes that the government of the Western Ukrainian National Republic agrees to the cessation of hostilities and will take the necessary measures on its part.¹²

Antonov-Ovseenko next approached the command of the Galician army to open talks on a truce, but was informed that this was the province of the Galician government. The problem for the government of West Ukraine was essentially whether to marshal its resources in aid of the government of Ukraine and to defend it from

¹² Ibid, p.185.

Bolshevik attack, or whether to leave the rest of Ukraine to its fate and concentrate on defending Galicia from the Poles.

The Polish position, particularly from the viewpoint of Pilsudski, was the creation of a "Greater Poland" encompassing the division of Lithuania and Belorussia, and the creation of a Ukrainian satellite state and finally the incorporation of Galicia into the Polish state.

Following the major Polish offensive in May 1919, the government of West Ukraine sent a note to the Supreme Council in Paris on May 30. It referred to its sense of betrayal by the Allied Powers and made reference to various hostilities being carried out by the Poles against the Ukrainian population in East Galicia. It also referred to the Supreme Council's obsession with Bolshevism:

As for Bolshevism, it did not exist until the Polish troops arrived; in fact, in the entire territory which was administered by the State Secretariat of the West Ukrainian People's Republic exemplary order prevailed; and the population, in cities and in villages, behaved properly towards the wealthy classes, (even the castles and large landholdings of the Polish landowners were not touched) as well as towards the Jews. The Supreme Council should be aware of this from the various Entente missions, which our country had the honour to entertain during the last seven months. The vast means of petroleum production and the commercial properties in the petroleum fields also have not been disturbed. This is sufficient proof that the Bolshevik propaganda is incongruous with the population of West Ukraine.¹³

The note went on to call for the stationing of Allied troops in the territory of West Ukraine in order to preserve peace until the issue could be finally settled by the Peace Conference. It even stated that in the event of this being impossible, the Galicians would accept the stationing of Czech troops in the territory.¹⁴

The President of West Ukraine, Petrushevych, persuaded the rest of the government not to enter any talks with the government of the Soviet Ukrainian Republic. In the interim the Polish forces continued to push the Galician forces eastwards and southeastwards.

¹³ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7961B, *Narodna Volya*. No 82. May, 1919.

¹⁴ Ibid.

On June 3 1919, with the Polish press reporting a string of victories, the Supreme Council met in Paris to discuss West Ukraine. The French ambassador in Warsaw sent a telegram to the conference stating that General Pilsudski had told him that the aim of the Polish advance in East Galicia was to link up with the Romanian army to form an anti-Bolshevik front.

On June 5 the Polish Prime Minister, Paderewski, appeared before the conference and answered several central questions about West Ukraine in an exchange with Lloyd George. When the British Prime Minister asked him if Polish forces were still advancing in the Ukrainian part of Galicia, the Polish leader replied that there were two Ukraines but only one Galicia. The people of Galicia pretended to be Ukrainians, he claimed, because of the similarity between their language and that of the real Ukraine. They were also under the influence of Germany he stated. Paderewski claimed that the population of Galicia consisted of 3,300,000 Ruthenians (Ukrainians) and 4,700,000 Poles, and that the Ukrainians, despite the Polish efforts at a truce, had attacked the Polish army on 12th May. The discussion continued:

Lloyd George: "Does Poland claim the whole of Galicia?" Paderewski: "Historically, yes." Lloyd George: "Do they claim that the whole of Galicia should be annexed by them?" Paderewski: "We have given autonomy to this country. We claim the whole of Galicia. We claim it for the simple reason that it is absolutely impossible to define ethnographically this country, because curiously enough, and we should rather be proud of the fact, in the centre of Galicia there is more of a Ukrainian population than on the border. The furthest regions of Galicia are more Polish than the immediate surroundings of Lemberg. There isn't a neighbourhood of Lemberg which contains eighty percent."¹⁵

Lloyd George then attacked Poland for its annexationist and imperialistic ambitions. Paderewski responded by claiming that the Poles were always a democratic nation and that: "We never imposed upon the people different customs, and the proof of it is this, that after six hundred years of common life with primitive people, like the Lithuanians and the Ruthenians, even the Ukrainians, these people are still existing and even with our assistance, with our practical help, are regaining their individual

¹⁵ *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference 1919. Vol VI.* (Washington, 1943), pp.194-201.

character.”¹⁶ The meeting ended without any decision being taken on the fate of East Galicia.

The Supreme Council met once again to discuss West Ukraine on June 12. When President Wilson suggested that a line be established between Poland and Ukraine, Lloyd George replied that the same position should be adopted as in Silesia, which is that a plebiscite be held. President Wilson responded by recommending that a group of experts should be brought together to set up a plebiscite area. It was agreed that the Council of Foreign Ministers be invited to discuss this with the experts and should advise the Supreme Council on the issue.¹⁷

It has to be stated at this point that East Galicia in 1919 had within its frontiers a major resource – oil. Oil production in 1913 was 2,053,150 tons, although by 1916 it had declined to 900,000 tons. In 1918 British capital invested in the oil industry was 10,125,000 francs. French capital was 44,800,000 francs and Belgian capital was 20,000,000 francs. Polish capital was 10% of the total. Western interests were represented by the Eastern Continental Petroleum and Mining Syndicate Ltd and by the International Committee for the Protection of British, French, Belgian and Other Allied Interests. Two British members of the Truce Commission were connected with the oil company Premier Oil and they proposed in February 1919 that both Polish and Galician troops withdraw from the oil fields, and that they be placed under the control of Polish police and a local Polish administration. The oil fields, refineries and reserves were to be placed under an Allied commission, and control and distribution of production was to be carried out with the co-operation of Polish and Ukrainian delegates.¹⁸ The Galicians controlled the oil fields and they entered into an agreement with the pre-communist government in Hungary to buy arms for oil. The agreement was ratified by the Bela Kun communist government in March 1919. West Ukraine also signed an agreement with Czechoslovakia exchanging oil for cash.¹⁹

In March 1919, the International Committee decided to claim its oil. The committee's representative, Litwiński, met with Piłsudski in Warsaw and demanded that the member companies of the International Committee take control of the oil facilities that belonged to them. Piłsudski demanded that the committee influence the

¹⁶ *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference 1919. Vol VI.* (Washington, 1943), pp.194-201.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Ludwik Mroczka, *Spór o Galicję Wschodnią 1914-1923* (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1998), p.161.

¹⁹ Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, p.276.

British Foreign Office to give Poland military equipment. Both Poland and West Ukraine laid claim to Lemberg (Lvov) and the oil fields.²⁰

In late April 1919, Lord Acton, the British ambassador in Berne, reported on proposals made by Nicholas Vasyenko, a representative of the West Ukrainian government. Vasyenko stated that West Ukraine insisted on independence but was prepared to give the Poles oil concessions for fifteen years. Vasyenko claimed that if the Allies rejected the Galician claims that the West Ukraine would massacre the Poles.²¹ Pilsudski told Sir Percy Wyndham, the British ambassador, in Warsaw on May 19, that Poland would be content with Lemberg (Lvov) and the oil region and that the fate of the other regions could be decided by the Peace Conference.²² Thus, it can be seen that the issue of oil, (not for the first time in the history of the 20th century) played a role in the decision of the Allied Powers to favour Polish claims. Also, the Poles while agreeable to some parts of East Galicia becoming parts of a putative Ukrainian state, were not prepared to compromise in any shape or form on the issue of the oil fields.²³ Conflict could be the only result.

It was at this crucial stage in the history of East Galicia that the nationalist government of Ukraine intervened. Petliura had realised that without Polish aid the fate of the nationalists in Ukraine was sealed. Consequently on 27 May the Directory signed an unofficial agreement with Paderewski in Warsaw. In return for supporting an independent Ukraine, the Directory renounced all claims to East Galicia and Volhynia as far as the Styr River. The agreement was finally rejected by the Directory under pressure from the Galicians but it pointed the way to the division between Galicia and Ukraine, which would come to a head in April 1920.²⁴

The Poles were engaged in following a policy, which would involve as much Allied support as possible. Polish sources indicate that they were very concerned that the British in particular, would deliver East Galicia to the Russian Whites as part of a new Russian state. On 11 June 1919 Admiral Kolchak responded to the leaders of the Allied Powers by stating that the future Russian Constituent Assembly should make all final boundary decisions. British and American officers in East Galicia reported that

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Dziwanowski, *Joseph Pilsudski*, pp.266-267.

Ukrainian peasants welcomed Polish troops as restorers of peace and order.²⁵ This was a claim that the Polish delegation in Paris made much of. Furthermore, the officers reported that unless the Polish forces were allowed to reach the Zbruch River, (the frontier between East Galicia and Soviet Ukraine) the Bolsheviks would enter East Galicia.²⁶ The commander of the West Ukrainian army signed an armistice with the Poles in Lemberg (Lvov) on 16 June in view of the advancing threat from the Red Army.

In London, however, the Polish Press Bureau (run by the Polish Foreign Ministry) continued to issue propaganda statements, describing the Galicians as the pawns of either the Bolsheviks or the Germans. On June 27 1919, the Bureau issued the following report:

Dziennik Powszechny of June 27 has an interesting article on the relations existing between the Ukrainians and the Russian Bolsheviks. According to this article the Ukrainians three times appealed to the Bolsheviks for help against the Poles and finally an agreement was come to at Kiev, by which Eastern Ukraine was to be joined to Bolshevik Russia and in return, the Bolsheviks were to cease attacking the Western Ukrainians and were to send help against Poland. Trotsky came to Kiev, and made a speech, in which he declared that the war with Poland was of the utmost importance to the Bolsheviks, and that they must spare no effort to bring it to a successful conclusion.²⁷

On July 5, the Polish Press Bureau reported that the Ukrainian district commissioner in Buczacz, 52 kilometres south of Tarnopol, had written a report stating that the Ukrainian peasants were deserting from the Galician army and returning home, and that the villagers openly stated that they did not want the war against the Poles to continue, and that the costs of the war were too high.²⁸

The Commission on Polish Affairs suggested on 17 June that Lemberg (Lvov) be made a free city and that East Galicia should be a part of Poland. The commission drew up a new frontier, which would leave Lemberg (Lvov) and the oil fields in Polish territory.²⁹

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s.49.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Mroczka, *Spór o Galicję Wschodnią*, pp. 166-167.

In Paris the foreign ministers of the Allied Powers met on June 18 to discuss the fate of East Galicia. Balfour, representing Britain, argued that all the military intelligence pointed to the danger of East Galicia being overrun by the Bolsheviks, and he suggested a solution, which would satisfy two main concerns of the Allied Powers.

1. Resisting the Bolshevik invasion of West Ukraine.
2. Protecting the future interests of the Ukrainian majority in East Galicia.³⁰

His plan was the appointment of a High Commissioner for East Galicia under the League of Nations. Balfour stated:

The Poles, on the other hand, must be informed that their military occupation of East Galicia is a temporary one, and can only be allowed to last as long as the needs of common defence against the invading Bolshevism renders this proceeding necessary, and that of this the High Commission must be the judge. The Ruthenians must be told that, though the Poles are temporarily in occupation of their country, they are acting under the directions of the League of Nations, and that the Ruthenians will be given a full opportunity of determining by plebiscite within limits to be fixed by the League of Nations, what their future status is to be.³¹

This proposal was finally accepted by the Supreme Council. On June 25 the Supreme Council discussed West Ukraine. One major alteration to Balfour's original proposal was that the High Commissioner be a Pole, and answerable to the Polish government rather than the League of Nations.³² Following this agreement, General Haller's army in West Ukraine, which was a part of the Allied army, joined with the Polish army to conquer East Galicia.

The Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28 and Article 87 stated that the frontiers of Poland would be decided by the Allied Powers. This was followed in September by the Treaty of St Germain, which provided that Austria ceded her sovereignty over East Galicia to the Allied Powers.

On July 11, a full thirteen days after the signing of the Versailles Treaty, the government of West Ukraine learned of its fate at the hands of the Allied Powers. The Ukrainian delegation in Paris argued that the Ukrainians had kept their faith in the

³⁰ *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference. 1919. Vol IV*, pp.837-839.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

Allied Powers, hoping that they would support their rights. They resented being accused by the Poles of being pro-Soviet and accused the Supreme Council of: "delivering the Ukrainian people into the hands of its historic enemy and condemning the Ukrainian land to Polonisation."³³ The members of the Ukrainian Peoples' Council, meeting in Vienna, announced that the area between the San and Zbruch rivers was ethnically and historically Ukrainian and demanded the withdrawal of Polish forces.³⁴

In the face of a powerful Polish attack the Galician forces crossed the Zbruch and entered Ukraine. Petliura's forces had been holding a narrow strip of territory along the Zbruch but in early July 1919 the Red Army attacked and captured Proskuriv from his army. The government of Soviet Ukraine appealed to Petrushevych to break the alliance with Petliura and to join it in fighting the Poles and Romanians, but he refused because he believed that ultimately the Allied Powers would support the Galician cause. The arrival of the Galician army was crucial for Petliura's campaign. It added 40,000 men to his weary and near defeated army and enabled the nationalists to march on Kiev.

As the nationalists marched on Kiev from the west, Denikin's White Russian army was advancing from the east. Denikin had the support of the Allied Powers, and this led the Foreign Minister of the Ukrainian Peoples' Republic, Margolin, and a Galician minister, Dr Paneyko, to meet the US Secretary of State, Lansing in Paris on June 30. Paneyko expressed the hope that the Polish occupation of East Galicia would be temporary, and Margolin asked for technical and economic assistance. Margolin protested about the Allied position of recognising Denikin and Kolchak as spokesmen for Ukraine. Lansing stated categorically that the United States did not favour Ukrainian independence, although it favoured some form of autonomy. He also made it clear that Petliura would only receive aid if he came to an agreement with Denikin.³⁵

In the interim, the Polish Press Bureau (the propaganda centre of the MSZ in London) reported a speech delivered by Dr Galecki, the Polish General Delegate to East Galicia, to the people of the province on July 22. Galecki stated that the Ukrainian leaders were blind instruments of the Germans, who were the enemies not only of Poland but also of all Slavonic races. The Germans forgot that Poles and Ukrainians

³³ Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution*, p.283/4.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Margolin, *Ukraina i Politika Antanty*, p.161

were united by ties of blood.³⁶ These statements, apart from persuading the East Galician population to remain loyal to Poland, were also clearly designed to persuade the French and British that the East Galicians were in the pay of Germany, and that any putative West Ukrainian state would create a German bridgehead in Central Europe.

Reports on German intrigue in East Galicia were not the only propaganda tool, which the Poles used, however. It is undoubtedly true that massacres and outrages occurred in East Galicia during the summer months of 1919. Polish archives are crammed with photographs of victims, and they make grim viewing. Many of these photographs were released to the Western European press to demonstrate Ukrainian atrocities in East Galicia. It is unclear from the state of the mutilated bodies, whether they were Poles or Ukrainians, but the Poles claimed that the murders were carried out by the Ukrainians. The Poles also claimed that the targets of Ukrainian death squads were often priests, landowners, or Galician peasants, who refused to join the anti-Polish campaign. Naturally, the Germans were once again held responsible for organising the outrages, and there are many accounts of Ukrainians being led by German or Austrian officers. In August 1919, the Department of Information of the Foreign Ministry in Warsaw, issued a *Report on Ukrainian Cruelties Committed on the Polish Population of East Galicia*. According to this document:

The steady intention of creating such a situation as would preclude all understanding between the Poles and the Ukrainians, induced the Germans to use the passive Ukrainian masses for the purposes of robbery and violence, for the shedding of innocent blood, for the violations, not only of the terms of the Hague Convention, but of all laws of human ethics and morality.³⁷

Thus, the impression was created that the cunning and sadistic Teutonic mind was behind all these gruesome events. In the Europe of 1919, where tales of German outrage in Belgium and elsewhere, were still fresh, and where the French, in particular, were more than ready to believe that all Germans were savages and barbarians, such claims were a potent propaganda weapon. There are no reports in the German archives, of any German involvement in the events in East Galicia, and unlike the Baltic, there were no *Freikorps* or other irregular German forces operating in East Galicia. There

³⁶ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7635A, s. 227.

³⁷ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 9412A, s. 2.

may have been individual former German or Austrian officers at large, but there is no indication whatsoever, of any official German or Austrian involvement.

The scale of the outrages was large, and did cause concern amongst organisations such as the Red Cross. Nowhere, of course, did the massacres and murders cause more outrage than in Poland itself. Whole files in the Warsaw archive contain protests directed to the government, and particularly to the Head of State (*Naczelnik Państwa*), Pilsudski, from all over Poland but particularly from East Galicia.³⁸ These protests came from local authorities, parishes, clubs, cultural associations, universities, schools, and individual citizens. It is difficult to know whether this was an orchestrated campaign, directed from Warsaw, or a genuine grassroots reaction. Probably it was the latter.

One example of this is an appeal to the Head of State, from the “present and former academics of the University of Lvov” on June 26, 1919. The protest contains all the typical allegations being made by the Polish authorities in East Galicia, at this time.

We wish to protest in the strongest possible terms, against the actions of the Russian Poles³⁹, who with the support of the Germans, are carrying out a brutal extermination of the Polish civilian population here, and with actions of violence, are expropriating the property and capital of this population. These actions are an affront to the culture of the Polish population, not only in terms of the rights of the people but also of its welfare. The following facts need to be noted; the Ukrainians, since they have come under the control of the Germans, have acted against the Poles from Russia. The connections between the Ukrainians and the Bolsheviki, and the whole Bolshevik movement, have assumed a central place in developments.⁴⁰

These protests against the Ukrainians in East Galicia (and it is undoubtedly true that there were outrages, although the Ukrainians also protested against Polish outrages) were used as a pretext by the Polish government, not to negotiate with the East Galicians; and were a rich source of anti-Ukrainian propaganda for the consumption of the Peace Conference in Paris.

³⁸ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 9412A. Gabinet Ministra 208, 1493^A, 5336^A, 5336B, 5336C, 5337, 5338, 5339, 5340, 5341, 5341^A, 5341B, 5342, 5343, 5345, 5346, 5350, 5351, 5352, 5353, 5354. Kancelaria Cywilna Naczelnik Państwa 199, 200, 201.

³⁹ This was the terminology used by many Poles, when referring to the Ukrainians in East Galicia.

⁴⁰ AAN: Kancelaria Cywilna Naczelnika Państwa. 201, s.54. The reference to Poles in Russia, is probably a reference to Poles in Right Bank Ukraine.

The joint Ukrainian/Galician forces took Kiev on 30 August 1919 but had to retreat the following day because Denikin entered the city. The Galicians had already heard of Petliura's overtures to the Poles and his intention of renouncing East Galicia. As a result the Galician forces agreed to join Denikin's army, on condition that they did not have to fight against Ukrainians. On 1 September Petliura signed an armistice with Poland. This was the final split between the East Galicians and the Ukrainians. From this date forward the Galicians had to fight alone militarily and politically.

In the autumn of 1919 the Allied Powers seemed to favour the possibility of uniting East Galicia with a future non-Bolshevik Russian state but as the Whites were finally defeated they turned their attention to the possibility of Polish rule. The Polish invasion of Ukraine in May 1920, and the alliance between Poland and Petliura, led to a strengthening of Allied, and particularly French, support for the Polish occupation of East Galicia.

The rout of the Polish forces and the end of the Soviet-Polish War in July 1920 altered the contours of the East Galician problem. On 10 August 1920, Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, telegraphed the Soviet peace terms to Poland, advising them that if they were made in good faith, Poland should accept them.⁴¹ In the Treaty of Sévres between the Allied Powers and Poland, Romania, the Serbo-Croat-Slovene state and Czechoslovakia, Polish sovereignty was recognised in Western Galicia along Line A, as stated in the report of the Commission on Polish Affairs of 17 June 1919. Poland refused to sign or ratify the treaty. According to the treaty Lemberg (Lvov) and the oil fields were to be outside Polish territory. East Galicia was mentioned as an area but its future status was unclear.⁴²

Many East Galicians, including the president of the West Ukrainian government, took refuge in Czechoslovakia, where they were given a sympathetic reception by the Czech government.⁴³

The Treaty of Riga, signed between Poland and Soviet Russia along with Soviet Ukraine, was the final act in East Galicia's struggle for independence and ensured that it remained under Polish rule until 1939. The Soviet delegates agreed to a Polish frontier east of the Curzon line but demanded that Poland recognise the independence not only of Soviet Ukraine and Belorussia, but also of East Galicia. They also

⁴¹ Mroccka, *Spór o Galicję Wschodnią*, p. 184.

⁴² *Ibid*, pp. 184-185.

⁴³ AAN: MSZ. Gabinet Ministra, odpis, s.4. Warsaw, January 1 1921.

demanding a plebiscite in East Galicia. Lenin intervened however and instructed the head of the Soviet delegation to sign the treaty within ten days. If necessary the delegation was instructed to accept the old frontier between Imperial Russia and East Galicia. The Treaty of Riga was duly signed on 18 March 1921.

During 1921 both the Poles and the Bolsheviks supported armed interventions in Soviet Ukraine and East Galicia. Gradually however, the diplomatic relationship between them stabilised. East Galicia remained under martial law because of unrest from 1919 to 1923. Various acts of terrorism were committed there and on 30 September 1921, a Ukrainian student, Stefan Fedak, tried to assassinate Pilsudski in Lemberg (Lvov) in protest against a population census being carried out in the area.

The British continued to press the other Allied Powers for some form of autonomy in East Galicia but the Poles resisted it fiercely and had the support of the French. Gradually the issue of East Galicia disappeared from the international agenda. East Galicia was on the agenda of both the Genoa Conference in 1922 and also at the Rapallo Conference but it is noteworthy that both the Polish and the Soviet governments insisted on the borders agreed to under the terms of the Riga treaty.

From the vantage point of 1922 and after, it is obvious that the fate of East Galicia was determined by three main factors:

1. Allied fear of Bolshevism and the association of the Ukrainians with it.
2. French support for Poland as a guarantee against German revival.
3. Soviet-Polish rapprochement after the Soviet-Polish War and their common fear of Ukrainian nationalism.

Other factors were the fatal division between the East Ukrainians and Galicians. In many ways the Galicians paid a higher price through their support of the nationalist cause in Ukraine, and the betrayal of their province by Petliura left a deep psychological wound, and created a lasting suspicion of the East Ukrainians. This division was in essence inevitable because Poland was the oppressor for the Galicians; but because of the policy of the Allied Powers on Ukraine, the Ukrainian nationalists in East Ukraine were pushed into the arms of Poland. The final factor in finishing the hopes of the Galicians, was the skilful use of propaganda by the Poles to create the impression that West Ukraine was a German/Austrian creation, and if it achieved independence it would become a German satellite state, so weakening Poland. Without

the support of the Allied Powers the struggle for independence of East Galicia was fruitless.

As Andrew Wilson makes clear, the failure of East Galicia to attain independence in 1919 was as much a matter of timing as anything else. East Galicia's relationship with Germany and Austria was central:

A west Ukrainian version of Ukraine would have had a more solid base in the civil society developed by the Hapsburg Ukrainian parties –in contrast to the *bunt* (social explosion) by now engulfing the east. Plans to hold the elections that would have given a Ukrainian government a more solid mandate were more advanced than in Kiev. A West Ukrainian Republic would also have had closer links with the Central European powers, old and new, although it was created at the very moment – November 1918 – when Austria-Hungary had already collapsed and Germany was losing the war in the west. Instead of Vienna cooperating with a Ukraine they more or less recognised, Berlin was forced to work with a Ukraine it did not (the Hetmanate in Kiev). (...) Different approaches meant difficult relations between the ZUNR⁴⁴ and the various governments in Kiev.

Wilson speculates that because the Hetmanate collapsed just as the ZUNR was established, it remains unclear whether the more conservative West Ukrainian politicians, who were used to court and chancellery politics under the Hapsburgs, could have cooperated with the Hetmanate. The ZUNR government was forced instead to deal with the left wing UNR regime, whose leaders were not as fraternal towards the West Ukrainians as they might have been.⁴⁵

Finally, the alliance between Petliura and Pilsudski left the Galicians out in the cold, and they in turn negotiated with Denikin. Wilson argues persuasively that with the Hapsburgs gone, Polish-Ukrainian antagonism was more exposed than ever before. Furthermore, Moscow's support for an anti-Polish Ukrainian nationalism was always in the background. In fact, this was one of the cards, which Soviet Russia would play (after the signing of the Riga Treaty) in order to discourage Polish support for Ukrainian nationalist partisans, operating in Soviet Ukrainian territory. Wilson also makes the point that, in a kind of reverse '*Piedmont effect*', one reason why the

⁴⁴ The Western Ukrainian Peoples' Republic.

⁴⁵ Wilson. *The Ukrainians. Unexpected Nation*, p.128.

Bolsheviks had originally supported the creation of the western Soviet republics was to target irredenta populations in the new Central European states, and that the Ukrainian and Belorussian SSRs were aimed at Poland. Petrushevyh, the former leader of the ZUNR, and other Ukrainian nationalist leaders from East Galicia, continued to make secret trips to Soviet Ukraine in the 1920's to seek support.⁴⁶

On the other hand, the younger and more militant Ukrainian nationalists in East Galicia would increasingly turn to Germany for support. This began in the early 20's, but would really blossom with the founding of the OUN in 1929.⁴⁷ This was a quite logical development, for not only was Germany Poland's chief enemy in the region, but nationalists in East Galicia looked back to German and Austrian support for the creation of an independent Ukraine in 1918, and the promise of some form of autonomy from the Hapsburgs. Naturally, all of this inflamed Polish opinion further against Germany. German sympathies were certainly with the Galicians, as they would have been with any enemy of Poland in the bitter anti-Polish atmosphere of the post-Versailles years, but nothing points to direct German involvement in East Galicia. The Poles remained convinced of it however, and used it to gain as much support as possible from the French, and to distance the cause of the East Galicians from the Entente powers.

There was some indication of an ending of the impasse on East Galicia in early 1921. The territory was not yet recognised as a part of the Polish Republic by the Allied Powers. Poland was deeply concerned about the situation with Germany in Upper Silesia and East Prussia and no peace treaty had yet been signed with Soviet Russia. The Polish government secretly approached the government-in-exile of West Ukraine in Vienna, led by Petrushevyh. They proposed autonomy for East Galicia within the Polish Republic, provided that Petrushevyh's government recognised it and ended its diplomatic actions against Poland. The West Ukrainian government totally rejected the proposal because it believed that the Allied Powers would support Ukrainian independence.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.129.

⁴⁷ Information provided by the Kiev historian Heorhii Kas'ianov from his study of the Ukrainian Section in the Central State Archives in Prague. Cited by Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, p. 338 (footnotes). This is also dealt with in Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right. The ideological origins and development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919-1929*. (East European Monographs: Boulder, 1980)

⁴⁸ This is described in the memoirs of T. Voinarovsky: (T. Voinarovsky and I. Sokhotsky), *Istorychni postati Halychny XIX-XX st.* (New York and Paris, 1961), p.66-69, cited in 'Polish-Ukrainian Relations' by Ivan L. Rudnytsky in Ivan L. Rudnytsky, *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History* (Edmonton: CIUS, 1987). Rudnytsky comments that there is no guarantee that Poland would have honoured its promise to Petrushevyh but that Ukrainian intransigence played into the hands of Polish chauvinist elements, those opposed to any concessions to and understanding with the Ukrainians.

This was the last occasion on which Poland showed any willingness to compromise on the East Galician question.

As Rudnytsky commented, the Poles would eventually pay a high price for their intransigence:

Poland, which had stubbornly denied West Ukrainian lands to a free Ukraine, was in the end forced to hand them over to the Russian Empire, and later to the Soviet Union, Poland itself also fell under the Russian domination. Thus, the inability of the Poles and Ukrainians to compose their differences amicably has already twice caused the destruction of Ukraine and Poland, in that order, and has paved the way for Russia's triumph.⁴⁹

The East Galicians were once again to play a major role in the struggle for Ukrainian independence in the late 1980's, and indeed were the most vociferous supporters of independence in Ukraine in the last years of the Soviet Union. Their reward was the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state in 1991.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.71.

CHAPTER 11

THE TREATY OF RIGA AND ITS AFTERMATH

The Treaty of Riga was the important international agreement governing the fate of both East Galicia and Ukraine. It effectively partitioned the Ukrainian lands between the two traditional enemies of Ukraine, Poland and Russia. Its outcome was not altered until 1939 when with German support East Galicia joined the rest of Ukraine in the Soviet Union.

The terms of the armistice already agreed in late 1920 laid out the basic contours of what would be the treaty. In the period between the armistice and the signing of the treaty both the East Galicians and the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) lobbied the Poles furiously to be allowed to participate in the treaty negotiations. The government of Petliura was in a far stronger position, as under the terms of the Warsaw Agreement Poland could not enter into any treaties on the position of Ukraine without consulting the Ukrainian leader. However, the armistice negotiations had already demonstrated that Poland was prepared to follow its own interests, without any regard to those of Ukraine. Grabski in particular had demonstrated his total contempt for the diplomats and government of the Ukrainian People's Republic. The government of West Ukraine was in an even weaker position, as it was technically still at war with Poland, and was not recognised as the *de jure* government of East Galicia by any European state, including Soviet Russia.

Petliura and his government realised that all was not well in Soviet Ukraine and that there was the possibility of an uprising if the war with the Bolsheviks was continued. Throughout late 1920 and early 1921 many reports filtered out from Ukraine about the activities of the Cheka and the erection of concentration camps in some areas. There were also many reports of food shortages and disruption in production.

In November 1920 Trotsky visited the Donbas and sent a telegram to Lenin on 19 November: "The situation in the Donbas is extremely serious. The workers are starving; there is no clothing. In spite of the revolutionary Soviet mood of the masses, strikes are flaring up here and there. One cannot help being surprised that the workers are working at all."¹ When Trotsky was making comments such as this about the more loyal eastern Ukraine, it demonstrated the extent of the unrest in Soviet Ukraine. From 1920

¹ *The Trotsky Papers, 1917-1922*, ed. and annotated by Jan M. Meijer, Vol 2 (1920-22) (The Hague and Paris, 1971), pp.360-361.

“concentration camps” were set up in the coalfields for criminals, political prisoners and violators of discipline.² Partisan bands continued to attack villages, railways, mines and factories. By 1921 their actions had reached “an incredible scale” in some areas of the Donbas and they had killed many miners.³ Doubtless some of these attacks were due to the actions of the followers of Makhno, or groups of lawless bandits but others were loosely allied to Petliura and the nationalist cause. Many of these reports would have reached Petliura in Poland and convinced him that Soviet power in Ukraine was built on extremely unstable foundations.

On November 2, 1920 Trotsky sent a Top Secret message to the Politburo in Moscow setting out his doubts about the situation in Ukraine, and the weak position of the Bolsheviks there: “With the railways in Ukraine the situation is far from well. The dominance of Wrangel’s and Petliura’s men is far from broken. They employ every “legal opportunity” for sabotage. Surveillance of all this from the centre in Moscow presents the utmost difficulty.” He went on to state that the only solution was to place a member of the Party, who would be subordinate to the centre in Moscow and a member of the Ukrainian Council of People’s Commissars, in charge of all railways in Ukraine. He was also deeply concerned about the military situation:

In the military sense the decisive role in Ukraine has been played up to now by the front. In the event of the liquidation of the front the highly acute question of the military administration of Ukraine will arise. The two districts (Kharkov and Odessa) which come under the orders of the All-Russian General Staff will not be able to solve the enormous problem which, in Ukraine, falls to the lot of the military authorities; for even after the liquidation of Wrangel and Petliura Ukraine will continue to be that part of the Republic which is most exposed to attack. At the same time internal complications will still be experienced for many months.⁴

Trotsky recommended the appointment of Frunze as Assistant to the Commander in Chief, under the orders of the Ukrainian People’s Commissar for Military Affairs. Trotsky was clearly concerned about the situation in Ukraine. Although by December 1920, Wrangel had been defeated and Makhno was on the defensive, the Ukrainian situation still seemed uncertain. It was vital for Petliura to convince the Poles that the

² *Diktatura ughia. Sbornik. Stati' i materialy, vypusk III. Posvlashchaetsia II-mu Donetskomu s ezdu gornorabochikh* (Kharkov, 1921), p.177.

³ O.O. Kuchner. *Rozhrom zbroinoi vnutrishni'oi kontrrevolutsii na Ukraini u 1921-1923rr.* (Kharkov, 1971), p. 125.

⁴ *The Trotsky Papers*, p.350-351.

struggle against the Bolsheviks and the campaign for an independent Ukraine not be abandoned.

The Bolsheviks realised that considerable numbers of Ukrainian nationalist, Cossack and anti-Soviet Russian troops were still based in Poland in late 1920. It was extremely important for them that these troops did not engage Soviet forces and did not receive any recognition or support from Poland. Article II of the Armistice stated that neither Poland nor Soviet Russia could "support military actions of the other side against the second side". Accordingly the Polish government was obliged to renounce the treaty with the Ukrainian People's Republic and terminate all military and political agreements with the other anti-Soviet groups. This led to an immediate crisis in relations between Petliura and the government in Warsaw.

Petliura's government was now ensconced in Tarnów. Most of his troops, who had retreated into Poland in November 1920, were disarmed and interned in camps at Łańcut, Wadowice, Aleksandrów Kujawski, Pikulice near Przemyśl, Kalisz, Bronowice and Łobzowo near Krakow, Piotków Tryb, and Bydgoszcz.⁵

During January and February 1921 there was an impasse in the peace negotiations in Riga. There were four main points of contention. These were, repatriation of prisoners, extension of the period for renouncing the armistice, gold, and Upper Silesia. The Bolsheviks held more than 500,000 Polish prisoners. There was an agreement in principle in December but the Bolsheviks would not agree to immediate repatriation because they linked the issue with the extension of the period allowed for renouncing the armistice. In October this period had been agreed as two weeks but the Bolsheviks now demanded that it be increased to six weeks. They were deeply concerned that the Poles wanted to base their relations with them on the armistice in October. This would mean that on the repatriation of the prisoners and the payment of gold, the Poles could launch a new war with only two weeks notice. Warsaw rejected the Soviet demands and the Bolsheviks refused to release the prisoners.

The Poles wanted a payment of 1.6 billion roubles from the Russian gold reserve, as compensation for war damage. In the armistice agreement the Bolsheviks had promised to pay Poland an unspecified amount from the gold reserve. The precedent for this was the peace treaties signed between Moscow and the Baltic States. Estonia had

⁵ Alexander Kolańczyk. 'Soldiers of the Army of the Ukrainian People's Republic interned in Poland (1920-1924)' in *Polska i Ukraina. Sojusz 1920 Roku i jego następstwa*, ed. Z.Karpus, et al. (Toruń: Michael Copernicus University Press, 1997), p.307.

been paid fifteen million gold roubles, Lithuania three million, and Latvia four million. In December Dąbski demanded three hundred million gold roubles for Poland. Lenin however wanted to make the payment to Poland in the form of trade concessions to help the Soviet economy. This would have the double effect of assisting Soviet economic growth, while encouraging Poland to support peace. Lenin refused to agree when Chicherin reported on 3 January 1921 that the Poles would agree to receive ten percent of their official claim.

Upper Silesia was the other issue, which influenced the peace negotiations. At the Versailles conference the Allied Powers had agreed that there should be a plebiscite held in the province to decide its fate. In early 1921 the plebiscite had still not been held but it was imminent. Berlin and Warsaw both believed that the Soviet-Polish War and the invasion of Poland had influenced opinion in East Prussia. The Polish government wanted no instability on the eastern frontier during the Upper Silesian plebiscite. Berlin hoped that any peace agreement would be delayed until after the plebiscite. This allowed the Bolsheviks to play Berlin off against Warsaw. Prince Sapieha, the Polish Foreign Minister, began to suggest to Allied representatives that the Bolsheviks were delaying signing any peace treaty, in order to help the Germans in Upper Silesia. In mid-February Prince Sapieha, visiting London, suggested that the delay in concluding the treaty "was due to German intrigue".⁶ Once again the German-Soviet axis had appeared marginally as a factor in Poland's policies on its eastern frontier. There was also disquieting news from Vienna.

The activities of some of the other Ukrainian groups and organisations played directly into the hands of those such as Grabski, who sought to annul the Warsaw Agreement. The Ukrainian nationalist movement was split into a plethora of competing parties. Although the main division was between Petliura and the Galicians, led by Petrushevych, there were also many other groups. One of the most important of these was the pro-German faction of the ex-Hetman, Skoropadskyi, which was agitating endlessly in Berlin and Vienna and which had a totally anti-Polish orientation. This group's activities caused enormous embarrassment for Petliura; and gave credence to the charge of the anti-Petliura Poles that Ukrainian independence was a German creation and that the Ukrainians would always be the creatures of the Germans. Petrushevych in Vienna and Skoropadskyi in Berlin did all they could in late 1920 and

⁶ *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, ed. Dominic Lieven. Series A. The Soviet Union, Vol IV, p.94.

early 1921 to totally wreck any last vestiges of the Polish-Ukrainian alliance. The governments of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia were all too prepared to assist them in this.

The Poles were kept informed about much of this, and one example of this is the report commissioned by the Polish General Staff, and issued on 1 January 1921, about the activities of the Ukrainian émigrés in Vienna. The report had the title 'The Political Situation' and began by commenting on the tendency of Petliura's government to use its influence within various Ukrainian circles, and that this had led to consolidation and coordination between the various émigré groups. It continued:

The main exponent of these points of view is the Congress Committee in Vienna. The leader of this committee is General Grekov and Andreievskyi. Representatives of all parties from Ukraine and Galicia are members of this committee, except the communists, socialist-federalists, borotbists, and independents.

The committee accepted as its goals the following points,

1. The removal of Petliura from power and the creation in Ukraine of a Soviet based on the union of all political parties, except the communists.
2. The creation of an alliance with Britain and Germany to direct actions against the Bolsheviks and to stop Polish imperialism and recover the territory of Ukraine.
3. To form an offensive and defensive alliance with the government of East Galicia, led by Dr. Petrushevych.
4. To base the Ukrainian Congress in Vienna.
5. Lieutenant-Colonel Vasili Vishivani, nee Wilhelm von Hapsburg (son of the ex-Emperor Karl), General Grekov and Andreievskyi were authorised to lead the negotiations with the British, German and French governments.

The committee made a special declaration to Lloyd George and the French government declaring that Petliura had not the legal right to be the leader of Ukraine, and that all his attempts to seize power would not be recognised by the Ukrainian government. Ataman Oskilko was authorised to form, as a

section of the committee, the Insurgent Army of Ukraine. The representatives of Hetman Skoropadskyi and Dr. Petrushevych became members of the committee.⁷

The Congress Committee also decided to open negotiations with the government of Ukrainian People's Republic. It decided also to appoint General Grekov, Parfieski and Makarenko as members of the Presidium. This 'Presidium of the All Ukrainian People's Government' then drew up a declaration, in which it proclaimed that the decision had been taken to remove Petliura from power and to defend itself until the territory of Ukraine was free, and until there would be a constitutional provisional government. It was clear from the meeting of the Congress Committee that Vassal, Levitskyi, and others, demonstrated an aggressively anti-Polish position. Ataman Skulsk delivered a very sharp anti-Polish speech supporting the government of East Galicia. An officer of the UNR army also spoke, who could not forget his 9-month internment in a Polish camp.⁸

The report also stated, surprisingly, that the policy of the Congress Committee had a strongly Francophile current. General Grekov had supported contacts between the committee and the French Foreign Ministry, where Berthelot and Colonel Boushe were seen as being on the anti-Polish side. These two had apparently tried to convince the Ukrainians to strengthen their ties with Rumania instead of supporting Petliura. Petrushevych had also addressed the committee, and asked those states, which had ideas about Ukraine to come forward to the League of Nations. He believed that the natural ally was the Czech leader Benéš, who had helped the Ukrainians of East Galicia in presenting their case to the League of Nations.

The report drew a distinction however, between the views of Benéš and Petrushevych on the future of East Galicia. Benéš was seen as wanting to incorporate East Galicia into Czechoslovakia as an autonomous area, whereas Petrushevych wanted independence. There was even a division of opinion on this between the Ukrainians – some supported the Czech position. After the conference the Ukrainian politician Vitviskyi met with Benéš in Prague. For the Polish General Staff this demonstrated that Czechoslovakia's aim was not only political – fermenting conflict with Poland – but also economic, the reconstruction of East Galicia.⁹

⁷ AAN: Generalny Wojsk 616/15, s.464-467.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Finally, the report states that there is a strong interest internationally in pursuing a new war against the Bolsheviks, using Russian army units and the Ukrainian army, and that Skoropadskyi hoped that the recent defeat of Petliura would increase his influence in Ukrainian circles. Petrushevych was arguing that Ukraine was vital in any war against Bolshevism and that there could not be any Ukraine without East Galicia. The Poles noted that these views were gathering some support internationally, and that the major source of interest was Britain, where, in the view of the Poles: "it is seeking ways of increasing its influence in Russia."¹⁰

The formation of a common front by the anti-Petliura Ukrainian nationalists had, of course, of its very nature an anti-Polish aspect; indeed it could be argued that opposition to Poland was the central point and that Petliura was merely regarded as Poland's puppet. It is not surprising that these parties had a pro-German and a pro-British orientation. Skoropadskyi and his supporters were based in Berlin and his regime in Kiev had been placed in power by Germany. Since his ignominious retreat from Ukraine in December 1918 he had consistently opposed any agreement with Poland and had argued for an alliance with Germany. Petrushevych and his 'government-in-exile' were based in Vienna and the Austrian government was also not on friendly terms with Poland.

The former Emperor Karl placed his thoughts about Poland on paper in October 1920: "The Germans, when not feeling themselves able to subjugate Poland, prefer a Russian Poland to an independent Poland.... The adoptive parents that Poland chose could not help her on her deathbed. Germany certainly will see in Poland only a bastard and will treat it accordingly."¹¹ Benéš and the Czech government had also shown themselves sympathetic to the East Galicians and Poland and Czechoslovakia had a border dispute in the Teschen area. Britain was regarded by the Ukrainians as the Entente power with the least sympathy for Poland. Lloyd George had shown understanding for the position of the East Galicians at the Paris Peace Conference, and had opposed the Polish invasion of Ukraine in April.

The attempt to gain French support is less understandable; France was Poland's staunchest ally and had supported Poland militarily and economically during the Polish-Soviet War. The policies of the Congress Committee suggest desperation with Petliura and Poland, and the search for alternative allies wherever they could be found. There

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ AAN: MSZ. Ambasada RP w Londynie 424, s.22.

can be no doubt however, that there was a tremendous sense of disillusionment with Petliura and his pro-Polish policy among most of the Ukrainian parties, and it is interesting to note that they hoped to replace him by appealing directly to the other members of his government-in-exile in Tarnów. There was no hope however, of any other state supporting the Ukrainian cause; and there is an element of tragic-comedy about this plethora of Ukrainian groups desperately seeking support, and heaping opprobrium on the head of the defeated nationalist leader.

In early 1921 there was no other option open to the nationalist Ukrainians other than hoping that the Poles would seek favourable terms for their Ukrainian allies in the negotiations at Riga. For the Poles however, the reports about the activities of the Ukrainian émigrés strengthened the opinion that they were not to be trusted, and that they were intriguing with the Germans and Czechs. This strengthened the position of the National Democrats and those sections of the Polish political class who had never been sympathetic to the Ukrainian cause.

Krasin arrived in Riga on 19 February to join Joffe on the Soviet delegation. On 24 February, Krasin and the Polish finance minister reached an agreement over the gold payments. Krasin had been authorised to pay thirty million roubles. The Poles agreed to this; and agreements were then signed to begin the repatriation of prisoners, and to extend the period in which the armistice could be renounced to six weeks. It is significant that the Allied prime ministers announced on 21 February that the plebiscite in Upper Silesia would be held on 20 March.

Some of the Polish press were already expressing reservations about the Polish-Ukrainian pact in the last months of 1920. The newspaper *Nowa Reforma*, in its edition of 21 December 1920, expressed many of the doubts of the Polish Right about Piłsudski's entanglement with Petliura, and took the view that the alliance was a literary fiction and not a realistic political one. It recommended the ending of the alliance; because this would end the political ideals of those Ukrainians who wanted to divert Poland away from dealing with the more central problem, for Poland, of the situation in East Galicia. Furthermore, the encouragement of Ukrainian ambitions by Poland would encourage those in East Galicia who did not want to recognise the Polish state.¹²

¹² AAN: MSZ. Ambasada RP w Berlinie 2414, s.305.

There was also extreme nervousness about the possibility of a joint German-Bolshevik attack on Poland. An article appeared in *Rzeczpospolita* on December 22 1920, making the claim that three documents had been uncovered which showed the inevitability of revolution in Germany. These had included a letter from Zinoviev to the German communists, which made reference to a secret military organisation. The paper's view was that both these Bolshevik revolutionaries and the nationalist-monarchist groups in Germany were opposed to the policies of Poland, indeed to its very existence.¹³ There were those in Poland, mainly the National Democrats and their supporters, who still saw the Ukrainians as allies or potential allies of Germany, and who wanted peace with Russia as soon as possible, and an end to the Ukrainian entanglement. One of the most important of these was Grabski, who now played an essential role in the Riga settlement. In his Memoirs, Grabski gives the impression that an ethno-religious viewpoint was central for him in the negotiations with the Bolsheviks. Grabski regarded Roman Catholic and non-Orthodox areas of the former Russian Empire as being natural constituent parts of the new Polish state, but Orthodox areas should automatically join the new Russia. He was scathing about the Ukrainian role in the war just over, and stated that its population had rejected both Poland's and Petliura's overtures and stood on the side of the Bolsheviks, therefore it had chosen its fate.¹⁴

Petliura and his ministers were based in Tarnów, hoping that they would be called to the negotiations in Riga. A report on Petliura's government from the Soviet embassy in Berlin was intercepted by the Polish embassy there in early 1921. It gives an interesting description of the situation in Tarnów:

The position of Petliura's government in Tarnów is described as consisting of only about 400 people – 20 ministers and 10 heads of department. The most important persons were the State Secretary Krishanovskyi; the Foreign Minister, Nikovskyi; the Justice Minister, Levitskyi; and the Prime Minister, Piliptschuk. The chief role in the government is played naturally by the Foreign Ministry because of the representation abroad with their propaganda and their ability to find money. The second most important post is War Minister. Petliura is only the Supreme Commander of the rebels; the commander of the army is the War Minister. At present this is a certain

¹³ Ibid. p.308.

¹⁴ St.Grabski, *Pamiętniki* Vol II. (Warsaw, 1989), pp. 172/73.

Vovk, a former staff captain. Vice minister is Jaroshevich, an old Lieutenant General of the (Russian) General Staff who was previously with Wrangel. The General Chief of Staff is General Petrov, a former colonel in the General Staff and his assistant Lieutenant General Janushevskyi, former Chief of Staff with Denikin. The Supreme War Council is formed from generals Junalkov, Sinkler, Sialskyi and Omilianovich-Pavlenko. It is debatable how many genuine Russian generals find themselves in this so-called Ukrainian army. Most of these came shortly before the collapse of Wrangel's army from Crimea to Ukraine. There are people who say that this happened because they felt that they were in less danger in Ukraine than in Crimea. In the opinion of the troops these people have no real influence, instead the troops follow their leaders, who are interned with them in the camps. According to the French lieutenant Segouant, approximately 300 officers and 700 men from Wrangel's army joined Petliura's.¹⁵

Quite obviously this Soviet report is an attempt to link Petliura's cause with that of Wrangel and also to suggest that morale among the Ukrainians was low and that Petliura had lost the confidence of his troops. Considering that Wrangel had shown no inclination to support Petliura until his final defeat, it is difficult to assume that many of his officers and men had willingly joined the banner of the Ukrainians. It is more likely that some of Wrangel's forces attempting to escape the rout in Crimea had managed to cross the Polish frontier and had been interned. This Soviet report was also quite clearly an attempt to discredit Petliura's government and army, and to link its destiny with that of the defeated and discredited Wrangel. It is certainly true however, that the UNR government maintained a small army of diplomats abroad, particularly in Western Europe. This was because of the absolute necessity for Petliura of convincing other states, especially the Entente Powers, of the legitimacy of his government and cause. This was even more urgent in early 1921, when Petliura and his ministers were aware that Poland was manoeuvring to abandon them in the negotiations at Riga.

Similar charges were made about Petliura and his army by his enemies on the Ukrainian left. The Borotbist journal *Borot'ba*, published in Vienna, launched a series of articles on "the maniac Petliura" in the autumn of 1920. Among the charges were that he had presided over the pogroms in Ukraine and had acted as the Chief Gendarme

¹⁵ AAN: MSZ. Ambasada RP w Berlinie 3674, s.12-13.

of the Poles and had encouraged Denikin's former officers and dignitaries into his entourage.¹⁶ Of course the Borotbists were the allies of the Bolsheviks and the charges are very similar to those made by the Soviet embassy. The Ukrainian communists and the Ukrainian monarchists and Right were now united in their vehement opposition to Petliura and their total opposition to his pro-Polish policy.

While negotiations continued at Riga, Pilsudski received an official invitation to visit Paris from the French government. This was an opportunity for the Poles to press the importance of a peace settlement on advantageous terms with the French.

Sir Percy Loraine, the British ambassador in Warsaw, expressed his opinion on Pilsudski's visit to Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary on December 20 1920:

The Poles obviously have but few bargaining counters in their hands, and from some remarks which Prince Sapieha made to me in a recent conversation, I suspect that Marshal Pilsudski will debate considerably on the danger of a fresh Bolshevik attack on Poland in the spring and urge its probability as a lever for securing an ample supply of munitions and modern armaments on easy terms. (...) No doubt Marshal Pilsudski's resourceful imagination will produce other arguments, but I fancy that the Red peril will be his principal line of attack and defence, reinforced by the dangers of Bolshevik co-operation with Germany.¹⁷

Once again the Poles were rattling the sabre and pressurising the French with the prospect of a German-Bolshevik common front. The French, smarting from the defeat of Wrangel, their protégé in Russia, were even more dependent on the Poles in Eastern Europe as allies and agents.

The Poles had agreed, during the negotiations over the preliminary treaty in October only to recognise the delegates from Soviet Ukraine as representing Ukraine. Thus, even though the UNR representatives were at Riga, they did not take part in any negotiations and were not recognised by either side. The Polish delegation, which finally negotiated the treaty, were as follows; Dąbski (Chair), Stanisław Kauzik, Henryk Strasburger, Lechowicz, Wasilewski, and a large staff of experts. As mentioned above, the impending plebiscite in Upper Silesia was always in the background at Riga and had the effect of considerably speeding up the negotiations. Dąbski commented:

¹⁶ AAN: MSZ. Dept Polityczno-Ekonomiczny 7966, s.35.

¹⁷ *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, ed. Dominic Lieven. Series A. *The Soviet Union*. Vol IV, p.95.

“The date of the Upper Silesian plebiscite hangs over me like an nightmare. I realise that if we lose the plebiscite or insufficiently win it, there will be people who would cast blame that the peace was not carried into effect soon enough.”¹⁸ It was quite clear that the interests of Poland would prevail in the negotiating of the provisions of the treaty and those of the Ukrainians would be very much at the end of the agenda. The Polish delegates at Riga were in constant touch with the Council for the Defence of the State and with the Foreign Minister, Prince Sapieha. Both were supporters of the National Democrats and supported the line proposed by Grabski.

What was the role of Pilsudski in the negotiations, and why did he not intervene to support Petliura and the cause of an independent Ukraine? Polish and Ukrainian historians have had radically different argumentation for Pilsudski's apparent passivity during the treaty negotiations. It was the Marshal after all, who had been the architect of the agreement with Petliura and whose central policy was the creation of an independent Ukrainian state. When Pilsudski was asked, several years after the signing of the treaty, why he did not end the negotiations at Riga, his reply was that after the military setbacks of the summer of 1920 Poland had been profoundly shaken. He continued:

The nation suddenly became tired and lost its self-confidence. I had to take this into account, especially since my person and my policy were the object of a vitriolic, ruthless campaign. Both the government and the Sejm (the Polish parliament) were torn asunder by the campaign. Considering all that, I decided that one cannot impose upon a reluctant nation that desired peace, the new risks inherent in the usual ups and downs of a war. Some of my suggestions had been communicated to the peace delegation, but it either failed to understand or did not wish to understand them.¹⁹

This has been the view put forward by Polish historians and apologists for Pilsudski. Their argument is that Pilsudski remained loyal to the Ukrainians but that the Polish people had had enough of war, especially in view of the near-annihilation of the Polish state and the huge strain on manpower and resources caused by a constant state of war since 1914. The Soviet-Polish War had cost the lives of a quarter of a million Polish citizens, and large numbers were still incarcerated in Soviet prison camps.

¹⁸ *Pokój Ryski: Wspomnienia, pertraktacje, tajne układy z Joffem, listy* (Warsaw, 1931), p. 173.

¹⁹ K.Okulicz, 'Dzieje ziem Wielkiego Księstwa', in *A History of the Grand Duchy*, ed. K.Okulicz, Z.Jundzill, et al. (London, 1953), pp. 119-20

Furthermore, the attitude of the Press and the majority in the Sejm was that peace with Soviet Russia was an absolute necessity. The National Democrats were in control of the political situation and Pilsudski was constrained.

The final treaty agreed at Riga on March 18 1921 conceded large territories of the former Russian Empire to Poland. The frontier agreed on was well within the 1772 frontier of pre-Partition Poland, and was even further west than Dmowski and the National Democrats had demanded at the Paris Peace Conference. It was however east of the Curzon line and included about 110,000km² of the western borderlands (Ukraine and Belorussia). It was much closer in conception to the ideas of Pilsudski's enemies the Polish Right. The Ukrainian Soviet politician Maniuls'kyi made a prophetic comment on the results of the treaty, when he claimed that Poland had become a sort of new Austria with an utterly mixed foreign population. He believed that Poland, by its own policy had created on its entire eastern border a permanent resistance movement. This was certainly true in East Galicia, where violent unrest continued until the dismemberment of Poland in 1939.

Dmowski claimed in September 1921 that his party took the entire responsibility for the Treaty of Riga because it had 'dictated the preliminaries'.²⁰ A Polish writer at the time wrote: "Dmowski had realised his principles and achieved his conception of an independent Poland, though he did not rule the country. Pilsudski did rule the country but he failed to fulfil his ideas."²¹

There were 26 articles in the treaty and most dealt with questions of reparations by Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine to Poland, while others dealt with the rights of Russian and Ukrainian minorities in Poland and of Poles in Soviet Ukraine and Russia. For Petliura the most important articles were Articles 2,3 and 5.

It is immediately obvious that the Bolsheviks did all possible to give the impression of Soviet Ukraine being a separate and sovereign signatory to the treaty and indeed, following the ratification of the treaty by Poland and Soviet Russia, a Soviet Ukrainian consulate opened in Warsaw together with a Polish consulate in Kharkov. Poland had finally fully recognised Rakovsky's regime and, as a corollary, withdrawn recognition from Petliura's government-in-exile and his armed forces. It is also noticeable that many of the articles referred to restitution for the actions of the Imperial

²⁰ AAN: Akta Adiutantury Generalnej Naczelnego Dowodztwa. 1918-1922. Report no 21. April 26, 1921. XXXVII /7275, s. 277.

²¹ Piotr S. Wandycz, *Soviet-Polish Relations. 1917-1921* (Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 289.

Russian government during World War I and indeed as far back as the first partition of Poland in 1772. The commercial aspects of the treaty also opened the way for normal trade relations between Poland and Soviet Ukraine.

Poland had finally resumed normal relations with the Soviet states on its eastern frontier and Joffe, the leader of the Soviet delegation, summed up the feelings of the signatories in his speech at the signing ceremony. According to Joffe, the signing of peace with Poland completed the circle of peaceful relations between all the states, which previously formed part of the Russian Empire and he continued:

The Tsarist policy of violence is liquidated and the peoples who have agreed in amity, without malice and hatred, to go their separate ways, may and must now develop in feelings of true friendship and neighbourliness those ties arising out of their economic proximity and common interest which were none the less built up during many centuries of State imposed unity. (...) And I, for my part, on behalf of Russia and Ukraine, am happy to declare that if in fact no interests foreign to the Polish people are allowed to govern Polish policy, those friendly and good-neighbourly relations of which the respected chairman of the Polish delegation spoke will most certainly be established between the states, which have signed this treaty.²²

Both countries were exhausted economically and militarily, they had both been engaged in constant warfare since 1914, and both needed international legitimacy. The Treaty of Riga provided both. For Poland it finally fixed its eastern frontier, which would remain until the German-Soviet Pact of 1939. As Joffe remarked, for Soviet Russia it was the final peace treaty with the new states, which had arisen from the debris of the Russian Empire in Eastern Europe. Pilsudski's attempt to recreate the Polish Commonwealth of the 17th century had failed, as had Lenin's attempt to export communism to Central Europe. The Treaty of Riga was a compromise and the frontiers drawn up there reflected the balance of power in Eastern Europe in 1921. For the Poles it was the best that they could expect; the Bolsheviks were prepared to grant large territories to Poland. The Russian Whites and the Socialist Revolutionaries would not have been prepared to do so. Also, the Soviet creation of a nominally independent Ukrainian state on Poland's eastern frontier would act as a magnet for disaffected Ukrainians within Poland's frontiers, and indeed shortly after the signing of the treaty

²² *Izvestiya*, 20 March, 1921.

Petrushevych began negotiations with Rakovsky's regime in Kharkov. This could certainly have been an attempt by the Bolsheviks to destabilise Polish rule in East Galicia.

Another factor for the Bolsheviks was the Kronstadt revolt which necessitated a speedy settlement with Poland. If Poland had its Upper Silesian dilemma, Russia had its Kronstadt. The Bolsheviks were pleased with the settlement at Riga. They had been forced to concede less territory than they had originally been prepared to offer Poland before the outbreak of the war. They had also held Ukraine, which was an area of vital economic importance for the new Soviet state and without which Russia could not be considered as a major power in Eastern Europe.

The question now remained how would Petliura and the UNR government react and what would be their fate and that of the thousands of Ukrainian troops interned in Polish camps? There was undoubtedly deep bitterness and an intense feeling of betrayal among the Ukrainians but their options were extremely limited. Under the terms of article five of the treaty no anti-Soviet activities could be carried on in Poland, and thus the fate of the UNR government and its diplomats hung in the balance. For Petrushevych and the other anti-Petliura nationalists the Treaty of Riga was the ultimate vindication of their anti-Polish stance, and they vehemently accused Petliura and his supporters of having led the nationalists up a political and diplomatic cul-de-sac.

Petliura's only hope remained Pilsudski and the Polish federalists but they were powerless in the face of public opinion strongly in favour of the treaty, and of a parliament dominated by the National Democrats and their allies. It is true that Pilsudski felt some responsibility for the fate of his erstwhile allies and he visited the main Ukrainian internment camp on May 15 1921, and apologised for the actions of the Polish government and thanked the Ukrainian troops for their support during the war. Some Ukrainian commentators remarked that the Ukrainians were very moved and that Pilsudski's remorse appeared genuine.²³ Pilsudski's disillusionment with Polish politics led to his retirement from public life in 1923, until his return in 1926. His plans for a series of independent states to act as a buffer zone between Poland and its main traditional enemy had failed. Petliura and his supporters were left to their own devices.

No help could be expected from the Entente powers. France had failed utterly in its attempts to dislodge the Bolsheviks by means of Wrangel's army and was not

²³ Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance*, p.175.

sympathetic to the cause of an independent Ukraine. Furthermore, its main ally in the east, Poland, had already recognised the Soviet Ukraine. The British referred in their Foreign Office reports to Petliura as “the bandit Petliura” and did not regard him as a serious politician or statesman.²⁴

In November 1920, the forces of the UNR, together with allied Russian and Cossack forces had launched an attack on Soviet Ukraine but the campaign was short and disastrous, without Polish support they had no chance against the Red Army. These Ukrainian troops (about 19,000) had been interned in central and western Poland. This was one of the reasons for Article 5 of the Treaty of Riga. The Bolsheviks remained decidedly nervous about the possibility of a resumption of hostilities by the Ukrainians and dubious about Poland’s stated neutrality. This was to remain a source of friction between the Soviet Ukrainian regime and Poland throughout 1921 and 1922.

Even after the Treaty of Riga unrest continued in Soviet Ukraine. A secret report to the British Foreign Office dated April 5 1921 reported:

In order to quell the constant risings that are taking place in the Ukraine, the Bolsheviks are transferring large forces there. The insurgents have three objects in view viz, the expulsion of the Bolsheviks, the establishment of a Ukrainian National Assembly, and the division of the land among themselves. The movement is very hostile to any form of foreign intervention, especially on the part of the Poles. In the Poltava and Kharkov districts the insurgents are led by Arkadi Stepanenko, a Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionary (...) In Podolia an insurgent force of about 4,000 strong with artillery and machine-guns has appeared in the vicinity of Shargrod (north of Mogilev). It is engaged in operations against units of the 14th Soviet Army. Forces under Atamans Golub and Paduliak are also operating in Podolia. These include well-disciplined soldiers of the Ukrainian forces formerly operating from Poland.²⁵

The British report clearly indicates that Polish intervention was not welcome and, while Polish political circumstances dictated that there would be no direct intervention after 1920, the Polish military must have been aware of the feeling in Ukraine. This

²⁴ *British Documents on Foreign Affairs. Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, (ed.) Dominic Liven. Series A. *The Soviet Union*. Vol V, p.299.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

situation would have strengthened the hand of Polish politicians who wanted no further involvement with Ukraine.

The government of the UNR and Petliura remained in Tarnów after the ratification of the Treaty of Riga. The government of the UNR decided in February 1921, on the eve of the signing of the treaty, to establish a Ukrainian Parliament in Tarnów, which would give a greater semblance of legitimacy to the nationalists in exile in Poland. The parliament only existed for six months, until August 1921, and during that time drew up an extensive list of legislation and tried to influence the policies of the government. The Prime Minister in March 1921 was Viacheslav Prokopovich, who based his cabinet on a parliamentary majority. The Ukrainian politicians in Tarnów also needed to give the impression of democratic government to the Entente powers and to deny the suggestion that Petliura's regime was a dictatorship. However, political antagonisms soon emerged and a hostile relationship between the parliament and Petliura developed. Also, the ratification of the Treaty of Riga by the Polish Sejm meant that the parliament had to work in semi-secret conditions, as its existence was contrary to Article 5 of the treaty. A delegation from the parliament of the UNR approached the Polish Sejm in April 1921, to try and appeal to it not to ratify the Treaty of Riga but it failed utterly. One unexpected success was that the government and parliament of the UNR were recognised as the *de jure* executive and legislature of Ukraine by the Argentine Republic early in 1921.²⁶ However, recognition by Argentina was one point, recognition by the Entente powers was another. Plans for an uprising by the interned troops in Poland were discussed but there were deep differences of opinion and Petliura did not want to antagonise the Poles.²⁷

The Bolsheviks were, of course, aware of the activities of the UNR administration in Poland, and the worldwide propaganda being carried out by its diplomats. The Soviet government in Kharkov appealed on numerous occasions to the Polish government to act against Petliura and the UNR government.

On 2 May 1921, the Polish paper *Monitor Polski* reported from the Press Bureau of the Foreign Ministry that the government of Soviet Ukraine had again protested to the Polish government about the activities of the UNR supporters in Tarnów. Kharkov quoted from Article II of the preliminary peace agreement and Article 5 of the Treaty of

²⁶ Jan Jacek Bruski, 'The Council of the Republic, the Parliament of the Ukrainian People's Republic in exile. (February-August 1921)', in *Polska i Ukraina. Sojusz 1920 Roku i jego następstwa*, (ed.) Z. Karpus, et al. (Toruń: Michael Copernicus University, 1997), p. 341.

²⁷ Ibid

Riga, that the Polish government had undertaken not to allow hostile organisations or activities hostile to Soviet Ukraine to be organised in Polish territory. According to the Soviet Ukrainian government, an organisation styling itself as “the government of the Ukrainian People’s Republic” and based in Tarnów was carrying out anti-Soviet propaganda by means of telegraph and printing. Furthermore, Kharkov claimed that groups of counter-revolutionary bandits based in Polish territory, and under the control of the illegitimate regime in Tarnów, were launching attacks on Ukrainian territory and destroying property in Soviet Ukraine. These groups, it alleged, were also carrying out anti-Semitic pogroms in Soviet Ukraine, and attacking the Red Army.²⁸

It listed a series of attacks by partisans within Ukrainian territory, which it had evidence of having been directed from Tarnów. The Soviet Ukrainian government believed that certain forces within Poland were still sympathetic to the Petliura regime; and it gave as an example of this sympathy the invitation to the Belverdere Palace from the Polish Head of State (Piłsudski) to Petliura, just before Piłsudski’s visit to Paris in February 1921. Kharkov believed that these forces were still trying to ferment war between Poland and Soviet Ukraine. The government of Soviet Ukraine protested against the continued toleration by Poland of the UNR regime, and its being permitted to carry out civilian and military functions on Polish territory. Finally, the Soviet Ukrainian government stated that it believed that all these activities were contrary to the provisions of the Treaty of Riga, and it requested Poland to act immediately.²⁹

The Polish government replied that Ataman Petliura and his ministers had been accepted in Poland as refugees from the Red Army, and as such had the legal right to be granted rights of asylum. Also, Poland had interned and disarmed all the troops of the UNR and placed them under supervision; as such Poland could not be accused of supporting armed attacks against Soviet Ukraine. The Polish Foreign Ministry also reiterated that the Soviet delegation at Riga had been made aware of the granting of asylum to Petliura and his government in Poland, and had accepted this without protest. Poland had never supported any actions by Ukrainian partisans within Soviet Ukraine or any anti-Semitic pogroms. As regards the invitation of Petliura to the Belvedere Palace, this could not be interpreted as a sign of support for the government of the UNR, but was merely a diplomatic protocol.

²⁸ AAN: Akta Leon Wasilewskiego 48,s.6.

²⁹ Ibid.

Then the Polish Foreign Ministry responded with several counter-charges. It had come to its attention that the Soviet Ukrainian government was permitting groups of partisans to form on its territory, who were engaged in anti-Polish military attacks on East Galicia. It listed several examples of attacks along the border with East Galicia, and also alleged that there was a 1st Soviet 'Galician' cavalry regiment attached to Budienny's army, along with a 'Galician' brigade organised under the title 'Red Galician Cossacks'. Some of these Galician troops were, it stated, attached to the 12th and 14th Soviet armies as well as Budienny's cavalry. Therefore the Polish government wished to protest against these warlike activities taking place on the territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, and wished to state to the Ukrainian Soviet government that they were in breach of Article II of the preliminary peace agreement and Article 5 of the Treaty of Riga.³⁰

This argument over 'our Ukrainians' and 'your Ukrainians' would continue throughout the 1920's and help to poison relations between Poland and Soviet Ukraine. There can be no doubt that Petliura and his government continued to be allowed to reside in Poland, chiefly as a weapon to use against the manipulation of the East Galicians by the Bolsheviks. Protests and diplomatic notes continued but gradually Petliura realised that there would be no real further political development for the Ukrainians in Poland.

In August 1921, tired of the bickering and infighting by the various parties in the Ukrainian parliament, operating out of the Bristol Hotel in Tarnów, Petliura dissolved the parliament. Petliura ruled virtually alone, over the disintegrating and disillusioned regime of exiles. Finally in January 1922 Andrei Liviskyi, as Prime Minister, formed a new cabinet.³¹

There were approaches to Tarnów by the pro-German Ukrainians led by Skoropadskyi, who argued that there was nothing further to be gained by the pro-Polish orientation but Petliura rejected their overtures and held his course. The Polish government continued to pressurise Petliura not to take any political risks and to tone down his anti-Soviet activities. There was also increasing evidence that Polish business wanted to develop economic interests in Soviet Ukraine and particularly wanted to exploit the new conditions laid down for trade and commerce by the Treaty of Riga.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Jan Jacek Bruski, 'The Council of the Republic, the Parliament of the Ukrainian People's Republic in exile. (February-August 1921),' in *Polska i Ukraina. Sojusz 1920 Roku I jego następstwa.*, ed. Z. Karpus, et al. (Toruń: Michael Copernicus University, 1997), p.345.

They were particularly concerned to try and exploit the rich resources of Ukraine before German business did. In order to accomplish this, a good relationship with Rakovsky's regime in Kharkov was necessary.

In December 1921, press reports from Kharkov³² announced the appointment of the first Soviet Ukrainian diplomatic representatives to Poland, they were Oleko Shumskyi as chief plenipotentiary representative, Isaiah Hurgin as legal counsellor, Ivan Sijok as first secretary and Mikola Popiv as second secretary. On the same day (12 December), a telegram from Kharkov to the Polish Foreign Ministry informed Warsaw about the attitude of the new Ukrainian Soviet delegation towards Petliura: "Shumskyi's attitude to Petliura is that he proposes an attack against him and violent repression or repatriation."³³ Throughout 1921 and 1922 the Soviet Ukrainian diplomats in Poland continued to demand the removal of Petliura and his (in their view) illegal regime from Polish territory. By 1922 the Poles had become aware of German companies becoming established in Soviet Ukraine, two of them were the Hoffco Company and the Agricola AG, which caused some concern.³⁴ From 1921 it became a policy of the Polish government to develop closer economic and trade links with Soviet Ukraine, especially in view of the developing German economic penetration of Ukraine. It was obviously imperative for the Polish government that something should be done about Petliura's regime in Tarnów, which was becoming an increasing impediment to better relations with the government in Kharkov.

Petliura moved to Warsaw in 1922, and increasingly his ministers and supporters began to leave Poland and move to the major cities of Western Europe – London, Berlin, Vienna and above all, Paris. An example of this is a request from the Ukrainian Central Committee in the Polish Republic to the Foreign Ministry on 3 December 1922, that Mikola Shulgin, brother of the UNR ambassador in Paris, who is described as a political refugee from Ukraine, currently living in Warsaw, be allowed a visa to travel to France.³⁵ The committee appeals to the ministry on political and moral grounds because Shulgin has been offered a place at the University of Aix en Provence, and asks that the Polish Consulate in Berlin be sent instructions to issue him with further papers for his journey. Paris was the centre of emigration for all those whose cause had

³² AAN: MSZ. Gabinet Ministra 6740A, s.155-156.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ AAN: MSZ. Gabinet Ministra 6703D, s. 273.

³⁵ AAN: MSZ. Gabinet Ministra 6703E, s. 209.

failed during the Civil War and the Soviet-Polish War – Russian Whites, Socialist Revolutionaries, Anarchists, and Nationalists.

With the retirement of Pilsudski from public life in Poland in 1923, and the continuing domination of the public sphere by the National Democrats and the other parties hostile to the Ukrainian nationalist cause, Petliura decided to finally leave Poland. He set out for Western Europe, spending a short time in Switzerland and finally settling in Paris. France held the key to the solution of the Ukrainian problem, he believed. If France and the Entente powers could be convinced of the justice of the Ukrainian cause then Poland would act. He constantly held to the belief that an alliance with Poland was vital, although Poland did not share that view at that point. He rejected the overtures of Skoropadskyi and the pro-German Ukrainians that an alliance with Germany was the only possible solution for Ukrainian nationalists. He also rejected the views of Petrushevych and the Galicians that some sort of accommodation with Rakovsky and Soviet Ukraine was necessary. The Bolsheviks remained the major enemy in his eyes.

In Paris, Petliura and the remaining UNR officials worked tirelessly for the achievement of Ukrainian independence. Two major obstacles stood in the way of Petliura's support for the Polish alliance. One was the large number of Ukrainian troops still interned in Poland, and these troops were not finally released until 1924. The other was the continuing unrest and anti-Polish terrorism in East Galicia and the resulting repression by the Polish state. These two factors in the Polish-Ukrainian relationship alienated many Ukrainian nationalists from Petliura. Vynnychenko, Petushevych and Skoropadskyi continued to label Petliura and his entourage in Paris as 'politically blind' and to accuse them of having prostituted themselves to Poland. All of this changed dramatically when in 1926 Petliura was assassinated in Paris by an aggrieved Jew called Schwarzbard. Schwarzbard claimed in his defence that Petliura was a war criminal and had been responsible for the major pogroms in Ukraine in 1919 and 1920. It has never been proven whether Schwarzbard was acting independently, or whether he was the first in a long line of assassins sent by the Cheka, and later the NKVD, to dispose of those considered enemies of the Soviet government.

The death of Petliura effectively spelled the end of the UNR government-in-exile and the pro-Polish orientation of Ukrainian nationalism. Even the return of Pilsudski in 1926 as Polish Head of State did not alter the situation. The era of Polish-Ukrainian co-

operation was over. Increasingly throughout the late 1920's most Ukrainian nationalists would look towards Germany as their source of support, and the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism would move away from the social democracy of the UNR towards the new hope of fascism.

CHAPTER 12

UKRAINIAN PRISONERS IN THE POLISH INTERNMENT CAMPS, 1920–1924

The ending of the Polish-Soviet War in late 1920 and the negotiations at Riga left one major problem unresolved, that of the Ukrainian troops interned in Poland. These troops of the Ukrainian People's Republic were, in late 1920, the forces of an ally of the Polish Republic. This altered when the preliminary peace agreement did not recognise the legitimacy of the UNR government, and was finally sealed by the treaty signed at Riga in March 1921. These troops were not alone; also interned were the Russian anti-Soviet forces of Boris Savinkov, led by General Bulak-Balakhovich; Cossack forces led by General Yakovlev, and Belorussian troops. These prisoners numbered about 40,000 in total in October 1920. The Ukrainians were by far the largest group numbering about 30,000.¹ What was to be done with these prisoners and how did the Soviet government regard them?

For the Soviet delegation at Riga, the role of the large number of Ukrainian and other anti-Soviet internees in Poland was very important. The possibility that these forces might be mobilised again by the Poles, or possibly be allowed to act independently, was a major concern. This was the reason for Article II of the preliminary peace agreement, which expressly committed each party not to support military actions by either side against the other. The High Command of the Polish Army offered these prisoners a choice in October 1920. They could either continue their military struggle against Soviet Russia without Polish support, or they could be interned in Poland. General Bulak-Balakhovich decided to move towards Mozyrz and then on to Belorussia, where he hoped to start an anti-Bolshevik uprising. The Ukrainians and the Cossacks decided to attack Braslav and then the Cossacks wanted to join up with Wrangel in Crimea.² The Polish Sejm insisted that 2 November 1920, be the deadline for all non-Polish units to leave Polish territory. If they returned to Poland they would be disarmed and interned. There followed a short and disastrous military campaign. The result was that on November 21 1920, the returning Ukrainian, Cossack and Russian troops were interned. Many of the Ukrainians were to remain in Polish camps until 1924.

¹ Zbigniew Karpus, *Wschodni Sojusznicy Polski w Wojnie 1920 Roku*. (Toruń: Michael Copernicus University, 1999), p.216.

² Ibid.

Several major questions arose in late 1920. What was the relationship between the prisoners and the UNR government-in-exile in Tarnów? How did the Polish authorities regard the interned Ukrainians? Finally, what were conditions like for Ukrainian prisoners in Poland after 1920?

The General Commander of the Ukrainian forces, General Omelanovich-Pavlenko, began to explore the possibility of the eventual evacuation of his army to France, and with this in view approached General Niessel (the French military representative) in Warsaw. The idea was never realised however, because the French government was not interested in the economic and political problems involved in assisting the internees in Poland, and it refused to help.³

At the beginning of December 1920 the Ministry of War issued instructions on the treatment of the internees from Poland's former allies. The instructions were covered in 23 paragraphs.⁴ The interpretation of paragraph 5 was that the administration of the camps in Poland would be the responsibility of the nationalities held in the camps. The Ukrainian and White Russian officers and officials would be strictly segregated from the Red Army prisoners. In the area of every camp, according to Paragraph 7, there would be internal autonomy organised along military lines, i.e. according to platoons, companies, battalions and regiments. For the internal discipline and maintenance of order in each camp, the three highest ranks of officers would act as the intermediaries with the Polish authorities.⁵ Paragraph 13 of the instructions stated that in order to assist with the maintenance of order in the camps, each internal camp administration would be expected to organise athletic and sporting events, elementary education, other courses of instruction, libraries, drama groups, carpentry shops, tailoring etc. Apart from keeping the internees occupied, these courses were obviously intended to provide some form of training for the time when the prisoners would eventually be liberated. Movement within the camps was fairly uncontrolled and officers were allowed to travel outside the camps within a 7-kilometre radius, with the permission of the Polish camp commander. Short holidays or periods of leave beyond the area of the camps were at the discretion of the District General Headquarters (*Dowództwo Okręgu Generalnego*).⁶ All of this suggests that as former allies the

³ Zbigniew Karpus, *Jeńcy i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińscy na terenie Polski w latach 1918-1924*. (Toruń: Michael Copernicus Press, 1997), p. 136.

⁴ AAN: Praesidium Rada Ministrów, 17021/1921. The instructions were issued on December 2, 1920 and applied to both Ukrainian and anti-Soviet Russian internees.

⁵ AAN: MSW. MS Wojsk, Vol 17, Instructions of 2 XII 1920, p. 1.

⁶ Karpus, *Jeńcy i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińscy na terenie Polski w latach 1918-1924*, p. 137.

Ukrainians were allowed some leeway by the Polish military authorities, both in terms of camp administration and freedom of movement within Poland. This may have been due to Piłsudski's influence within the Polish military and his sense of guilt at having abandoned the Ukrainian nationalist cause. On the other hand, it may simply have been that in the eyes of the Polish authorities, the Ukrainians did not constitute a military or political threat - unlike the Bolshevik prisoners.

Polish sources state that it is extremely difficult to estimate exactly how many Ukrainian and other anti-Soviet prisoners were held in Poland from 1920 to 1924. Estimates were based on information given by Polish military units guarding the frontier. These sources claimed that in December 1920, approximately 20,000 Ukrainian troops crossed the frontier into Poland.⁷ It was difficult for Polish officers to differentiate between Ukrainian UNR troops, who had been fighting with the Poles, and deserters from the Soviet army, as well as Ukrainians returning to East Galicia.

However, in February 1921 the Polish authorities were able to estimate that there were in total 30,000 internees in Poland, consisting of 7,000 officers and 23,000 other ranks. Of these approximately 15,500 were Ukrainians, that is more than 50% of the total. The others were Belorussians, Cossacks, and anti-Soviet Russian troops. The Polish frontier troops found it hard to estimate how many Ukrainian civilians linked to the UNR army and government were in Polish territory.⁸

With the aim of breaking up some of the larger camps and lessening the risk of epidemics such as typhus, among the prisoners (many of the Ukrainian troops were already suffering from the disease at the end of the war) the Polish authorities decided to open new camps in early 1921, and to transport the non-Bolshevik prisoners there. These new camps were based in Sosnow, Radom, Piotrkow, Częstochowa, Zdunski Wol, Plock, Ostrowie Lomzyński, Toruń, Łuków and Rożan. Each of these camps held approximately 1,000-3,000 internees.⁹ The Ukrainian prisoners were concentrated in Wadowice, Łańcut, Kalisz, Aleksandrów, and Częstochowa (where most of the Ukrainian civilians were interned).

To follow the history of the interned Ukrainians in the various camps there follows a table outlining the numbers of prisoners in each camp from December 22 1920 to October 12 1921.¹⁰

⁷ AAN: Protokoli Rada Ministrow, 3 December 1920, Card 414.

⁸ Karpus, *Jeńcy i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińcy na terenie Polski w latach 1918-1924*, p.138.

⁹ Ibid, p.138.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.140.

Strzalkow (The first prisoners were brought there in May 1921)

30/5/1921	23/8/1921	6/9/1921	13/9/1921	12/10/1921
845	2051	2454	2458	2678

Wadowice (the camp was closed in October 1921)

22/12/1920	18/1/1921	4/2/1921	5/3/1921	30/5/1921
3144	2159	2112	2777	3856
23/8/1921	13/9/1921	6/10/1921	12/10/1921	
2751	1208	1005	37	

Łańcut (the camp was closed in August 1921)

22/12/1920	22/1/1921	4/2/1921	5/3/1921
1789	1982	2133	2243
30/5/1921			
2614			

Kalisz

22/12/1920	13/1/1921	18/1/1921	4/2/1921
1854	2052	3289	3922
5/3/1921	30/5/1921	6/9/1921	12/10/1921
3889	4395	3518	3296

Częstochowa (the camp where Ukrainian civilians were held). No figures until 12/10/1921 when there are 240 internees listed.

In all of these camps only Ukrainian prisoners were held, the exception was Strzalkow where some Belorussian prisoners were present.¹¹

So the total number of troops from the army of the Ukrainian People's Republic interned in Poland, from February 1921 to October 1921 were as below:¹²

4/2/1921	30/5/1921	23/8/1921	19/9/1921	12/10/1921
15258	15005	11194	8928	7874

¹¹ Ibid.
¹² Ibid, p.142.

If a comparison is made with the number of anti-Soviet Russian and Cossack prisoners held, the Ukrainians outnumber both the others. The number of Russian anti-Soviet prisoners held in Poland in February 1921 and October 1921 was 14,450 and 5,028 respectively.¹³

The unexpected arrival in Poland of large numbers of prisoners (not excluding Red Army prisoners) constituted a significant problem for the Polish authorities. The infrastructure to accommodate such numbers did not exist and in late 1920 the Polish military authorities had to improvise with what was available. An example of this was the camp at Aleksandrów Kujawski where, surrounding the core of a derelict barracks, an internment camp was quickly erected. The Polish authorities were taken by surprise and this led to Ukrainian prisoners being held at the local station in wagons for several days, while the work was being carried out. The camp was finally completed with the assistance of the Ukrainians.¹⁴ This and other examples give some idea of the ad hoc nature of the Polish preparations to construct the internment camps. Also, as many Polish historians have pointed out, Poland - after suffering almost seven years of war and occupation - was in no state either economically or administratively to support large numbers of internees. Such an eventuality had not been included in Pilsudski's plans for the Soviet-Polish War. For both the government in Warsaw and the Soviet government in Kharkov, the presence of thousands of Ukrainian prisoners on Polish territory was not welcome.

An interesting comparison here is with the situation of Ukrainian prisoners in Czechoslovakia. After the war against the Poles in East Galicia in 1919, several thousand Ukrainian nationalist troops had crossed the Czech frontier and been interned. Although the numbers were far less than in Poland, there were certain similarities in their situation. The Czech government had been well disposed towards the East Galicians and had a frosty relationship with Poland; consequently the internees in Czechoslovakia were not regarded as enemies but as neutrals. This can be compared with the position of the Ukrainian internees in Poland, who also were not regarded as enemy prisoners (unlike the Bolshevik prisoners) but as former allies. The major camp for interned Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia was Josefov. In 1923 the International Committee of the Red Cross received a request from Father Bonne, a member of the Ukrainian Emigrant Committee in Prague, to investigate the situation of Ukrainian prisoners in Czechoslovakia. As a result representatives of the International Committee

¹³ Ibid, p.142.

¹⁴ Ibid.

of the Red Cross visited Josefov. They reported that there were 1,200 prisoners in the camp and that most had been there since 1919 or 1920. They observed that theatres, libraries and other facilities were provided and that there was electricity in the camp. They also visited courses provided for the internees by Ukrainian professors. The Red Cross representatives estimated that there were circa 3,700 Ukrainian internees in Czechoslovakia. They were told by the Czech Foreign Ministry that it assisted many internees to return to East Galicia, when it could. According to the Red Cross representatives, the sanitation system in the camp was satisfactory and the conditions were reasonable.¹⁵

Victor Gloor, the leader of the Red Cross delegation, who visited Josefov in August 1925, learned that the Czech government was intent on closing the camp in October of that year. To facilitate the exodus of Ukrainian internees from Czechoslovakia, the government was offering each one a sum of 50 Swiss Francs to return to Poland. Gloor was told that any Ukrainians returning to Poland from Czechoslovakia without documentation would be arrested and imprisoned for 5 or 6 days and then allowed to return to their villages in East Galicia.¹⁶ Gloor asked the International Committee of the Red Cross to place pressure on Poland to accept Ukrainian internees from Czechoslovakia, so that the camps there could be closed. The Czech authorities in Josefov told him that of the prisoners there, 124 wished to return to Poland, 132 to Soviet Ukraine, 29 to remain in Czechoslovakia and only 4 wished to go to the USA.¹⁷ As to the fate of the other Ukrainians who had been in the camp there is no information, but obviously by August 1925 most had already left Czechoslovakia. Clearly many Ukrainian prisoners in Czech camps wished to return to Soviet Ukraine but the situation in Poland was very different, where most Ukrainian internees had been involved in fighting against Soviet Ukraine.

Another aspect to this contrast with the situation in Czechoslovakia is referred to by Palij, when he draws attention to the role of the Ukrainian Free University in Prague. The news of the establishment of this and of the general educational opportunities available to Ukrainians had a large impact in the Polish internment camps. Many younger internees escaped to Czechoslovakia and many entered schools. Palij claims that this resulted in a diminution of overcrowding in the camps and life became better

¹⁵ British Red Cross Archive, London '(hereafter BRCA)': *International Review of the Red Cross*. Vol 55. (1924), pp. 993-995.

¹⁶ BRCA: *International Review of the Red Cross*. Vol 56. (1925), pp. 808-813.

¹⁷ Ibid.

for those remaining.¹⁸ This would explain some of the large fall in numbers of the internees.

There were two major occasions when Red Cross delegations were called upon to intervene in Poland, and both arose out of unusual circumstances. The first was in November 1920, just at the conclusion of the Soviet-Polish War. This delegation was led by Lucien Brunel and was a result of concerns in Geneva about the typhus epidemic, which was raging throughout Poland and Ukraine. The Polish Red Cross sent a request to the International Committee for assistance and Brunel was dispatched to Poland. Brunel was the Secretary of the Missions Service of the International Committee.¹⁹ Brunel reported that the internment camps in Poland held various categories of prisoners – Bolsheviks, Ukrainians, Russian refugees, and Jews. In the course of his investigation of the typhus epidemic he visited several camps and described conditions there:

La nourriture, qui est celle des soldats polonais, serait suffisant si la quantité fournie par la Gouvernement polonais était distribuée régulièrement. Le sucre, la graisse et la farine font défaut (...) Le nombre des malade s'accroît tous les jours, et l'hôpital qui ne contient que 1,300 places ne suffit pas à recevoir tous les malades atteints de la dysenterie et du typhus. Un grand nombre d'entre eux sont poitrinaires et les cas de décès augmentent avec la mauvaise saison. Beaucoup de ces malheureux ne passeront pas l'hiver ou resteront invalids.²⁰

Brunel also met with the UNR diplomat Count Tishkewicz, who appealed to him to help Ukrainian refugee children.²¹ Although Brunel did not report specifically on the situation for Ukrainian internees in Poland but on internees in general, his report draws a stark picture of illness and deprivation in the camps. It is undoubtedly true that, in the chaos resulting from war and political upheaval in Eastern Europe, Poland was overrun with refugees and was not in a position economically to provide the necessary assistance. Also, the outbreaks of typhus and dysentery were on a massive scale and difficult for the Polish authorities to deal with.²²

¹⁸ Palij, *The Ukrainian-Polish Defensive Alliance*, p.175.

¹⁹ BRCA: *International Review of the Red Cross*. Vol 51 (1920), pp. 431-721.

²⁰ Ibid, p.1308 "The food, which is provided by the Polish soldiers, would be enough if the Polish government distributed it regularly. Sugar, lard and flour were in short supply ... The number of the ill is increasing every day and the 1,300 hospital places are not enough to deal with all the sick resulting from typhus and dysentery. Most of them have chest infections and the number of deaths is increasing because of the season. Many of these wretched people will not make it through the winter or will become invalids."

²¹ Ibid, p.1309.

²² Ibid, pp.431-721.

In 1922 the section of the Polish Red Cross dealing with prisoners of war ceased to function, and its activities were transferred to a repatriation section based in Moscow. The information section continued collecting data on military and civilian prisoners in Poland but the reduction in personnel constrained the activities of the Polish Red Cross in this section.²³ Most of the Polish Red Cross's work on prisoners seemed to be concerned with Polish prisoners of war in Russia. This, of course, left the needs of the Ukrainian internees in Poland unmet. The Ukrainian Red Cross does not seem to have been concerned about their welfare and concentrated mainly on the famine in Soviet Ukraine. Thus they fell between various stools and were dependant on various Ukrainian émigré organisations to raise their concerns. The chief one was of course the diplomatic corps of the UNR government in Poland, and later in France.

The second occasion on which the International Committee of the Red Cross intervened in Poland was in the summer of 1924. This was a more serious situation and resulted from an article, which had appeared in the French newspaper *L'ère Nouvelle* in June 1924, signed by some French politicians and accusing the Poles of ill-treating political detainees, including Ukrainians. The Polish Red Cross responded by contacting the International Committee and suggesting that a delegation came to visit prisons in Poland. The International Committee of the Red Cross delegation visited 20 prisons in Poland, containing 10,000 political detainees.²⁴ By far the largest group of political prisoners were Ukrainians but these were probably those who had been active in anti-Polish agitation in East Galicia. The delegation did not visit the internment camps, and restricted its visits to the prisons. This was likely due to the fact that the internees were classified as POW's or refugees rather than as political prisoners. Thus one can see that the Red Cross only responded to what was regarded as an international health crisis in 1920, and to a specific request from the Polish Red Cross in 1924 concerning political prisoners. Other than this the Red Cross did not unduly concern itself about the thousands of Ukrainians held in Polish camps for more than four years.

While the outside world was oblivious or unconcerned about their fate, the Ukrainian internees continued to organise their life in the camps. In both the camps at Kalisz and Strzalków cultural departments were organised, and in Strzalków there were even activities supervised by the Ukrainian University in Lancut. There were numerous publications and in the camp at Aleksandrow Kujawski a newspaper *Nowe Żyttia* was

²³ BRCA: *International Review of the Red Cross*. Vol 54 (1923), p. 1227.

²⁴ Andre Durand, *History of the International Committee of the Red Cross. From Sarajevo to Hiroshima* (Geneva, 1984), p.132.

published.²⁵ Many cultural and other activities in the camps were co-ordinated by the Orthodox clergy.²⁶

The presence of so many anti-Soviet internees in Poland was an embarrassment for the Bolshevik regime, and shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Riga the first offer of amnesty was made. On 20 March 1922 a Soviet delegation entitled 'The Russian Delegation for Repatriation' arrived in Strzalków offering an amnesty for those who would return to Soviet Russia or Soviet Ukraine. According to the liaison officers from the Polish Foreign Ministry, who were present, the Ukrainians responded by singing "Ukraine will never die!" and by shouting, "Long live independent Ukraine and Ataman Petliura!" The Soviet delegation then left.²⁷ As a result of the amnesty offer 721 men from the Russian forces of General Balakhovich agreed to return to Soviet Russia but only 30 Ukrainians, and on March 28 they were evacuated to Soviet Russia. This response to the Soviet amnesty was in marked contrast to the response of the Ukrainian prisoners in Czechoslovakia, where almost 50% wanted to return to Soviet Ukraine.

In the following weeks the 'Russian Delegation for Repatriation' visited other internment camps, one was Tuchol where many anti-Soviet Russian and Cossack troops were held. In Tuchol, 458 men agreed to return to Soviet Russia.²⁸ By May 1922 only 863 internees in Poland agreed to return to Soviet territory, of these almost none were Ukrainians.

A decree passed by the Council of Ministers of the Polish Republic on 29 September 1921, declared that the camps for internees would come under the control of the Foreign Ministry, which would also co-ordinate the Polish delegation on the Multilateral Commission for Repatriation, which had its seat in Warsaw. The decree also stated that the Foreign Ministry and the Interior Ministry were to enter into negotiations for the eventual transfer of competence for the camps to the Interior Ministry. The deadline laid down for the transfer was May 1 1922. After that date all affairs pertaining to internees within Poland would come under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry.²⁹

Karpus comments on the situation in the internment camps in the summer and autumn of 1922:

²⁵ Karpus, *Jęńcy i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińcy na terenie Polski w latach 1918-1924*, p.156.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 157. The Polish Foreign Ministry liaison officers made their report on March 28 1922 and the reports are in the Central Army Archive in Warsaw. Camp No 1 for prisoners and internees in Strzalków. Vol 1.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ AAN: Praesidium Rada Ministrow, Vol 61-86/1922.

The living conditions in the camps were very difficult. The transfer of responsibility for the camps to the Interior Ministry (MSW) did not improve the situation for the internees. There appeared to be difficulties in supplying food and there was also a shortage of fuel, and the employment opportunities for the majority of internees were still very limited. Serious reservations led them to address the camp administration, which more than once committed abuses. The assumption of responsibility for the camps by the Interior Ministry led to an attitude ending the rule of the previous regime, and for that reason the internees were referred to numerous committees, which began to examine the situation in each camp. The inspection of the camp at Tuchol in mid-May and June 1922 confirmed accusations about maladministration of the camp because, for example, wood for fuel had been brought to Tuchol all the way from the county of Wolyn (Sarn), while at the same time close to the camp there were 7 state forests.³⁰

Although no Ukrainians were held in Tuchol but anti-Soviet Russians, the situation at Tuchol was probably not unrepresentative of the administration of the camps. Karpus does not suggest that inmates were ill treated but rather that there was corruption and waste, which led to life being more difficult in the camps than it need have been. It would appear that reforms in camp administration put in place by the Interior Ministry were slow to take effect and only as a result of regular inspections did the situation improve.

There were also indications that Ukrainians in exile in Czechoslovakia were taking an active interest in the situation of the internees, and this caused some concern to the Poles. One of these was General Shapoval and a report on his activities was sent from Tarnów, the seat of the Ukrainian government-in-exile on 24 October 1922 to Warsaw. Shapoval had had talks with the Czech government in Prague about the situation of the Ukrainian internees in Poland. In a conversation with the Director of the Political Department, he had underlined the fact that: "It is necessary soon at all cost to close the camps for internees. The camps are a reason for large-scale demoralisation both among the officers and men. The time is due for this demoralisation to be ended. The Supreme Ataman (Petliura) should abandon the Poles. The government (the UNR

³⁰ Karpus, *Jency i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińscy na terenie Polski w latach 1918-1924*, p.158.

government) should demand this as a minimum and should move abroad.”³¹ Shapoval was of the opinion that Ukrainian emigrants in Poland could be as helpful to Poland as they had been useful in Czechoslovakia.³² It is clear from this report that the Polish authorities were concerned about any possible Czech involvement with the fate of the internees or with the UNR authorities in Tarnów. Indeed the following report from Tarnow (No 86) was entitled ‘New Czech Intrigues in Tarnów’ and is dated 26 October 1922.³³ This report was concerned mainly with political developments within the structures of the UNR regime but continued also to deal with the visit of General Shapoval. The detail is quite limited and refers only to Shapoval’s talks with the UNR Prime Minister, Levitskyi on the ‘rescue of the camps’.³⁴ Petliura’s government found itself in a delicate position, for it could hardly pressurise the Poles too much on the issue of the internees, when its own standing in Poland was so precarious. There is no evidence that Shapoval’s efforts came to anything and the Poles were intensely suspicious of any involvement by the Czechs in Ukrainian affairs.

In the interim all was not calm in the camps themselves. While Russian and Cossack internees continued avail of themselves of amnesties and return to Soviet Russia, most Ukrainians did not. By June 1922 2000 internees had taken advantage of the amnesty and left Poland.³⁵ The Ukrainians however, were demanding the right to work in Poland or to be allowed to emigrate to Western Europe, particularly France.³⁶ Without cooperation from France this was impossible but there were clear signs of unrest. With the return of more Russian internees to Soviet Russia the Poles began to close camps, and to transfer the remaining Russian internees to camps, which had previously been only for Ukrainians. An example of this was Tuchol, where in late 1922 internees were transferred to Strzalków.³⁷ The pace of return to Soviet Russia by the non-Ukrainians increased rapidly and in January 1923 another 1000 internees left. The following table illustrates the situation from July 1922 until the final liquidation of all internment camps in August 1924. It is divided into two sections – Ukrainians held mainly in Strzalków; and those working outside the camps, who were both Russians and Ukrainians (no figures for Ukrainians alone exist).

³¹ Taras Hunczak, *Ukraine and Poland in documents. 1918-1922. Part II.* (New York, 1983), p. 451. Report No. 86. Transcript 8935.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, p.452.

³⁴ Ibid, p.453.

³⁵ Karpus, *Jency i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińscy na terenie Polski w latach 1918-1924*, p.158.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid, p.159.

Strzalkow

1 July 1922	30 October 1922	14 June 1923
2,364	608	700
19 September 1923	30 November 1923	7 August 1924
350 and 1157 ex internees	193 and 700 ex internees	180

The ex-internees were those who were free to leave the camps but because of high unemployment in Poland continued to live in the camps.³⁸

Working outside the camps.

January 1923	19 September 1923
2,300	7,854

Those working outside the camps were still internees but were allowed to take up employment in the surrounding area.³⁹

By late 1922 Strzalków was the major camp for Ukrainian internees. It can be seen immediately that there was a rapid decline in the number of Ukrainians from late 1922 but whether this was due to being offered employment outside the camps, or to being ex internees is not clear. The economic situation in Poland in the early twenties was dire and it was extremely difficult for the internees to eke out a living. An indication of this was the colossal rate of inflation in Poland; resulting in an internee receiving an allowance of 16,500 Polish marks from the State Treasury in June 1921 and in June 1923 the allowance had increased to 526,500 marks to take account of inflation.⁴⁰ It is also probable that the drain on the Polish public purse of maintaining large numbers of internees was a factor in the decision to finally liquidate the camps. Pressure was also increasing from the Ukrainian émigrés in Central and Western Europe to finally resolve the issue of the internees. The internees themselves produced propaganda and many pamphlets and publications emerged from the camps – many are now in the collection of the *Bibliothèque Ukrainienne Semon Petlioura* in Paris. One example was a journal produced in the camp at Strzalków entitled *Lagiernaja Zizn*, published in 1923.⁴¹ Some estimates are that nearly 1000 publications were produced in the camps.

³⁸ Ibid, p.154.

³⁹ Ibid, p.157.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.160.

⁴¹ Ibid.

By 1923 the Interior Ministry was desperate to finally solve the problem of the internment camps. Apart from liquidating some camps, the authorities encouraged internees to register as Romanian, Estonian, or Polish citizens and thus to solve the legal and bureaucratic difficulty of displaced persons. The ministry allowed internees leave to work for the state or for private employers;⁴² they also allowed some internees to work in labour battalions assisting the Polish army.⁴³ In this way the Polish government gradually solved the economic and fiscal problems surrounding the internees. These were only interim measures however, and some permanent solution would need to be found.

A major breakthrough in the problem of the internees emerged in late 1922. From the end of the Soviet-Polish War, many of the interned Ukrainians had hoped to be able to go to France in order to lead a normal life, and in some way contribute to the Ukrainian émigré cause - but the French authorities had not been prepared to agree. Now, finally, the French Embassy in Warsaw indicated to the Russian Committee for the Welfare of Emigrants in Poland that France would be prepared to offer asylum to the internees. In the spring of 1923 registration of those wishing to travel to France began in the internment camps, and 1,500 internees were registered.⁴⁴ Responsibility for the organisation of the programme was given to the Ministry for Employment and Social Welfare, and 20% of the places on the programme were to be allocated to Polish unemployed persons.⁴⁵ Following an agreement between the Interior Ministry and the Ministry for Employment and Social Welfare, 50 internees left for France in December 1923.⁴⁶ It is not clear from the Polish records how many of these internees were Ukrainian but, as most came from the camp at Strzalków, it is likely that many were.

The Polish authorities in late 1923 were determined to solve the issue of the internment camps and decided to liquidate the camp at Strzalków. Consequently in November 1923, all those internees, who were already working outside the camp, were offered free accommodation in the camp's quarters.⁴⁷ In spring 1924 the camp at Strzalków was liquidated and the former inmates were offered the choice of 200,000 Polish marks and their freedom, or transfer to the camp at Kalisz.⁴⁸ Although the Polish

⁴² Ibid, p.161.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ AAN: Protokoli Rada Ministrow. No 84, issued on 9.7. 1923 concerning Russian and Ukrainian military internees in Poland. Vol 68. PAN.

⁴⁵ AAN: Protokoli Rada Ministrow. No 84, issued on 10.7.1923 concerning talks with the Interior Ministry on the liquidation of camps.

⁴⁶ Karpus, *Jency i internowani rosyjscy i ukraińscy na terenie Polski w latach 1918-1924*, p.162.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p.162.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.163.

government wanted to liquidate all internment camps in Poland by the end of 1923, a lack of finances prevented the scheme from being fully implemented until the following year.

On March 30 1924 the Interior Ministry issued Order No. 6, which finally regulated the status of all remaining internees in Poland and sought to close all of the internment camps.⁴⁹ The content of the order was that all remaining persons in Poland who did not possess a passport, had to be registered with the state authorities by 15 August 1924 and to complete forms. Those who did not avail themselves of the Soviet offer of an amnesty would be required to return to Soviet Ukraine or Soviet Russia. The internees who successfully registered with the Polish authorities would be free to travel throughout Poland, but a special permit would be required to travel to the eastern provinces (East Galicia and the territories adjoining Belorussia). The problem was that the cost of registration was high – 12 zloty for an asylum card, and as much as 24 zloty for those who were not in a position to claim one. This meant that the cost was too high for many of the internees.⁵⁰ Obviously in this way the Polish authorities hoped to discourage many of the internees and former internees from remaining in Poland. The result was that many of the former internees were forced to leave Poland, and without passports this was difficult. Consequently many had to return to either Soviet Russia or Soviet Ukraine.⁵¹ Although by this point the numbers of Ukrainian internees in the Polish camps was far less (as can be seen in the table above), it was still a disastrous fate to have to return to a state under the rule of a regime, which they had given their all to oppose. On 31 August 1924 all former internment camps for Russian and Ukrainian anti-Soviet forces in Poland were liquidated. The only former internees excluded from the terms listed above were invalids and the elderly. These were permitted to remain in Poland and came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Employment and Social Welfare.⁵² Thus for the Poles the problem of the interned Ukrainians was finally solved.⁵³

The surprising fact is that more Ukrainian internees did not avail of the offer to go to France. Whether this was due to the French stipulating that only a small number could apply or to a feeling on the part of the Ukrainians that they wanted to remain

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.164.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.165.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Further information about Ukrainian emigration in Poland is available in Z.Karpus, 'Emigracja rosyjska, ukraińska i białoruska w Polsce w okresie międzywojennym (1918-1939). Stan badań i postulaty badawcze', (in) *Regiony pograniczne Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w XVI-XX wieku. Społeczeństwo-gospodarka-polityka*, ed. M.Wojciechowski and R.Schattowski. (Toruń: Michael Copernicus University, 1996).

close to their homeland is not clear. Another interesting aspect is that the Poles, despite having had the forces of the UNR as their allies in the struggle against the Red Army, were unwilling to allow them to settle in Ukrainian areas of the Polish Republic without special permission. This suggests that they remained unsure of their loyalty to the Polish state. The fortunate Ukrainians were those who gained the right to asylum and who remained to work in Poland. Others less fortunate had to return to Soviet Ukraine. It is certainly true, as Polish historians claim that Poland was not in an economic position to provide a good standard of living for its former Ukrainian allies, as conditions in the camps testified. However, to return them to Soviet territory was a dark page in the history of Polish-Ukrainian relations. Pilsudski, the architect of the alliance, kept clear of the situation after his retirement from public life in 1923. The Ukrainian internees were left to their fate, which would be decided by a National Democrat dominated government, intent on good relations with Soviet Ukraine, and for whom the internees were an embarrassing reminder of a failed policy.

CONCLUSION

Prior to November 1918 Germany was the major player in Ukraine, although it had only been so for the preceding six months. However, following its defeat in the West its influence in Ukraine rapidly waned. Consequently, most histories of German-Ukrainian relations are confined to the years of the First World War, and particularly the period following the first Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and take up the story again with the German invasion of Ukraine in 1941. Some studies have followed the relationship between Nazi Germany and the Ukrainian nationalists in the years following the establishment of the Third Reich; but there has been a dearth of studies examining the relationship between Ukrainian nationalists and the Weimar Republic, particularly in the early years.

I have attempted to demonstrate that German economic and political interest in Ukraine did not disappear following its defeat in November 1918; it simply took a different form. German industrialists and entrepreneurs, many of whose former markets were no longer accessible to them, continued to covet the rich resources of Ukraine, and saw the Ukrainian market as an important one, for a country recovering from defeat. Similar names appear in the records of economic negotiations, as appeared in the records of Imperial Germany, for example – Stinnes and Thyssen. The economic importance of Ukraine in the years following World War I should not be underestimated. It must be borne in mind, however, that despite losing territory to Poland under the terms of the Versailles Treaty, Germany in 1919 was far more of a Central European country than it is today, and far more of its economic interests lay in the east. For the shipping interests of Königsberg the route to the iron ore deposits of Ukraine was vital, as many of the shipping business there consisted of iron ore being exported through the port to the Rhine and the Elbe via the Kiel canal, and thus reaching Germany's industrial centres in the Ruhr and further east.

There was a strong element of opportunism in Germany's economic policy towards Ukraine in these years, and German economic interests (including the Economics Ministry) were prepared to deal with whichever regime held power in Kiev or Kharkov, whether that was Nationalist, White Russian, or Bolshevik. At various times during the Civil War, overtures were made by Germany to whoever held power, in order to further German economic aims. This was understandable, as it was often unclear which regime would eventually gain the upper hand in Ukraine. For German

big business the essential requisites in Ukraine were the maintenance of order; and the political stability necessary for investment, and the expropriation of raw materials, such as iron ore. The only period when the nationalists appeared to have firm control of Ukraine was in the early months of 1920, during the Soviet-Polish War (and that was only Right Bank Ukraine). German business regarded Poland as an economic competitor in Ukraine. The evidence demonstrates that both Poland and Germany were extremely concerned about the other becoming the dominant economic player in Ukraine. For German business, the prospects offered by a Soviet government in Kharkov were promising, especially when viewed within the broader framework of the developing economic contacts between Berlin and Moscow.

For Poland, of course, the reverse was the case and, especially after the signing of the Warsaw Agreement with Petliura, the prospect of a nationalist government in Kiev, beholden to Poland, offered the biggest economic prize. For Poland there was the added dimension of the Polish landowners west of the Dnepr, and this was a central part of the agreement made with Petliura, as has been demonstrated by Ukrainian historians. A Soviet government in Ukraine would mean the end of the agricultural wealth of the Polish landowners there. There was a real perception by Germany, that a Ukraine dominated by Poland would be part of the Franco-Polish economic block.

On the political front, German policy was more sympathetic to the Ukrainians. Although Germany disengaged directly in November 1918, German troops remained in Ukrainian territory until March 1919. Clearly these troops were there as part of the Entente policy on Ukraine and Russia.

Although German forces in Ukraine following the fall of the Hetmanate did not indicate any clear hostility to the nationalists, and indeed often made agreements with them (usually about troop withdrawals), they sympathised more openly with the Bolshevik forces in Ukraine. In contrast to the situation in the Baltic, where the *Freikorps* divisions were actively anti-Bolshevik and counter-revolutionary, German troops in Ukraine were less inclined to fight. This must be viewed however, in the light of the revolutionary situation in Germany itself during the early months of 1919. I have also uncovered some evidence, albeit from German diplomatic sources in Kiev, that there were German communists, probably former prisoners of war, who were co-operating with the Bolsheviks in Ukraine. Unfortunately, I did not uncover any further

information on this but it is an intriguing footnote to the revolutionary situation in Ukraine in late 1918.

After the disastrous French-led campaign of early 1919, the German military indicated no further desire to become embroiled in the affairs of Ukraine. In fact, the events in Ukraine from the fall of the Hetmanate to the evacuation of Odessa seemed to have cured the German military command from having any further *Drang nach Osten*, certainly regarding Ukraine. They had too many problems in the Baltic, and in the disputed frontier areas with Poland, to have any desire for further complications. Furthermore, Germany was a defeated power and following the Versailles Treaty, the *Reichswehr* was only a shadow of its former self. As an aspect of German military history and particularly as an examination of Germany's military role in Eastern Europe, my study of the role of the German army in Ukraine in late 1918 and early 1919, demonstrates the contrast with the German army's role in the Baltic. The situations in both theatres of conflict could not have differed more. Even the presence of a German minority in Ukraine had no effect on the German army's reluctance to engage the Red Army or the nationalists.

This was also the policy of the German government and of the Foreign Ministry, who feared being caught between the twin poles of the Bolsheviks and the Entente. There is no evidence of German involvement in East Galicia, despite Polish claims to the contrary, and although Berlin would have welcomed a setback for Poland there, it was unable and unwilling to intervene. Undoubtedly the German press, including the Social Democrat organ *Vorwärts*, railed against 'Polish Imperialism' in both East Galicia and Ukraine proper but the German government did not intervene in the Polish-Galician conflict, or in the Soviet-Polish War. There cannot be any doubt that Berlin would have welcomed a Polish defeat in both struggles.

There was also the small group of Germans led by Rohrbach who sympathised with the aims of Ukrainian nationalism, and regarded an independent Ukraine as a means of permanently weakening Russia, and also of limiting Polish power in the East. For them a Ukraine linked to Germany provided the essential counterbalance to Polish power in Eastern Europe, and would also protect Germany's eastern frontiers from hostile actions by Russia or Poland. These ideas were not supported by the mainly Social Democrat governments of the early Weimar Republic. They were, however, taken seriously by some on the German Right, and would eventually be taken up by

ideologues of the German nationalist right, such as Rosenberg. His ideas provided an ideological underpin for German cultural and economic imperialism in Eastern Europe. Rohrbach's and Rosenberg's common Baltic German ancestry played a large part in their suspicion of Russia and their support for German expansion in the east. Indeed, both ideologues looked towards the establishment of a ring of pro-German states in Eastern Europe, which would have the effect of limiting both Polish and Russian ambitions in the region, while providing Germany with military allies and sources of trade and raw materials. This was Rohrbach's 'Orange' theory – that the constituent parts of the former Russian empire could be separated into component parts, similar to dividing up an orange.

Rohrbach's writings and activities in support of Ukrainian independence have usually been studied in the period of the *Kaiserreich* but I am demonstrating that he continued his campaigns for Ukrainian independence and German-Ukrainian understanding into the Weimar period, and although he did not succeed in influencing government policy, I am demonstrating a continuity in his theories, which took the form of the establishment of societies for German-Ukrainian friendship, journals etc, which would keep the flame of German-Ukrainian relations alive during the colder period of the early Weimar Republic.

For Poland the relationship with the Ukrainians was complicated by the East Galician issue. No Polish government or politician, with the exception of the Ukrainian members of the Polish *Sejm* from East Galicia, was prepared to countenance any separation of East Galicia from the Polish Republic. This was the *sine qua non* of Polish relations with the Ukrainians. The military conflict in East Galicia in 1919 poisoned relations between the Directory and Warsaw, and led to a lack of support by Poland for the aims of Ukrainian nationalism until 1920. German support for the independence of East Galicia was a useful propaganda weapon for the Poles to use against the Ukrainians, and was a factor in securing Entente support for the Polish occupation and subjugation of the region. Portraying the East Galicians as the agents of Germany and the Bolsheviks, in the febrile atmosphere of 1919, was a masterstroke on the part of the Poles. I have attempted to discover examples of German connivance and assistance with East Galicians in the German archives, but have found no evidence of it and it seems clear that it was simply a propaganda weapon

This is contrary to the views of many current Polish historians, who argue that Poland was always sympathetic to Ukrainian nationalism from the fall of the Hetmanate onwards. These include Zbigniew Karpus and Waldemar Rezmer from Toruń, Michał Klimecki from Warsaw, Barbara Stoczewska from Krakow and Jerzy Kłoczowski from Lublin. These historians have attempted to connect the Polish-Ukrainian relationship of 1919-1920, with that of the period following the establishment of a democratic Poland in 1989, and especially since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the appearance of an independent Ukrainian state.

The historical discourse during the 1990's established a link with the political one, drawing parallels for example, between Poland being the first state to recognise independent Ukraine in 1991 and the Warsaw Agreement of 1920. Links were made between the "strategic partnerships" with Ukraine (first declared in 1992 and officially established in 1996). The argument about the purpose of these partnerships as not being anti-Russian but rather an attempt to counterbalance Moscow's enormous influence on Kiev was mirrored in the historical discourse and in a range of conferences held between Ukrainian and Polish historians. Jerzy Kłoczowski based in the Institute of Central Eastern Europe (*Institut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*) in Lublin argued that these developments were a continuation of Poland's historical friendship and support for Ukraine. He argues this thesis extensively in his recent work *Historia Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* (Lublin, 2000), where he contends that Poland has always tried to offer support and assistance to Ukraine against Russia and that the Pilsudski-Petliura pact was only one prominent example of this tendency.

As late as 2000, some Polish academics were arguing that the Polish and Ukrainian naval fleets were about to offer each other reciprocal rights in the Baltic and Black Seas. The Polish historians regarded this as merely the continuation of a historic trend in foreign and defence policy, which dated from 1919. The archival evidence does not support this contention, and I would go as far as to argue that prior to late 1919, and the first negotiations between Pilsudski and Petliura, Poland did all it could to damage the Ukrainian nationalist cause.

Where true power would have lain in the Ukrainian People's Republic, had it been secured in 1920, is a contentious issue. All the evidence suggests that it would have been a Polish client state and Pilsudski would in the long term probably have pressed for the formation of the Greater Polish Commonwealth or federal state, along

the lines of the 17th century Polish state. Germany totally opposed the alliance between Petliura and Pilsudski, and Petliura's influence in Berlin evaporated after the Warsaw Agreement. Germany would also have probably refused to recognise the Polish-backed state based in Kiev, as all the evidence from 1920 indicates. Only with the defeat of the Pilsudski-Petliura project, and the increasing anti-Polish orientation of the Ukrainian nationalists after 1922, did German relations with them begin to improve again.

From the accounts of German diplomats, especially those stationed in Warsaw and Kharkov, it is clear that German policy towards the nationalists in Ukraine was driven above all by the latter's relationship with Poland. Applying the maxim of 'my enemy's friend is my enemy', Germany's relations with Petliura and his regime waxed and waned in direct proportion to the warming and cooling of Petliura's relations with Pilsudski.

Another indicator of this was the improvement in relations between Berlin and the Soviet Ukrainian government, after the signing of the Warsaw Agreement in 1920. Essentially, the last thing that Berlin or Warsaw wanted was a Ukraine allied to the other. The winner from this competition was of course, Soviet Russia, whose rule over Ukraine was recognised at Riga by Poland, and was also accepted by Germany as a far lesser evil than a Polish ruled Ukraine. The increasing rapprochement between Moscow and Berlin would soon lead to the Treaty of Rapallo.

However, just as Polish historians have argued for a current continuation in the traditional relations between the two states, temporarily blocked by the advent of communism, this theme is also evident in the German-Ukrainian relationship. Here, the role of Rohrbach is central, as the German theoretician and geopolitician, who doggedly supported the claims of Ukrainian independence. It is no coincidence that the website of the Ukrainian Republic's embassy in Berlin, refers to the role of Rohrbach and his establishment of the German-Ukrainian Society in interwar Berlin. Once again, the theme is of a historic friendship interrupted by forty- five years of Soviet rule.

I have argued that there was an attempt by Germany to form a loose alliance with Ukrainian nationalism in the aftermath of World War I. While it is certainly true that Skoropadskyi and the pro-German Ukrainian nationalists in Berlin hoped for this development, it did not occur, as Weimar Germany regarded Ukrainian nationalism as a spent force, and also a movement coming increasingly into the French and Polish orbits. The German Foreign Ministry was opposed to any involvement in the region and

distrusted the overtures being made by Petliura's diplomats to France and Britain, indeed to any possible source of support. Germany was also severely constrained in what it could do in Central and Eastern Europe and regarded Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine as the best hope for increasing its economic and political influence in the region. This tendency was strengthened by the pro-Polish orientation of the UNR regime from late 1919. Because of Entente pressure, Germany could not assume an openly pro-Soviet position during the Soviet-Polish War but it was clear where its sympathies lay.

Following Rapallo, Weimar Germany would increase its economic, political and even military links with Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine, and go on to provide advisors and expertise to the fledgling Soviet state. Both countries would share a detestation of Poland, and a desire to readdress the settlements reached at Riga and Versailles.

I have also addressed the earlier German-Ukrainian relationship during World War I and the recognition of Ukrainian independence by Germany in the Brest Litovsk Treaty of February 1918. This created a positive legacy in German-Ukrainian relations and although it did not bear fruit in the early Weimar period, when Germany was too weak and engaged to play a major part in Ukraine, it did lead on to a reawakening of the German-Ukrainian axis towards the end of the Weimar Republic and the beginning of the Nazi period. The negative legacy of Polish oppression of Ukrainian nationalism in East Galicia and the anti-Ukrainian policies of the pre-1926 National Democrat dominated governments in Poland also had an impact. Even the *Sanacja* regime of Pilsudski (1926-1936) also continued to fear and to repress Ukrainian nationalism in Poland. This led Ukrainians, particularly from East Galicia, to seek support from Berlin, and as Germany was Poland's main rival in the region, an attempt to forge an alliance would follow.

Polish and Ukrainian historians, and particularly émigré Ukrainian historians in Canada, have attempted to analyse the Polish-Ukrainian relationship during this period. For the majority of Polish historians, the Petliura-Pilsudski pact was a landmark in the relations between the two nations and a missed opportunity for a new balance of power in Eastern Europe. They have usually seen the reasons for its failure in the absence of broad support for Ukrainian nationalism in Ukraine. The Ukrainian historians conversely have also sometimes seen the pact as the beginning of a new era in Polish-

Ukrainian relations, but an opportunity which was squandered by Polish imperialism and chauvinism towards Ukraine, and a profound failure to understand the Ukrainian desire for sovereignty. Rudnytsky held this view and believed that both countries were responsible for what occurred. I have attempted to analyse the various forces in the maelstrom of the period, and concluding that whereas the Ukrainian side was motivated by desperation, which led to subjugation and abasement to Polish aims, the Polish side was motivated by a form of 'manifest historic destiny' and realpolitik. In examining this relationship I have sought to explore the various avenues of interpretation.

Apart from Karpus, I am not aware of the question of the Ukrainian internees in Poland being addressed by historians, and I have gone further by utilising Red Cross reports to examine what the true situation in postwar Poland was for the internees. Although there were no direct reports on the camps, the Red Cross visits to Poland during this period, indicates the type of political atmosphere in which the camps existed. I have also attempted to draw parallels between the conditions for Ukrainian internees in neighbouring Czechoslovakia, and to compare their situation with those in Poland, in order to ascertain the political orientation of Ukrainian internees following the defeat of 1920. I did this by utilising the sources in the Red Cross Society Archive in London. It was a disappointment not to discover reports on the Polish camps there but the reports on the Czech camps are, in my opinion, a serious breakthrough in terms of the study of Ukrainians in internment throughout the region.

I have also demonstrated the extremely complex web of relationships between the various Ukrainian political groups in exile, and their conflicting views on relations with different European states and particularly with Germany and Poland. The Polish-Ukrainian alliance brought this contrast in views to boiling point and I have displayed the depth of division between the Ukrainian émigré groups. I have not addressed the Soviet relationship with the Ukrainian nationalists, except insofar as it affected the nationalist relationship with Poland or Germany. An example of this is the clamour from Soviet Ukraine after the Treaty of Riga for the removal of the Petliuran regime from Polish territory.

One of my principal aims has been to demonstrate that Polish-Ukrainian and German-Ukrainian relations did not operate in a political and economic vacuum, and although they each had their own dynamic, they were also influenced by the diplomatic and economic relationship between the nationalists and the other state. Although the

Ukrainian nationalist relationship with Poland and Germany had its individual contours and dynamics, the links with both countries, are inevitably influenced by the paradigm of Polish-German relations, within which it operated. Although archival evidence was sometimes scanty, I have sought to highlight the details of the Ukrainian nationalist relationship with both Poland and Germany within this framework.

This period in the history of Europe's second largest state, when independence came within its grasp, is a vital one in the formulation of the history of nationalism in Eastern Europe. The policies of the surrounding states, which impacted on the history of Ukraine, need to be examined and I have sought to compare two of the most important of these states, and their role in the Ukrainian struggle for sovereignty. Almost no research has been carried out regarding the relations between early Weimar governments and industry with Ukraine, and this is a contribution to the study of a little known or understood aspect of Central and Eastern European history. Although the archival sources were not as rich as I hoped initially, some interesting light has been shed on aspects of German foreign and economic policy in these years. Whereas the Polish involvement with Ukrainian nationalism during these years has been more extensively studied, the conflict in Petliura's ideas about the Polish alliance, the Ukrainian internees and the discourse over contemporary Polish historiography have not surfaced as themes heretofore.

I believe that this is a significant contribution to the history of Ukraine in the period following the collapse of the great European empires and the attempt by Ukraine to forge its own destiny.

APPENDIX 1

THE TREATY OF RIGA (1921)

1. Both parties declare that the state of war between them shall come to an end.
2. The boundary between Poland, Soviet Russia, Belorussia, and Ukraine is settled, with minor rectification in favour of Poland, as agreed in the Preliminary Peace Treaty.
3. Both Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine abandon all rights and claims to the territories situated west of the agreed border. Similarly, Poland abandons, in favour of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belorussia, all rights and claims to the territory situated east of the border, while the districts that are the subject of dispute between Poland and Lithuania should be settled by them.
4. In view of the fact that part of Poland formerly belonged to Russia, Poland shall not be held to have incurred any debt or obligation toward Soviet Russia, except as provided in the treaty. Similarly no debt or obligation shall be regarded as incurred by Poland towards Belorussia or Ukraine, and vice versa, except as provided in the treaty.
5. Both parties pledge to respect each other's political sovereignty, to abstain from interference in each other's internal affairs, and not to support or create armed detachments with the objective of encouraging armed conflict against the other party so as to undermine its territorial integrity or subvert its political or social institutions.
6. All persons over the age of eighteen, who are within the territory of Poland and, on 1 August 1914, were nationals of Russia shall have the right of opting for Russian or Ukrainian nationality. Similarly, all persons over the age of eighteen who are within the territory of Russia and of Ukraine, including the descendants of persons who took part in the Polish struggle between 1830 and 1865, shall be considered citizens of Poland if they express such a desire. The choice made by the husband shall apply also to his wife and children under the age of eighteen, if the husband and wife have not agreed to the contrary.
7. Russia and Ukraine pledge that persons of Polish nationality in Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia shall enjoy free intellectual development, the use of their national language and the exercise of their religion. Similarly Poland recognises the same rights for persons of Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian nationality in Poland.

8. Both parties abandon all claims to repayment of expenses incurred by the state during the war and to indemnities for damages caused to their nationals by the war or military measures taken during the Polish-Soviet Russian-Ukrainian War

9. The agreement concerning repatriation concluded between Poland, on the one side, and Russia and Ukraine, on the other, shall remain in force as agreed in the Preliminary Peace Treaty.

10. Each party guarantees to the subjects of the other party full amnesty for all acts directed against the government and the security of the state; as well, acts committed in the interests of the other party shall be regarded as political crimes and offences within the meaning of this article.

11. Russia and Ukraine shall restore to Poland all war trophies, libraries, archives, works of art, and other objects of historical, ethnographic, artistic, scholarly, and archaeological value that have been removed from the territory of Poland by Russia since 1772. Similarly, any collections or objects of historical value that have been removed from Russia and Ukraine during the same period shall be restored to Russia and Ukraine.

12. Both parties agree that state property of whatever nature, including properties of all state institutions and possessions belonging to appendages and the Imperial Cabinet and Palaces that are within the geographic territory of both parties, or are to be restored to the parties by virtue of the treaty, shall be their property. Both parties mutually renounce the right to any form of compensation that might involve the partition of state property, subject to any contrary provisions contained in the present treaty.

13. Russia and Ukraine agree to pay Poland within one year after ratification of the present treaty the sum of thirty million gold roubles in specie and in bars, based on the active participation of the territory of Poland in the economic life of the former Russian state.

14. Both Russia and Ukraine shall hand over to Poland 300 locomotives, 260 passenger carriages and 8,100 freight cars. The total value of the rolling stock to be restored to Poland shall be fixed at the sum of 13,149,000 gold roubles. The total value of any railway material other than rolling stock shall be fixed at the sum of 5,096,000 gold roubles.

15. Upon the request of the Polish government, supported by the declarations of the owners, Russia and Ukraine agree that restitution shall be made to Poland for the

purpose of restoring property belonging to self-governing and municipal administrations, institutions, and legal and physical persons that was taken from Poland to Russia and Ukraine from 1 August 1914 to 1 October 1915. A restitution commission, composed of five representatives of each party and necessary experts, shall be created for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this article and shall reside in Moscow.

16. Russia and Ukraine agree to settle with Poland accounts relating to funds or capital bequeathed to physical and legal persons of Polish nationality or to Polish public or private scientific, religious, or charitable institutions or societies, which by virtue of the regulations in force, were deposited on account in the state banks or credit institutions of the former Russian state. The fourteenth of January 1916 is accepted as the fixed date for the settlement of accounts. The action shall be effected by a joint commission for the settlement of accounts.

17. Russia and Ukraine undertake to settle accounts in respect of the deposits and securities of Polish physical and legal persons in Russian and Ukrainian state banks that have been nationalised and in state institutions and savings banks. Russia and Ukraine shall respect the rights of Polish physical and legal persons as they have been recognised. A joint commission on the liquidation of accounts shall be entrusted with the settlement of questions.

18. A joint commission composed of five representatives of each party and the requisite number of experts, with its seat in Warsaw, shall be established to settle accounts provided for in articles 14, 15, 16, and 17 of the present treaty, and to draw up rules governing these settlements and fix the amount, method, and dates of payments. The first of October 1915 shall be the fixed date from which all accounts shall be settled.

19. Russia and Ukraine discharge Poland from all responsibility regarding debts and obligations incurred by the former Russian state, in particular obligations arising out of the issue of paper money, treasury bonds, debentures, and certificates of the Russian treasury.

20. Russia and Ukraine recognise ipso facto and without special convention the claims of Poland and Polish nationals and legal persons to all rights, privileges, and similar benefits with regard to the restitution of property and compensation for damages incurred during the revolution and civil war in Russia and Ukraine.

21. Both parties agree to enter within six weeks from the date of ratification of the treaty into negotiations concerning a commercial convention and a convention regarding the exchange of goods by barter. They also agree to commence negotiations with a view to exchanging consular, postal, telegraphic, railway, health, and veterinary conventions and a convention for the improvement of the conditions of navigation on the waterways of the Dnieper-Wisla and Dnieper-Dvina basins.

22. Both parties agree to permit the forwarding of goods in transit subject to the following conditions:

a. The principle laid down in this article shall serve as a basis for the future convention on transit.

b. Both parties agree to the free transit of goods by railways and waterways.

c. Both parties agree that goods transported to or from Russia and Ukraine through Poland and vice versa shall be exempt from customs or transit duties of any kind.

d. The transport of goods intended for armaments or for military equipment, and of all military stores shall be prohibited.

e. Goods from another state that are in transit through the territory of one of the parties shall not be subjected to a different or higher rate of duty than would be levied on similar goods if they were sent directly from their country of origin.

23. Russia and Ukraine declare that all undertakings entered into by them with regard to Poland, and all rights acquired by them by virtue of the treaty, shall apply to all territory situated east of the frontier of the state specified in article 2 of the treaty, which formed part of the former Russian state and was represented by Russia and Ukraine when this treaty was concluded. All above-mentioned rights shall also apply to Belorussia and its citizens.

24. After ratification of the treaty, diplomatic relations between the contracting parties shall be resumed.

25. The treaty shall be drawn up in Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian in three original copies. All three texts shall be considered authoritative for purposes of interpreting the treaty.

The treaty shall be ratified and shall come into force from the time of the exchange of the protocols of ratification unless otherwise provided in the treaty or annexes.

APPENDIX 2

THE WARSAW TREATY (1920)

The preamble of the treaty stated:

“ The Government of the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Government of the Polish Republic, profoundly convinced that each people possesses the natural right to self-determination and to define its relations with neighbouring peoples, and equally desirous of establishing a basis for concordant and friendly co-existence for the welfare and development of both peoples, have agreed as follows;

1. Recognising the right of Ukraine to independent political existence within the northern, eastern, and southern frontiers as they shall be determined by means of separate agreements concluded with the respective border states, the Polish Republic recognises the Directory of the independent Ukrainian People’s Republic, headed by the Supreme Military Commander Simon Petliura, as the Supreme Government of the Ukrainian People’s Republic.

2. The frontier between the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Polish Republic is established as follows: northward from the Dniester river along the Zbruch river and continuing along the former frontier between Austria-Hungary and Russia to Vishedrudka, and proceeding from there in a northerly direction through the Kremianets Hills, and then in an easterly direction from Zdolbunovo and then along the length of the eastern administrative boundary of the district of Rivne and continuing from there along the administrative boundary of the former province of Minsk to the juncture with the Pripet river and terminating at the mouth of that river.

The districts of Rivne, Dubno and part of Kremianets, which are immediately ceded to the Polish Republic, shall be subject to a more concise agreement to be concluded later.

The final delimitation of the border shall be accomplished by a special Ukrainian-Polish commission composed of responsible specialists.

3. The Polish government recognises as Ukrainian the territory east of the frontier, as defined in Article II of this agreement and extending to the 1772 frontiers of Poland prior to the partition and occupied at present by Poland or acquired in the future from Russia by military or diplomatic means.

4. The Polish government obligates itself not to conclude any international agreements directed against Ukraine; the Ukrainian People's Republic obligates itself similarly with respect to the Polish Republic.

5. The same national-cultural rights which the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic ensures citizens of Polish nationality on its territory shall be ensured to citizens of Ukrainian nationality within the frontiers of the Polish Republic and conversely.

6. Special economic and commercial agreements are to be concluded between the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Polish Republic.

The agrarian question in Ukraine shall be resolved by the Constituent Body. In the period preceding its convocation the legal status of landowners of Polish nationality shall be defined by an agreement between the Ukrainian People's Republic and the Polish Republic.

7. A military convention is to be concluded and is to be regarded as an integral part of this agreement.

8. This agreement shall remain secret. It shall not be revealed to a third party or published by it in whole or in part except with the mutual consent of both the high contracting parties. An exception to this is Article I, which shall be made public after the signing of this agreement.

9. This agreement shall enter into force immediately upon being signed by both high contracting parties."

APPENDIX 3
PILSUDSKI'S PROCLAMATION OF APRIL 1920.

To all inhabitants of Ukraine

On my order the forces of the Polish Republic have advanced deep into Ukrainian lands.

I formally declare that the foreign invaders, against whom the Ukrainian people have risen sword in hand to defend their homes from rape, banditry and looting, will be removed by the Polish forces from territories inhabited by the Ukrainian nation.

The Polish forces will remain in Ukraine for such time as may be necessary to enable a legitimate Ukrainian government to take control.

From the moment that a national government of the Ukrainian Republic has established its state authority and has manned the borders with forces capable of protecting the country against a new invasion, and the free nation is strong enough to settle its own fortunes, the Polish soldier will return to the Polish Republic, having fulfilled his honourable task in the struggle for the freedom of nations.

Advancing with the Polish forces are the fighting sons of Ukraine who under the leadership of Ataman Semeon Petliura have found help and shelter in Poland in the most difficult days for the Ukrainian people.

I believe that the Ukrainian nation will strain every nerve to obtain, with the help of the Polish Republic, its own freedom and secure to the fertile lands of its mother country happiness and prosperity, after a return to work and peace.

The forces of the Polish Republic assure care and protection to all inhabitants of Ukraine without distinction of class, race or creed.

I appeal to the Ukrainian nation and to all inhabitants of these lands, patiently bearing the privations of war, to assist the Polish Army in its bloody struggle for their life and freedom with all means at their disposal.

Jozef Pilsudski
Commander-in-Chief, Polish Forces
26 April 1920.
Army Headquarters

APPENDIX 4

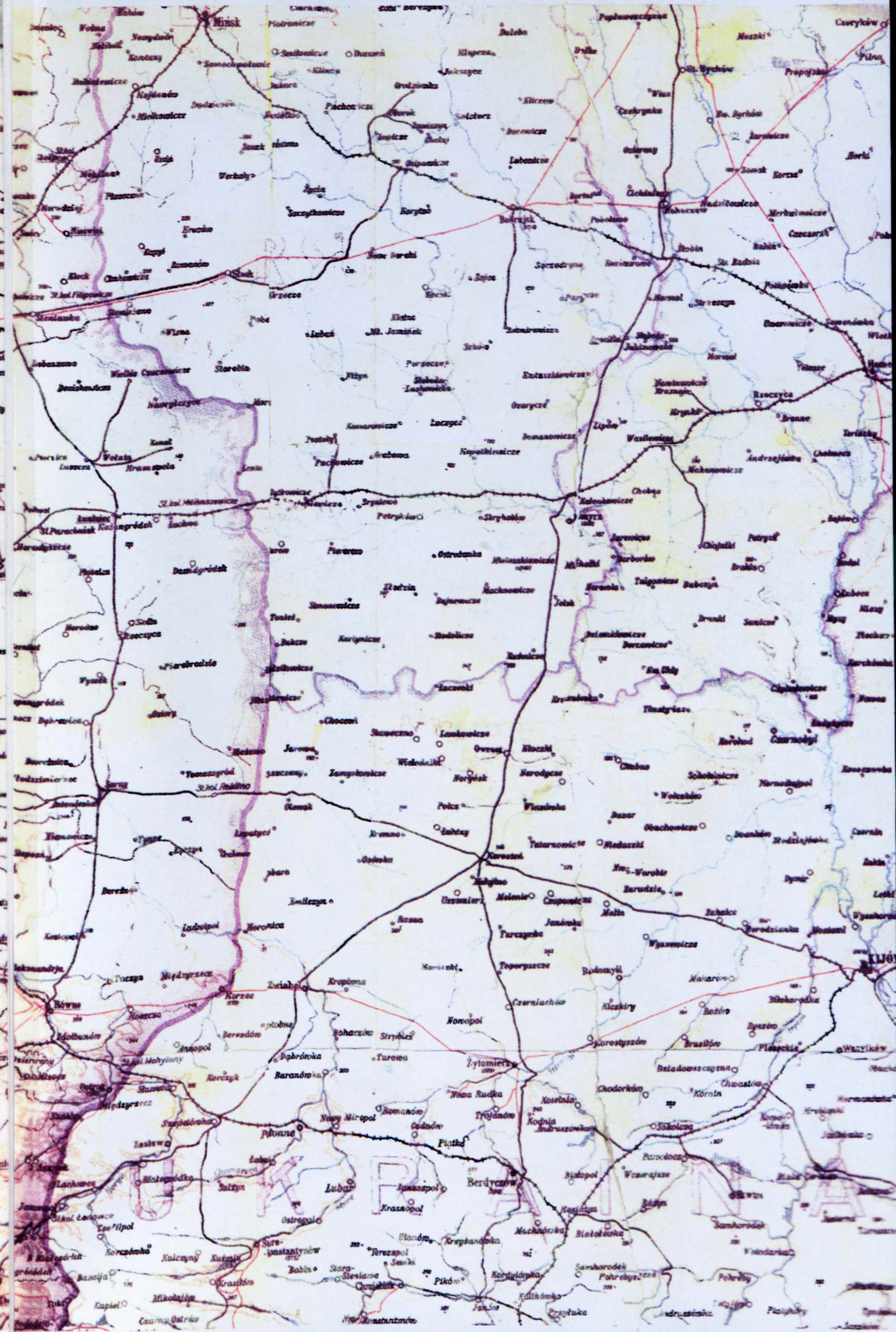
MAP OF UKRANIAN AND POLISH RAILWAYS IN 1921.

Demonstrating the main rail routes from Ukraine to East Prussia (in the top lefthand corner of the map) for retreating German troops from Kiev in 1918-1919. The line passes through Brest-Litovsk and Bialystok, reaching the German frontier northwest of Bialystok. This demonstrates that the main route to East Prussia crossed Polish territory.

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