

# THE PROBLEM OF TESCHEN AT THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

THE PROBLEM OF TESCHEN AT THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE  
WITH  
SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON BRITISH POLICY

by  
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### PRINCIPAL ABBREVIATIONS

AMO	Archiv Města Ostravy, (Moravia).
AMZV	Archiv Ministerstva Zahraničních Věcí, (Prague).
<u>DBFP</u>	E. L. Woodward & R. Butler, eds., <u>Documents on British Foreign Policy</u> , (London).
<u>FR</u>	Department of State, <u>Foreign Relations of the United States</u> , (Washington).
NNR	Německá Národní Rada, (Moravia).
<u>PCIJ</u>	Permanent Court of International Justice, The Hague, <u>Publications</u> , (London).
SAO	Státní Archiv Opava, (Czechoslovakia).
<u>SDNA</u>	State Department Archive, National Archives, Washington.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to examine one of the problems which confronted the Paris Peace Conference in the years 1919-1920: the Czechoslovak-Polish territorial dispute over the Duchy of Teschen<sup>1</sup> which seriously affected future relations between the two republics. The study is concerned with the diplomatic origins and subsequent development of the conflict, as well as with the factors which influenced the decisions of the Allied negotiators who strove to find a suitable settlement. The issue itself had no significant influence on Allied international or external policies, but its slow development reflected the conflicting and changing interests of the Great Powers. The study is focused on these conflicting trends.

Because the attitude of Great Britain towards Poland and Czechoslovakia has been relatively neglected, a special, though not an exclusive emphasis has been devoted to the analysis of British role in the

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<sup>1</sup>Various spellings exist. The Czechs use "Těšín", the Poles "Cielesyn", and the Germans use the generally accepted term among the English-speaking historians, that of "Teschen".

Teschen settlement. Of the many influences bearing on British foreign policy in regard to East Central Europe, the thesis is concerned with external factors that determined the attitude of the Foreign Office. In comparison with the more important and pressing issues fully occupying the attention of the British Government and the British Delegation at that time, the Teschen conflict, though irritating, did not seem a matter important enough for parliamentary discussions. Consequently, the Czech-Polish struggle was hardly ever discussed in the House of Commons, and was only mentioned in passing by the British press. This, despite the fact that throughout the negotiations Great Britain held the decisive vote and ultimately was responsible for the final settlement. However its interest in the affair was of a negative nature. The Czech-Polish border dispute concerned Great Britain only so far as it affected British general policy towards East Central Europe and the contending states in particular. Therefore, the role of Great Britain in the Teschen settlement cannot be regarded as a product of conscious deliberations, but rather as a by-product of other considerations and influences which were themselves undergoing change throughout the two-year period.

A detailed analysis of Allied war aims which, to a degree, moulded the attitudes and policies of the

Great Powers towards Czechoslovakia and Poland is outside the scope of this study. Because it already existed as an independent state when the Conference convened in January 1919, Czechoslovakia, at least in the early phase of the Conference, enjoyed a more favorable position than Poland.<sup>1</sup> Its independence was the result of internal and external political and military forces made possible by the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy. While in Prague the Czech statesmen had taken control over the local administration, abroad, the Czechoslovak National Council continued to exploit the Czech military contribution to the Allied cause in its diplomatic bargaining. The end product of these two forces was the achievement of a peaceful merger between the exiled leaders and the Czech statesmen who jointly consolidated the authority of the new government. The Czechoslovak delegation at the Paris Peace Conference represented a united nation and a consolidated government.

In contrast the Poles, although they had enjoyed earlier and traditional Western support for their cause, encountered difficulties due to the unsettled situation on their frontiers. On account of

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<sup>1</sup>David Lloyd George, The Truth About the Peace Treaties (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), Vol. II, p. 942; also Edvard Beneš, Světová válka a naše revoluce (Praha: Čin a Orbis, 1928), Vol. II. p. 262.

political factionalism and the presence of German troops on what was considered Polish territory, the Poles were unable to achieve internal security. Also in comparison with the Czechs who had actively co-operated with the Entente Powers throughout the war, the Poles had been divided in their loyalties between the Entente and the Central Powers. This was detrimental to the Polish cause at the Peace Conference.

Though the overt struggle over the Duchy of Teschen between Czechoslovakia and Poland began officially only in the middle of January 1919, its origin may be traced to the race for independence by the two Slav states and to the tentative nature of Allied ideas about the territorial settlement generally. During the first three years of the war the Allied Powers had opposed the idea of destroying the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>1</sup> The Entente Powers feared that any such commitments in this direction might prejudice separate peace talks with Austria-Hungary. The latter's existence was generally regarded as essential to the European balance of power. The Radical and Liberal forces in Great Britain stood foremost among those who discouraged any interference in Austrian internal

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas G. Masaryk, The Making of a State: Memoirs and Observations, 1914-1918 (London: Allen & Unwin, 1927). p. 335.

affairs. The Liberals hoped to weaken Germany by a separate peace with the Habsburgs. To the Radicals and particularly to their articulate lobby represented in the Union of Democratic Control,<sup>1</sup> the Dual Monarchy appeared as an indispensable economic and cultural unit in Central Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, while T. G. Masaryk and other exiled Czech leaders were, with the aid of diligent propaganda, slowly gaining the support of many influential individuals, the general attitude towards independent Slav states was not encouraging.<sup>3</sup> The drafting of the Allied reply to President Woodrow Wilson of January 10, 1917, signified the first break-through. In the reply, the Entente Powers, at least officially, recognized the plight of national minorities, and despite a reluctance to commit themselves, the Allies, nevertheless, assumed a sympathetic attitude to the restoration of autonomy, if not of the independence, to the historic provinces of the Bohemian Crown. The concept of recognizing

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<sup>1</sup>The U.D.C. was founded by E. D. Morel, Norman Angell, and others. See Harry Hanak, Great Britain and Austria-Hungary During the First World War (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 151.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 154-55 passim.

<sup>3</sup>Masaryk, p. 234.



Bohemia, Moravia, and Lower Silesia as an integral geographical unit implicitly strengthened the Czechoslovak claims to the Duchy of Teschen.

The military and political realities soon forced the Entente Powers to take full advantage of the psychological warfare methods such as the encouragement of nationalist aspirations by the peoples of the Dual Monarchy. For diplomatic purposes, however, they refrained from openly associating themselves with the idea of dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy. As late as January 8, 1918, Lloyd George in his address to the Trades Union Congress in London recognized the possible eventuality of a purely ethnic Poland, but did not include the breaking up of the Dual Monarchy in Allied war aims.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout this rather unfavourable period the Czech cause was gradually helped by external developments and by "an extremely intelligent propaganda", using the Czech Legions in Russia as a bait in international bargaining for national independence.<sup>2</sup> Beneš, apprehensive of the ethnic complexity facing the future

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd George, The Truth . . ., Vol. II, p. 758.

<sup>2</sup>E. Davis, "America's Contribution to Central Europe," The New Europe, Vol. IX, No. 112 (December, 1918), p. 178.

state, sought to gain Allied approval to preliminary delimitations of its boundaries. The Czechs explicitly laid claim to the historic frontiers of the former Bohemian Crown. Their claim implicitly predetermined Czech rights to the economically and strategically important Duchy of Teschen. It was not until June 29, 1918, however, that Benes succeeded in gaining from the Quai d'Orsay recognition, in the form of the so-called "Pichon's letter."<sup>1</sup> This pledge was formalized in September with a bilateral treaty between the French Government and the Czechoslovak National Council. France committed itself to support the Czechs in order that they "could regain [their] liberty and reconstitute an independent Czechoslovak state within the limits of its old historic provinces."<sup>2</sup> Contrary to France, Great Britain and the United States, although they had officially recognized the Czech national independence movement and the Czechoslovak National Council as the "trustee of the future Czech Government," refused any

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<sup>1</sup>Beněš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. II, p. 229. Also see below, pp. 44-45.

<sup>2</sup>Czechoslovakia, Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí, "Accord entre le Gouvernement de la République Française et le Conseil National tchécoslovaque, concernant le statut de la Nation tchécoslovaque en France, September 28, 1918," Archiv diplomatických dokumentů československých (Prague: Orbis, 1927-1928, 2 Vols.), Vol. I used, cited in D. Perman, The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), pp. 46-7.

binding territorial commitments.<sup>1</sup>

In connection with the later conflict over Teschen it is doubtful that the Quai d'Orsay was aware of the conflicting Czech and Polish claims to the Duchy. Beneš admitted that he had carefully avoided any reference to Teschen or to the possibility of a border dispute in that area.<sup>2</sup> He hoped that once the Allies recognized the principle of historic rights, Teschen would automatically revert to Czechoslovakia.

Foreign policies of nations generally evolve from their internal needs and external pressures. Poland, hoping to replace Russia as a great East European Power, embarked on a policy of expanding its boundaries. Control of the mineral and industrial resources of Teschen would have enabled Poland to dominate Czechoslovakia and even Austria. Therefore, the possession of this economically and strategically important territory became one of Poland's main objectives.

The Allies were embarrassed when both Czechoslovakia and Poland submitted their claims on Teschen to the Peace Conference. Poland based its

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<sup>1</sup> Beneš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. II, pp. 272-83.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

claims on the principle of self-determination which the Allies were officially pledged to uphold. However, the possession of Teschen formed only one part of Czech and Polish total territorial claims. Soon more pressing territorial interests elsewhere forced them to modify their claims where historic, ethnic, economic, or strategic objectives were concerned. By altering well-defined principles they inadvertently enabled the Great Four to employ similar flexible approach where principles conflicted with political realities. However, the uncompromising attitude adopted by the two Slav States in regard to Teschen soon manifested that the Allies themselves would have to resolve the dispute.

Unfortunately for the later developments the Allied and Associate Powers were not resolute enough to take decisive action in what they considered to be a minor conflict between two friendly states. This reluctance was caused partly by the fear that direct intervention would result in unpopular military actions in Central Europe. The Allies knew that on account of war weariness their nationals would oppose any increase in military commitments in a region which was considered to be of no direct interest to them. At the same time the statesmen at Paris were aware that without physical occupation of the disputed area, their enforcing

authority depended, to a large extent, on a moral mandate only. This knowledge led Great Britain to favor policy of postponement in the hope that a lasting settlement based on mutual compromise might yet be worked out.

Throughout the two years of diplomatic bargaining the Czechs proved experienced negotiators. Under Beneš's realistic political ideology the Czech delegation acknowledged the fact that the balance of power, though not mentioned specifically, was nevertheless the motivating force determining British and French foreign policies. Hence, instead of claiming Teschen on purely abstract principles, as the Poles had done, Beneš began to emphasize its economic and political importance to Czechoslovakia. Beneš's diplomacy was severely hampered by the nationalist policy adopted by the Czechoslovak Government in Prague. Contrary to the officially advocated policy of moderation, the Czech Government adopted an activist policy towards the Poles in Teschen. Their decision to occupy, by force if necessary, the former Duchy was influenced by the chaotic conditions prevailing in East Central Europe, and by the Allied hesitant attitude whenever they were confronted with faits accomplis. The Czech Government believed that once their power within

the Duchy was consolidated, their aggression would be forgotten. Thus by appealing to the need of stability and the need to prevent Bolshevik propaganda being spread among the local coal miners, Prague gave orders for a military occupation of Teschen.

The Czechs did not count with the stubborn nationalist resistance of the Poles. The Allies failed to act promptly, and the minor conflict was allowed to gain momentum. The outcome was a bitter and prolonged struggle over Teschen which left lasting effects on later Czech and Polish relations. More seriously, it was to prevent the realization of post-war peaceful co-operation between the two Succession States as envisaged by the Great Powers, and as propagated by Masaryk during the war. The pivot of this scheme was the establishment of a chain of friendly small states which would form an effective barrier to German expansion to the East. Seen from this wider perspective the "Teschen affair" assumed magnified proportions.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

The conflict over the Duchy of Teschen<sup>1</sup> which permanently embittered the post-war relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia is comprehensible only if viewed against the complex historic, geographic, and ethnic perspective relating to the long history of Lower Silesia. A brief analysis of the above mentioned factors is important because they underlay the claims raised by the Polish and the Czech delegations at the Paris Peace Conference.

Teschen had two important assets: strategic location and economic value based on its mineral resources and its important railroad system. The Duchy which formed a quadrilateral of 2,282 square kilometres was divided into four districts: Frydek, Frystat, Teschen, and Bielitz. The quadrilateral was well defined and protected by natural boundaries. To the north lay Prussian Silesia, connecting the Duchy through the Oder system, and the natural depression along the important Warsaw-Vienna railway; to the south are the

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<sup>1</sup>The former Duchy of Teschen was also known as Lower or Eastern Silesia. It was one of the two districts comprising Austrian Silesia.

western Beskids which seal the Duchy from the Danubian regions.<sup>1</sup> The western part of the Duchy forms an important corridor between Eastern Europe and Vienna. The river systems of the Oder and the Vistula, as well as the strategic Jablunkau Pass (offering access into the Carpathian Mountains) made Lower Silesia an important point of communication between Eastern and Central Europe. The geographical compactness enabled Teschen to remain an historical unit for centuries despite the fact that it is a sort of "transit" area bordering on three nations: the Poles, the Czechs, and the Germans.

The economic value of Teschen is equally prodigious. The Ostrava-Karvin region is the center of Czech heavy industry. Though it covers only 4.3 per cent. of Czechoslovak territory, it supplies 75 per cent. of coal. Much of Karvin coal contains high content of volatile elements, reaching up to 30 per cent. of weight. Karvin coal is particularly suitable for the production of gas and coke. The region produces 92.5 per cent. of coke and 80 per cent. of raw iron of Czechoslovakia.<sup>2</sup> The gas coal is the best in Central

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<sup>1</sup>H. W. V. Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference of Paris (London: Henry Frowde, Hodder & Stoughton, 1921), Vol. IV, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup>Milan Otáhal, Dělnické hnutí na Ostravsku, 1919-1921 (Ostrava: Krajské nakladatelství, 1957), p. 6; also Boguslav Kozusznik, The Problem of Cieszyn Silesia (London: privately printed, 1943), p. 90.



Europe and Austrian industry depended on it. It was essentially the presence of coal which gave the impetus to the large industrial centres built nearby. The impact of the industry on local life can be estimated when we consider that according to the census of 1921 only 21.9 per cent. were employed in agriculture, whereas 50.7 per cent. were employed by the industry and trade.<sup>1</sup>

Paradoxically, while the natural boundaries protected the territory from the outside world, its strategic and later economic values made the area a price of contention between the Bohemian, Polish and German Crowns. Colonizations by their respective subjects contributed to the amalgam of diverse national groups in Teschen. The historical and ethnographic fluidity requires a brief survey in order to clarify the two main claims based on the principle of "historic rights" and on "ethnic self-determination" raised by the Czechoslovak and the Polish delegates respectively at the Peace Conference.

Historically we know that by the tenth century Silesia formed part of the Moravian Empire.<sup>2</sup> In about

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<sup>1</sup>Statistická příručka RCS (Prague, 1925), Vol. II, p. 403, quoted in Otáhal, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Francis Dvornik, The Slavs, Their Early History and Civilization (Boston: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1929), p. 81.

1000 A.D. the region was temporarily annexed to Poland by the rising Piast Dynasty.<sup>1</sup> By 1290 Teschen became an independent duchy.<sup>2</sup> The unsettled period following the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century witnessed acceleration in German influence and colonization. Ultimately, the principality of Teschen grew continuously more dependent upon the German rulers of Bohemia.<sup>3</sup> On August 24, 1335, by the Treaty of Trenčín, the whole of Silesia reverted to Bohemia. Kazimir of Poland ceded his suzerainty over Silesia in return for John of Luxemburg's renouncement of claims to any part of Poland.<sup>4</sup> The final separation of the principality of Teschen (which remained in the possession of the Silesian Branch of the ducal Piast family until 1653) was re-emphasized by Kazimir by a special proclamation of 1339. With the death of the Duchess Elizabeth Lucretia (1653) Teschen was "escheated to the Habsburg Emperor in his capacity as King of Bohemia."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>2</sup>Kurt Witt, Die Teschener Frage (Berlin: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1935), p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Great Britain, Foreign Office, Historical Section, Peace Handbook No. 4, Austrian Silesia (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1920), p. 11. (Hereafter referred to as Peace Handbook).

<sup>4</sup>František Uhlíř, Těšínské Slezsko (Prague: Jos. Lukasik, 1946), p. 57.

<sup>5</sup>Temperley, Vol. IV, p. 349.

Following the Silesian Wars, by the Treaty of Breslau in 1742, Austria lost most of her Silesian possessions with the exception of Troppau and Teschen. The cession of Silesian lands was given to the Estates of Bohemia for ratification. By this act the claim to Teschen as an integral part of the Bohemian Crown was fortified.<sup>1</sup> Despite the above act, in order to improve the imperial administration, the Duchy was temporarily annexed to Moravia.

The industrialization, which had taken place throughout the nineteenth century and the growing strategic importance of the Teschen location, encouraged the imperial administrators to promote local German cultural and political preponderance. Such a political climate was not favourable to the demands by the Czech reformists for "the reconstitution of the ancient Bohemian kingdom, including Silesia and Moravia."<sup>2</sup> In 1860 the Duchy was separated from Moravia and its administration was placed under the authority of Troppau. Judicially, however, it remained connected with Brno.<sup>3</sup> Constitutionally Teschen gained

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Peace Handbook No. 4, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Temperley, Vol. IV, p. 349.

representation in the Austrian Reichsrat. Despite the continuous Germanization of the province and attempts to isolate it from Czech nationalism, Emperor Francis Joseph acknowledged the indivisibility of the lands of the Bohemian Crown in 1870.<sup>1</sup> To conclude then, as far as "historic rights" were concerned, the claim presented by the Czechoslovak delegation at Paris was based on firm foundations.

Contrary to the rather simple continuity manifested in the history of Austrian Silesia, the principle of national self-determination was of a more complex nature. The crux of the problem lay in the fact that ethnic changes were interrelated with political and economic changes the Duchy had experienced since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

From the linguistic point of view until 1434 German and Latin were the official languages used by the Ducal Chancery. In 1434 the Czech language was adopted.<sup>2</sup> In the eighteenth century, under the program of Germanization, German was re-introduced and in 1848 became the local official language.<sup>3</sup> Among the native

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<sup>1</sup>Temperley, Vol. IV, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup>Stanislas Raubal, Formation de la frontière entre la Pologne et la Tchécoslovaquie (Paris: Les Presses Modernes, 1928), p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Uhlik, p. 60.

Silesians, or Slonzaks, a transition dialect showing affinities to both the Czech and the Polish languages, was spoken. Being an important minority, the definitely pro-German Slonzaks were claimed by both the Czechs and the Poles as their nationals. However significant nationalist rivalry did not appear prior to the second half of the nineteenth century.

The exploitation of the Karwin coal mines and the growth of local industry altered the nationality question in Teschen. The rising demand for labour led to increased immigration from both Bohemia and Galicia. The Czechs were soon employed in administrative or managerial positions, while the Galician Poles formed the large labour force. The ethnic, cultural, and social separateness stimulated the Czech-Polish antagonism and was exploited for political reasons by the Austrian authorities.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Austrian census of 1910 the duchy showed a population of 434,821 out of which 233,850 spoke Polish, 115,597 Czech, and 76,923 German.<sup>2</sup> The above figures, used by the Peace Conference, were

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Grappin, Polonais et Tchèques: La question de la Silésie de Teschen (Paris: Imprimerie M. Flinikowski, 1919), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>"Die Ergebnisse der Volkzaehlung vom 31. December 1910," Neue Folge des oesterreichischen Statistik, 1. Band, I. Heft, quoted in Witt, p. 38.

challenged by both the Czechoslovak and the Polish Delegations.<sup>1</sup> The Poles pointed out that the census was based on mother tongue, and that the Czechs were communal officials in most districts and thus able to manipulate the census taking. As example they quoted the Karvin district which contained a large Polish labour force, yet the Czechs were in control of the local municipal councils.<sup>2</sup>

The Polish argument has some validity because the electoral system was "censitaire et oral."<sup>3</sup> Both the Czechs and the Germans controlled the key administrative and economic positions and could exert pressure on the Polish farmers and workers.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Memorandum, presented by the Polish Delegation to Jules Cambon (February 28, 1919), in Roman Dmowski, Polityka Polska i odbudowanie państwa (Warszawa: Nakładem Księgarni Perzynski, Niklewicziska, 1926), pp. 521-25. See also Beneš's statement at the Council of Ten (February 5, 1919), reprinted in U.S., Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942-1947), Vol. III, pp. 881-82. (Hereafter cited as FR).

<sup>2</sup>Grappin, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Most local peasants were mere tenants. In Frystat out of 23,433 farmers only 9,398 were owners. In Frydek out of 17,707 farmers only 6,078 owned their land. In Teschen 9,767 out of 16,943 were owners. Statistisches Handbuch fuer die Selbstverwaltung in Schlesien (Troppau, 1919), Vol. X, pp. 294-95, in Otáhal, p. 10.

The Czechs, on the other hand, claimed that the census listed only those born in Bohemia as Czechs, while the native Slonzaks were listed as Poles.<sup>1</sup> As there were over 60,000 Slonzaks, the Polish numerical superiority would have been considerably reduced. The Czech argument was reinforced by the overt anti-Polish sentiment of the Slonzaks. Further, the Czechs denounced the Austrian Law of December 5, 1896 in accordance with which temporary residents of an area were considered citizens of the boroughs in which they resided, enjoying equal rights with those of the permanent residents.<sup>2</sup>

The fact remains that the Poles were in majority in the three districts they claimed even if their population figures were reduced by the above contention. The possible division of the Duchy along ethnic lines not only aggravated the later territorial negotiations but it testified to the local conditions under which the three main national minorities were not only ethnically and culturally alien to each other, but they tended to be socially and spacially isolated as well.

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<sup>1</sup>Czechoslovakia, Mémoire No. 4, Le Problème de la Silésie de Teschen, reprinted in Herman Raschhofer, editor and translator, Die tschechoslowakischen Denkschriften fuer die Friedenskonferenz von Paris, 1919-1920 (Berlin: Carl Heymanns, 1937), p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>For example, in 1900 there were 50,463 Poles with permanent residence in Galicia. By 1910 there were 58,545 Galician Poles in Teschen. For figures see Kozusznik, pp. 63-65; also Uhlir, p. 62.

The Czechs were mostly settled along the Moravian border, dominating the district of Frydek (70 per cent. Czech) and western Frystat. Socially they formed a middle class stratum entering the ranks of administrative bureaucracy or supervisory technical personnel.<sup>1</sup> The Czech nationalist movement was restricted to intellectual circles and the gymnastic clubs of Sokol. As a result of intensive Germanization and increase in Polish immigration, the Czechs were losing ground in Teschen. By 1908 the Czech school board Matice Osvěty was forced to move from the town of Teschen to Polská Ostrava, while the local Czech newspaper became unproductive and had to be moved from Teschen to Frydek.<sup>2</sup>

The German speaking minority was essentially urban, forming the middle and the upper classes. To a large degree the Germans owned or controlled local mines, industry, and business.<sup>3</sup> The large landowners of Teschen were almost exclusively German or Germanized

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<sup>1</sup>Among local judges there were 49 per cent. Czechs, 42 per cent. Germans, and only 9 per cent. Poles in 1918. Among the administrative personnel there were only 10 per cent. Poles. For further information see Witt, pp. 46-47, or Raubal, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>Ferdinand Pelc, O Těšínsko: Vzpomínky a úvahy (Slezská Ostrava, 1928), quoted by Ferdinand Peroutka, Budování Státu (Praha: Fr. Borový, 1936), Vol. I, pp. 234-35.

<sup>3</sup>Witt, pp. 45-6.



Polish aristocracy.<sup>1</sup> The war and post-war agitations by the German speaking minority against the annexation of the Duchy to Poland is the more understandable since to their number must be added some 17,000 Jews who, for obvious reasons, were anti-Polish.<sup>2</sup> Politically, the energy of the pre-war Silesian Germans was largely spent on preserving the status quo. The Germans controlled the Landtag of Troppau only on account of its antiquated electoral system and the personal prestige of local German nobility. With the reformed electoral system and the acceleration in nationalist rivalry the districts of Teschen, Frystat, and Jablunkau were lost to the Poles; while the important Moravian Landtag comprising the industrial and mining districts, was under Czech control. The Germans managed to maintain the mayoralties of the towns of Teschen, Oderberg, Frydek, Frystat, and Jablunkau. In 1909 Kořdon's Silesian Party managed to halt the Polish political encirclement by winning the Bielitz mandate.<sup>3</sup> The greatest error of the Germans was that being politically on the defensive, they had failed to form an alliance with the Germanophile Slonzaks.

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<sup>1</sup>The Habsburgs owned about one quarter of the total land which was mainly forest. Count Larisch-Moennich, besides being a prominent mine owner, owned some 30,000 acres of land. W. J. Rose, "The Duchy of Teschen as Zwischenland", The Royal Society of Canada, 3rd series, XLVIII (1954), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>Witt, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Witt, p. 82.

The indigenous Slonzaks, claimed as nationals by Czechs and Poles alike,<sup>1</sup> did not emulate the re-awakening nationalism of the two Slav nations. To the contrary, they manifested a regional, slightly pro-German patriotism congenial to their middle-class or agrarian conservative interests. These parochial tendencies were encouraged by Austrian officials and by their political mentor, the high school teacher, Dr. Joseph Kořdon. It was he who stressed the individuality of the Slonzak dialect and their predominantly Lutheran faith which distinguished them from Czechs and Poles alike.<sup>2</sup>

In order to prevent political indoctrination by either of the two Slav nations, on February 1909, Kozdon and some 150 prominent Slonzaks undertook the task of organizing their compatriots under a uniform leadership. The Silesian National Party was founded and its organ, the Slazak.<sup>3</sup> In the post-war period, the Slonzaks joined the German minority in their demand for autonomous Teschen. In case this failed, both demanded that an undivided Teschen be annexed to

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<sup>1</sup>Grappin, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Witt, pp. 47-50.

<sup>3</sup>Witt, pp. 80-81.

Czechoslovakia rather than to Poland.<sup>1</sup>

The Polish minority consisted of two groups: settlers and migrants. The former were mainly peasants, situated in the central and eastern regions of the Duchy.<sup>2</sup> The latter were almost exclusively hired labour from Galicia.<sup>3</sup> Socially they formed the proletariat stratum, while politically they were prone to nationalist propaganda and radical slogans emanating from the politically agitated Galicia. In the post-war era their radicalism enabled the Czech Delegation to warn against Polish Bolshevik activities among the Karvin miners.

National awareness among the Silesian Czechs and Poles dates back from the second half of the nineteenth century. The increase of non-autochthonous-population, the struggle over educational facilities and privileges,<sup>4</sup> and clashing, mutually incompatible self-interests fanned the latent antagonism. However,

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<sup>1</sup>Czechoslovakia, Archív Města Ostravy, Německá Národní Rada (hereafter referred to as AMO, NNR), "Minutes of the meeting of February 6, 1919," III, pp. 125-29 quoted in Jaroslav Valenta, "Plány německé buržoazie na neutralizaci Ostravska a Těšínska v letech 1918-1920," Slezský Sborník, Vol. LVIII (1960). p. 301.

<sup>2</sup>Peace Handbook No. 4, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Oesterreichisch-ungarische Kolonisations-gesellschaft was formed with the sole purpose of recruiting cheap labour from Galicia. Otáhal, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>In 1848 the Polish language was introduced in local schools. Uhlíř, p. 60.

as long as Bohemia and Poland were under alien subjection the Silesian conflict was oriented towards cultural rather than political supremacy.<sup>1</sup> The better organized Poles, backed by the politically strong Polish Club in Vienna, were on the ascendancy. The successes of the Polish Club in gaining concessions and privileges from Vienna<sup>2</sup> stimulated the "Great Poland" idea even among the Silesian Poles. Ultimately they approved eventual revision of the Silesian boundaries and annexation of Teschen to Galicia. However, external events were not favourable to this objective.

Outside of Teschen, the pre-war Western World was for the first time made aware of the Czech claim to Lower Silesia on the basis of "historical rights", and of the Polish assertion of the principle of ethnic self-determination in the years of 1908-1909. Significantly, the two authors were the later antagonists at the Peace Conference, Dr. Edvard Beneš<sup>3</sup> and Roman Dmowski.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Witt, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>The imperial regime needed the Polish supporting vote.

<sup>3</sup>Edvard Beneš, "Le Problème autrichien et la question tchèque" (Ph.D. dissertation, Paris, 1908). Roman Dmowski, La Question polonaise (Paris, 1909) translated by V. Gasztoritt. Both works quoted in Witt, pp. 78-9.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PRE AND POST ARMISTICE SITUATION IN TESCHEN

During the war, the nationalist activities within the Duchy of Teschen could be roughly divided into three phases. The first phase, covering the first two years of the war, was conspicuous by general political apathy. The reason for this lack of nationalist enthusiasm was the occupation of the center of Polish irredentism, Galicia, by the Russian imperial forces. The second phase coincided with the political events in Poland proper. The successful re-occupation of Galicia and of Russian Poland by the Central Powers, once more re-united the ancient Poland. Polish national aspirations were everywhere stimulated. On November 5, 1916, under the pressure of political expediency the Central Powers issued a proclamation promising the re-creation of an independent Poland. Territorial particulars and the fate of Galicia however, remained obscured.

These external factors heartened the Silesian Poles, especially as their ranks were swelled by numerous Galician refugees and by the presence of Pilsudski's Polish Legion in Teschen.<sup>1</sup> A precedent to their

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<sup>1</sup>Witt, p. 83.

irredentist movement was given by the resolution, which had been adopted by the Landtag of Galicia (May 28, 1917) to foster unification of all Polish territories. The Poles of Teschen officially adopted similar policy.<sup>1</sup>

Both the local Germans and Slonzaks opposed the Polish plans of annexation.<sup>2</sup> As a counter measure the German minority proposed several plans to the imperial administration by which they hoped to assure German political preponderance in Teschen. In order to strengthen the German population figures they demanded the unification of Lower Silesia with the German dominated enclave of Biala.<sup>3</sup> Another plan proposed the formation of an Austrian province consisting of Teschen, northern-Moravia with its industrial and mining region, and Troppau. This territory was to be proclaimed "reichsunmittelbares Land."<sup>4</sup> Needless to

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<sup>1</sup>Grappin, pp. 31 ff.

<sup>2</sup>"Denkschrift des deutschen Landtagsmehrheit Schlesiens betreffend die Sonderstellung Galiziens und ihre Rueckwirkung auf die schlesischen Verhaeltnisse" (Troppau, January 9, 1917), MS form, in the Private Papers of J. Kořdon, XII, D/22, Czechoslovakia, Státní Archív Opava. In Valenta, Slezský Sborník, LVIII, p. 291.

<sup>3</sup>F. Szymiczek, Wálka a Slask Cieszynski v letech 1914-1920 (Katowice: Instytut Slaski, 1938), p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>AMO, NNR, VI, copies, t. 152, in Valenta, Slezský Sborník, LVIII, p. 291.

say that the above German ambitions were articulately denounced by both the Czechs and the Poles who recruited their press<sup>1</sup> and the labour unions on their side.<sup>2</sup>

By October 23, 1918, the German faction appears to have resigned to the eventuality of dismemberment of the Dual Monarchy. Instead of annexation to Austria, they aimed at proclaiming the Duchy a neutral state united with Austria by federal ties.<sup>3</sup> In order to achieve this objective they requested military forces from Vienna. Some ten to twelve companies were believed sufficient to hold Teschen by force. Lacking spare military forces, the Austrian Government failed to comply with this request. Despite their numerical weakness, the German minority continued to agitate for a "Great Silesia" and even planned a public rally for November 3, in the Town of Teschen. This mass demonstration had to be cancelled due to the emergence of Polish and Czech revolutionary elements which refused to guarantee protection to the demonstrators. The German endeavours were temporarily neutralized by the

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<sup>1</sup>Narodní Listy, Nos. 84, 87, and 95, of 27th and 31st March and 7th April, 1917. Also Národ, September 26, 1917, in Valenta, ibid., p. 292.

<sup>2</sup>The important coal and industrial regions of Silesia were the scene of a wave of strikes. Otáhal, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>Czechoslovakia, Státní Archiv Opava (hereafter cited as SAO), Policejní ředitelství Moravská Ostrava, kr. 1164, No. 1/1990, in Valenta, Slezský Sborník, LVIII, p. 293.

joint Czech-Polish action.<sup>1</sup>

The Slonzaks, meanwhile, underwent political disorientation. The platform of their National Silesian Party was based on close co-operation with Austria, and with the latter's inevitable defeat, the Party lost its political reality. Under Kołodziej's leadership they adopted the strategy of "wait and see."<sup>2</sup>

The final phase of nationalist and political activities that directly emanated from the Duchy and that were controlled and decided upon by local Silesians took place during the fall of 1918. The realization of the almost inevitable disintegration of Austria-Hungary, and the hope of re-establishment of independent Poland and Czechoslovakia radically transformed the issue of Teschen. Almost overnight the various political groups within the Duchy began to coalesce in accordance with their ethnic affinity rather than their political ideology.

The Poles presented the best organized and united front. In the first week of October they formed the Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego (National Council of the Duchy of Teschen) which comprised ten

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<sup>1</sup>Slazak, No. 45, November 9, 1918, in Valenta, *ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>2</sup>"Co będzie z Austrią," Slazak, No. 45, October 19, 1918, in Valenta, *ibid.*, p. 297.



representatives of the three Polish political parties in Lower Silesia.<sup>1</sup> The chairmanship was assumed by Jan Michejda, Father Joseph Londzin, and Tadeus Reger (Socialist). All three were former deputies to the Austrian Reichsrat and leaders of the three respective parties.<sup>2</sup> The Rada set immediately to work, organizing mass demonstrations with the objective of attesting allegiance to Poland. The first such demonstration of pro-Polish loyalties took place on October 12, 1918. Some 35,000 people, according to Polish figures, participated.<sup>3</sup> A resolution, appealing to Wilson's Fourteen Points, the principle of self-determination, and requesting the annexation of the Duchy to Poland, was adopted.<sup>4</sup> On October 15, the Socialist Party in co-operation with local labour unions organized a similar rally at Orlova. An analogous resolution was taken.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The parties were: (1) The National Union Party, essentially middle-class membership. (2) The Catholic Union, predominantly agrarian. (3) The Polish Socialist Party, mainly labour. Grappin, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Grappin, p. 36. Also H. Austruy, La Pologne et la Silesie de Teschen (Paris, 1919), pp. 5-6, in Witt, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>Grappin, p. 36.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

The Czechs could no longer afford to ignore the Polish provocations. Though slower to act and less well organized than the Poles, they were encouraged by events occurring outside of the Duchy; namely the proclamation of Czechoslovakia's independence (Washington, October 18) which was followed by the official recognition of the Czech exile Government in Paris by the Entente Powers. In Poland the political development was reversed. Much of Polish territory was still under German control, and the Government in Warsaw was undergoing a severe crisis. Under such circumstances it was doubtful that Poland would or could materially support the Polish Rada within Teschen. In an attempt to exploit the apparent weakness of the Polish Government, and in order to oppose the Silesian Rada in an official capacity, two Silesian Czechs, Drs. Zikmund Witt and Ferdinand Pelc, founded the Czech National Council of Silesia (Národní Výbor) in Ostrava. Challenging the Polish resolution, the Czech Council claimed Lower Silesia as an integral part of the Bohemian Crown and, therefore, part of the new Republic.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>St. Koziński, Sprawa granic Polski na Konferencji Pokojowej w Paryżu 1919 (Warsaw, 1921), pp. 98-99, in Witt, p. 95.

Because the Polish Rada controlled the greater part of the Duchy with its predominantly Polish population, the writ of the Czech Council did not extend beyond Frydek.

Nevertheless, on October 28, emboldened by the revolution in Prague, the Czech Council dispatched some of its members to Frystat in an attempt to claim the administration over that district.<sup>1</sup> The Polish Rada, aware of its numerical superiority, refused to comply. As a counter measure, on October 29, the Rada proclaimed itself the executive organ of the Polish Government in Warsaw.<sup>2</sup> In order to fortify its political activities with physical force, a volunteer militia was organized and led by experienced officers. F. Latinik, a Galician Pole who had served under the Austrian flag, was entrusted with the command.<sup>3</sup> On October 30, backed by the armed militia,<sup>4</sup> the Rada issued a decisive Manifesto claiming Lower Silesia for Poland. The exact territorial delineations were left to be negotiated by the Governments of Prague and

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<sup>1</sup>Grappin, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>Witt, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup>Some 2,000 to 2,500 men consisting of infantry, cavalry, and machinegun formations. H. Austruy, La Pologne et la Silesie de Teschen (Paris, 1919), p. 7, in Witt, p. 97.

Warsaw. The manifesto was then forwarded to the Austrian Provincial Government of Silesia in Troppau, to the Provisional Government in Warsaw, and to the Galician authorities in Cracow, the Czech Government or authorities were apparently ignored.<sup>1</sup> By this notification the Duchy of Teschen formally severed its ties from the Austrian administration at Troppau.<sup>2</sup> The Poles have also challenged the Czech claim of "historical rights" to Lower Silesia.

The Czechs learnt quickly that physical occupation was the best proof of ownership. Following the Polish example, they also began to arm units along the Moravian border.<sup>3</sup> They were, however, prevented from penetrating the districts of Frystat, Teschen, and Bielsko by the Polish numerical superiority. It was inevitable that the accelerated rivalry would lead to some explosive conflict. The latter occurred in the struggle over the strategically and economically important railroad junction of Oderberg (Bohumín).

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<sup>1</sup>Grappin, pp. 39-40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., also Witt, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup>Czechoslovakia, SAO, Zemský Národní Výbor pro Slezsko (hereafter referred to as ZNV), 1917-1920, No. 163/18, in Otáhal, p. 83.

The values of Oderberg, which linked with the Jablunkau Pass and formed a key gateway to eastern Europe, were well known to Czechs and Poles alike. The junction was a crossroad of lines connecting Berlin-Budapest-Constantinople, as well as Triest-Vienna-Warsaw-Russia. As a commercial line it carried transport between the Baltic and the Adriatic.<sup>1</sup> The war period had focused the attention on its strategic as well as economic importance. Through Oderberg were transported troops and supplies from Germany to the East, the Balkans, and to Italy via Hungary. The German "Drang nach Osten" would have to follow this road as well.<sup>2</sup> It was through Oderberg that Upper Silesian coal could be transported to Hungary. To Poland the control of this junction meant an important link with Germany and Hungary. Such a bloc would have seriously weakened the young Czech Republic.

The Poles made the first move. On the same day that the Manifesto was issued three officials of the Rada arrived in the town of Oderberg and requested the handing over of the administration of the district and of the railroad.<sup>3</sup> On the following day the Czech

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<sup>1</sup>Grappin, pp. 25-6.

<sup>2</sup>Witt, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup>Grappin, p. 39.

leaders, Drs. Witt and Pelc, arrived with similar objectives in their minds, only to discover that the Poles already were in control of the district. The Czechs, hoping to stress their argument with force, were accompanied by a military unit of some 30 armed men.<sup>1</sup> However, the Polish Rada had at its disposal its own militia and the support of the Oderberg Poles.<sup>2</sup> The Czechs, defeated, were forced to retreat.

The struggle over Oderberg was the first serious incident between the two nationalities during which arms were displayed. The incident also revealed that the main consideration of the two nations was the possession of the strategic and economic areas rather than the respect for the ethnic principle. Because neither of the two Councils was strong enough or willing to assume the responsibility for an armed clash without the aid from its mother country, the conflict opened a way for a negotiated compromise. There were other reasons urging an amicable allotment of responsibilities between the two revolutionary bodies. Primarily it had

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 39-40.

<sup>2</sup>According to the Austrian Census of 1910 the district contained 10,355 Czechs, 9,808 Germans, and 18,118 Poles. Statistisches Gemeindelexikon von Maehren und Schlesien, ed. Staatsamt auf Grund der Volkszaehlung vom 15. Februar, 1921 (Prag 1925), p. xvii, cited by Witt, pp. 42-3.

become imperative that a governing authority be established which could formally replace the now extinct Austrian administration. Secondly, instead of fighting each other, the Czech and Polish militia could be employed in policing the countryside where disbanded soldiers roamed and dissatisfied miners threatened with revolutionary plots.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, the transport of food and other supplies which was at a stand still had to be resumed.<sup>2</sup> Under these compelling circumstances the representatives of the Czech National Council and the Polish Rada Narodowa met in Ostrava.

The negotiators (four leading members of each council)<sup>3</sup> apparently acted from purely local interest at first. This was manifested by their failure to notify or even ask for instructions from their respective central Governments in Prague and Warsaw. In addition, the opening paragraph of the so-called November Agreement stressed the temporary nature of the

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<sup>1</sup>Labour unrest was due to the dense concentration of workers in the Karvin district. 100,000 men were easily organized by their unions. By November 10, 1918 the Czech Council had to appeal for military protection to Prague. SAO, ZNV, jednací spisy pro 1918, cited by Otáhal, pp. 7 and 87.

<sup>2</sup>Grappin, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup>The Czechs were represented by Dr. Zikmund Witt, Dr. Ferdinand Pelc, Petr Cingr, and Jan Nohel. The Poles were: Tadeus Reger, Dr. R. Kunicki, Paul Bobek, and Joseph Kiedron.

arrangement by leaving the territorial issues to the final decision of the two Succession States.<sup>1</sup> The agreement was mainly concerned with immediate expediency. The Duchy was divided for administrative purposes along lines closely coinciding with the ethnic structure of the local population. The Czechs retained control over Frydek, an area of some 519 square kilometres containing a population of 108,836 out of which 84,091 were Czechs, 15,093 Poles, and 11,944 Germans.<sup>2</sup> The districts of Teschen and Bielitz remained under the administration of the Polish Rada.<sup>3</sup> The district of Frystat was divided between the Czechs and the Poles.<sup>4</sup> The latter retained the towns of Frystat, Karvin, as well as the important Oderberg. The railroad was to be

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<sup>1</sup>The Agreement was signed on November 5, 1918.

<sup>2</sup>"Die Ergebnisse der Volkzaehlung vom 31. December 1910," Neue Folge des oesterreichischen Statistik, 1 Band, I. Heft, in Witt, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Teschen: population of 102,552, out of which 11,141 were Poles, 6,204 Czechs, and 17,045 Germans. Bielitz: population of 101,403 with 66,148 Poles, 32,775 Germans, and only 799 Czechs. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Protokol<sup>1</sup> des polnisch-tschechischen Provisoriums vom 5 November 1918," reprinted in Witt, Appendix I, pp. 260-62; see Appendix A, p. 239. Also Poland, Commission Polonaise des Travaux Préparatoires au Congrès de la Paix, Mémoire concernant la délimitation des frontières entre les états polonais et tchécoslovaque en Silésie de Cieszyn, Orawa et Spisz (Paris: Imprimerie Leve, n.d.), Annex B 4, pp. 27-31.



under the authority of the lada, but a Czech delegate was to have a voice in all decisions. The rest of the railroad lines were cared for by the respective council whose territory they traversed. The mining district was also divided. Poland gained 11 pits producing 3,445,000 tons of coal (37 per cent. of total production) and 4 mills producing 590,000 tons of coke (24 per cent. of production). The Czechs retained 27 pits with the output of 5,918,000 tons of coal (63 per cent.), and 8 mills producing 1,890,000 tons of coke or 76 per cent. of total production.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of their affiliation, the mining districts were administered by the management located at Moravská Ostrava which was controlled by the Czech Council. Similarly like at Oderberg, so in Moravská Ostrava the Polish Lada had its own delegate present whose consent was required in affairs dealing with mines situated in the Polish district.

The seemingly amicable compromise did not lead to a détente in local Czech-Polish relations. The Poles acted as if the agreement were of a permanent nature. The Polish Lada re-organized itself upon the

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<sup>1</sup>Raubal, pp. 44-45.

Warsaw pattern. An executive committee was constituted in order to administer justice, finances, communications, economy, agriculture, public works, and the militia.<sup>1</sup> The Silesian railroad system was annexed to the Polish railroad management in Cracow. And finally, an agreement was concluded with Hungary by which the Rada promised to ship coal in exchange for foodstuffs.<sup>2</sup>

The activities of the Polish Rada indicate that contrary to the Czech Silesians, the local Poles were aware of the political significance of the November Agreement. The temporary division of the Duchy was a possible precedent for the permanent division of Lower Silesia and its industrial region. Furthermore, the agreement officially acknowledged Polish ethnic superiority, and therefore Polish rights to the whole or at least to the greater part of Teschen.<sup>3</sup> The Czech Council inadvertently helped to strengthen the Polish argument by publicly admitting that the authority of the Council extended over "all Czech lands in Silesia."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Many Polish soldiers from Galicia were reported to have been recruited by the Rada. Grappin, pp. 44-5.

<sup>2</sup>Grappin, pp. 25-6.

<sup>3</sup>Peroutka, Vol. I, p. 238.

<sup>4</sup>Unidentified excerpts from local newspapers, quoted by Peroutka, Vol. I, p. 238.

Dr. Pelc, leader of the local Czech, also conceded that the "agreement was based on ethnic status quo familiar to all . . . ." <sup>1</sup> As a result of the November territorial delimitation the official Czech claims based on "historical rights" and claiming Teschen as an integral part of the Bohemian Crown were seriously prejudiced. Viewed from this wider scope, the signing of the November Agreement assumed an international importance. The Teschen conflict no longer involved only local elements, but was gradually extended to Prague and Warsaw.

The possibility of a struggle over Teschen was foreseen by both the Czech and the Polish leaders during the war. <sup>2</sup> They were aware of their mutual claims on Austrian Silesia, yet they also knew that the actual possession of Teschen depended on political reality connected with their quest for national independence. As Masaryk pointed out in regard to his conversation with Roman Dmowski, President of the Polish National Committee in exile, in 1916:

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<sup>1</sup>Ferdinand Pelc, O Těšínsko: Vzpomínky a úvahy (Slezská Ostrava, 1928), quoted by Peroutka, I, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup>Masaryk, pp. 234-35.

Little was then said of the Silesian question which was very subordinate in comparison with our common aims.<sup>1</sup>

Knowing that the Entente Powers would have the decisive word in post-war territorial settlement, the Polish and Czech statesmen devised a similar tactical strategy based on the maximal and minimal objectives.

Their first aim was to secure as many assurances and guarantees from the Allies as the opportunities warranted. In this case their official claims and memoranda demanded either the whole or in the least the greater part of the Duchy. For example in a confidential memorandum prepared for Sir Edward Grey and presented to him on May 1915, Masaryk claimed the whole Duchy of Teschen as the integral part of the Bohemian crown.<sup>2</sup> Similar claims were made by Roman Dmowski for the Poles. In his memorandum presented to Balfour on March 1917, Dmowski claimed almost the entire Duchy. He excluded the district of Frydek.<sup>3</sup> A later, more specific note was dispatched to President Wilson on October 8, 1918. In it Dmowski referred to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>"Independent Bohemia", Czech translation reprinted in Beneš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. III, pp. 237-56. See also Masaryk, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup>Dmowski, Aneksy VI, pp. 445-47 and Aneksy X, pp. 506-20.

the Polish version of the Prague agreement<sup>1</sup> according to which ethnic self-determination was to be applied in Lower Silesia.<sup>2</sup>

The second tactic was to negotiate a compromise settlement between each other. In the spring of 1918 two meetings between Czechs and Poles took place; one in Prague and the other in Paris.

The Prague conversations were conducted in an unofficial atmosphere during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Czech National Theater when several prominent Poles assembled there.<sup>3</sup> The outcome of the negotiations was a vague oral agreement that the issue of Teschen would be postponed until the end of the war. Then a Czech-Polish commission presided upon by a neutral chairman was to be set up and was to negotiate an amicable settlement.<sup>4</sup> The vagueness of the agreement soon gave rise to numerous interpretations. The Czechs claimed that a postponement of the problem

<sup>1</sup>See below,

<sup>2</sup>R. Dmowski, "Memorandum to Wilson on Polish Aims," reprinted in S. Kozicki, Sprawa granic Polski na Konferencji Pokojowej w Paryżu 1919 (Warsaw, 1921), pp. 170 ff, in P. Roth, Die Entstehung des polnischen Staates: Eine voelkerrechtlichpolitische Untersuchung (Berlin: O. Liebmann, 1926), p. 133.

<sup>3</sup>Members of the Polish Club such as Stanislaw Glabinski, Wincenty Witos, J. Moraczewski, and others were present.

<sup>4</sup>Peroutka, Vol. 1, pp. 230-31.

was reached and nothing else. The Poles, however, claimed that the ethnic principle was agreed upon as the determining factor in the future border delimitations.<sup>1</sup>

Though inconclusive, the negotiations between Beneš and Dmowski in Paris were conducted in a more efficient manner. The Czechs offered to cede the eastern, predominantly Polish district of Teschen, and to establish common boundaries on the Vistula. Beneš's aim was to preserve the industrial and mining districts as well as the Oderberg railroad for the future Czech State. Dmowski rejected the offer being unfavourable to Poland.<sup>2</sup> The conflict remained pending. Consequently both Beneš and Dmowski knew that the unresolved Teschen border dispute would re-emerge once the boundaries between the Czech and the Polish states were discussed.

The discrepancy between the maximal and minimal objectives required a cautious and tortuous diplomacy, especially so because both strategies were related to international developments. As long as the cause of national independence was insecure, the idea

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<sup>1</sup>Peroutka, Vol. I, pp. 230-31. Also Poland, Sekretariat Jeneralny Delegacji Polskiej, Akty i dokumenty dotyczace sprawy granic Polski, 1918-1919 (Paris: 1920-1926, 4 vols.), Vol. IV, pp. 68-69, in Piotr S. Wandycz, France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925 (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1962), p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Beneš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. II, pp. 97-98.

of dividing Teschen along ethnic lines was not altogether intolerable to either the Czechs or the Poles.<sup>1</sup> By fall of 1918, however, the hope that national recognition might be achieved, changed the attitude of the negotiators. Their national interests dictated firmer diplomacy. The first to assume a distinctly negative attitude towards a negotiated settlement were the Czechs. This sudden volte face was due to the Czech diplomatic successes in their quest for recognition.

In June 1918 France officially recognized the Czech National Council in Paris as the nucleus of the future Czechoslovak Government. The note, signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Pichon, also committed France to support Czech claims to the historic boundaries of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See R. W. Seton-Watson, Masaryk in England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), p. 47; also Karel Kramář, Pět přednášek o zahraniční politice (Praha: Pražská akciová tiskárna, 1938), p. 68. It appears that during the war period even Dr. Kramář, the most nationalist member of the Czech Delegation at the Peace Conference, had accepted the possibility of a divided Teschen.

<sup>2</sup>Pichon to Benes, June 30, 1918. Czechoslovakia, Archiv diplomatických dokumentů československých (Prague, 1927-1928), Vol. I., in Benes, Světová válka . . ., Vol. II, pp. 100 and 229.

The Czech diplomatic success was due to the bargaining power of the Czech Legion in Russia. Due to the exigencies of the military situation, France formally recognized the Czech Council as the ipso facto

When guaranteeing Silesia, Pichon had been, as Beneš<sup>1</sup> later admitted, unaware that a conflict between Czechoslovakia and Poland might arise there. In an official statement Beneš later confessed that had he raised the problem of Teschen, Pichon would never have signed the guarantee.<sup>1</sup>

This diplomatic success raised the hopes of the Czechs that the entire area might be acquired. Under these circumstances the authorities in Prague ignored the note of October 1918 sent by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, St. Glabinski, in which he referred to the Prague Agreement and requested the appointment of Czech delegates to the formerly agreed upon territorial commission.<sup>2</sup>

The activities of the Prague government reveal that the Czech statesmen anticipated difficulties over Teschen. They were ready to risk diplomatic

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government representing the Czech nation on September 28, 1918. Under similar political and military pressures Great Britain and the U.S. recognized the Czechs as an Allied nation, but refused any territorial commitments. "Accord entre le gouvernement de la République Française et le Conseil National tchécoslovaque, concernant le statut de la nation tchécoslovaque, en France, Septembre 28, 1918," in Beneš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. II, p. 319.

<sup>1</sup>"Statement to the Permanent Committee of the Czechoslovak National Assembly," August 4, 1920. Reprinted in Edvard Beneš, Problémy nově Evropy a zahraniční politika československá: projevy a úvahy z r. 1919-1924 (Praha: Melantrich, 1924), p. 62.

<sup>2</sup>Grappin, p. 40.



negotiating or even a conflict over the Duchy rather than to acknowledge a locally concluded agreement that suggested a possible modus vivendi between the two principal national minority groups. The November Agreement, dividing Teschen along ethnic lines, was not advantageous to Prague.

Taken by surprise, the reaction of the Czech Government towards the November Agreement was ambiguous. Officially the Czechs neither accepted nor rejected it. Its existence, however, was implicitly admitted by Prague in a series of diplomatic démarches. At first a note of warning, stressing the transient character of the Agreement, was sent to Glabinski.<sup>1</sup> On November 30, encouraged by the constitutional and political difficulties in Poland, Kramář adopted a more curt tone in his second protest note addressed to the Polish

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<sup>1</sup>The note reads:

If the Polish Government will issue instructions to its authorities in the given districts /of Teschen/not to take any steps to change the existing state of affairs without a preliminary and formal agreement with the Czech authorities, the National Council is prepared to give similar instructions to its representatives in Moravska Ostrava. It is evident that the/existing/state of affairs in no way prejudices the aspirations of both nations who will make them known at the moment when the general conference of powers will assemble to determine definitely the new orders of/both/states.

Poland, Sekretariat Jeneralny Delegacji Polskiej, Akty i dokumenty dotyczace sprawy granic Polski, 1918-1919 (Paris, 1920-1926), Vol. IV, p. 71, in Wandycz, p. 79. (My own underlining).

authorities in Galicia.<sup>1</sup> This time Kramář<sup>1v</sup> demanded that Czech sovereignty over the entire Lower Silesia be immediately recognized by the Polish Rada in Teschen.<sup>2</sup> Two days later Karel Lochner, the Czech Consul in Cracow, tried to communicate verbally a similar message to Leon Wasilewski in Warsaw. The new Foreign Minister, however, rejected the message reminding Lochner that he had not been officially accredited for such a diplomatic démarche.<sup>3</sup>

In December Pilsudski, preoccupied with domestic problems, made a last furtive attempt at a compromise. A special mission was dispatched to Prague with the aim of securing official recognition of the November Agreement and repeating the request for a formation of a joint territorial commission.<sup>4</sup> The fact that the mission failed to accomplish its objective revealed three points: a) that the Czechs, counting with French support, were set on having the entire Lower Silesia; b) that nothing short of force would

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<sup>1</sup>The note called the conclusion of the November Agreement an "acte arbitraire" committed by the Polish Rada. The latter was accused of having failed to inform Prague in the "official and customary way." Grappin, p. 48; also Witt, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Grappin, p. 48; also Witt, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup>D. Wandycz, "Zapomniany list Pilsudskiego do Masaryka," Orzeł Biały, Nos. 32-35. Cited by P. Wandycz, p. 31.

unseat the Rada Narodowa which had consolidated its power in Teschen; c) that the final settlement of the Silesian conflict could only be reached at the Peace Conference in Paris.

The conviction that struggle was inevitable and that Allied opinion would be decisive, guided the Czech domestic and foreign policy. At home public opinion was roused by speeches in the National Assembly and by the press which devoted greater space to the Silesian problem than ever before.<sup>1</sup> Masaryk's statements were also part of the new diplomatic campaign. His Message to the Nation appeared in an edited version in The New Europe. The speech stressed "friendship with (. . .) neighbours . . ." as the keystone of Czech foreign policy. Nevertheless, he warned

the way in which the Poles intend to obtain our territory is inadmissible. We must first consolidate the territory of our state, and then we shall willingly discuss the question of frontier rectification. We hope that the Poles will accept our standpoint, especially as their action might tempt others to similar action at the expense of the Poles. When the Poles have their State we shall treat with them as one State with another.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>On December 12 Kramář in a speech compared the pro-Austrian loyalties of the Poles during the war with the activities of the Czechs who were the allies of the Entente Powers. For details see: Grappin, p. 51; also Feroutka, Vol. I, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup>"Masaryk's Message to the Nation," The New Europe, Vol. X, No. 118, January 16, 1919, pp. 20-23.

Masaryk cleverly introduced a novel element, aimed at the Great Powers, into Czech diplomacy. Namely, the comparison between democratic Czechoslovakia which aimed at replacing the vacuum left by the disintegrated Dual Monarchy by an active co-operation between the Succession States, and Poland whose expansionistic and chaotic policy might facilitate Bolshevik unrest in Eastern Europe. The argument of Bolshevik threat in the industrial Teschen area was exploited by the Czech statesmen throughout the peace negotiations.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of international relations the new diplomacy appeared to be successful at first. Both France and Great Britain were inclined to leave Teschen under Czech jurisdiction; at least until the final decision of the Peace Conference.<sup>2</sup> In reality, however, the greater part of the Duchy was under the administration and military occupation of the Polish Rada.

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<sup>1</sup>Beneš to Pichon, January 10, 1919. Czechoslovakia, Archiv Ministerstva Zahraničních Věcí (hereafter cited as AMZV), "Paris Archive," No. 212. Cited by J. S. Hájek, Wilsonovská legenda v dějinách ČSR (Praha: Státní nakladatelství politické literatury, 1953), p. 134.

Reports by local gendarmerie on labour unrest can be found in SAO, ZNV, 81/18, 398/18, and 370/18, in Otáhal, pp. 92-93.

<sup>2</sup>"Copy of the Reply of the French Government to the Government of German-Austria," FR, Vol. 11, p. 383; see also Lloyd George, The Truth . . ., Vol. 11, p. 929.

By January the situation in Teschen became critical. Until January 16 Polish political and constitutional affairs were unsettled. The national government was neither properly established nor officially recognized.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the Czechs, the Polish political leaders were divided among themselves. On January 16, however, Jędrzej Moraczewski's weak Socialist Cabinet officially resigned. The fear of remaining divided and of not being represented at the Peace Conference led to a compromise between Ignacy Paderewski, leader of Poles in exile, and Józef Piłsudski, Head of State.<sup>2</sup> The decision to hold election of deputies to the Warsaw Diet on January 26 was upheld by the new Government.<sup>3</sup> That part of Teschen which was administered by the Rada Narodowa was included among the electoral districts of Poland.

Were the election to take place it would not only have testified to Polish preponderance, but would

<sup>1</sup>Due to the distrust of Piłsudski, the Western Powers delayed recognition to Poland. The United States granted recognition on January 30; France on February 24; and Great Britain on February 25, 1919. The Czechs officially recognized Poland only on May 28, 1919. Z. B. Kutrzeba, Polska odrodzona (Cracow, 1921), p. 187, quoted by P. Roth, pp. 56-57.

<sup>2</sup>Josef Blociszewski, La Restauration de la Pologne et la diplomatie européenne (Paris: Librairie de la Cour d'Appel de l'Ordre des Avocats, 1927), p. 144.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

have implied Polish sovereignty over the greater part of Teschen.<sup>1</sup> Technically this would have placed the Poles in an advantageous position at the Peace Conference.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, the Czech Government could not permit the election to take place.<sup>3</sup> Knowing that negotiations with the Poles would not bring positive results, the alarmed Czechs faced two alternatives: either to have Teschen placed under Allied, preferably French occupational forces, or to force the Poles out by a military offensive. Both Beneš and Masaryk hoped that were Teschen occupied by friendly French forces, the Duchy might be gained without an open conflict with Poland.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore an open aggression might have an averse effect on the diplomatic negotiations at Paris. However, were peaceful means to fail, an open conflict would not then be avoided.<sup>5</sup>

Both statesmen hoped that the economic and political disorganization in Central Europe was

<sup>1</sup>British Commissioner in Teschen, E. C. Wilton to Curzon, April 29, 1920. DBFP, Vol. X, p. 667.

<sup>2</sup>Blóciszewski, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup>Wilton to Curzon, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 667. Wilton reported conversation with Beneš.

<sup>4</sup>Beneš to Pichon, January 10, 1919, AMZV, "Paris Archive," No. 212, in Hájek, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup>Beneš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. III, p. 490.

opportune to their request for the temporary neutralization of Teschen. The Western Powers were anxious to rehabilitate the territories of the former Dual Monarchy. The coal of Teschen and its railroad lines were crucial to the reconstruction of Central Europe.<sup>1</sup> Under such circumstances the decreasing volume of production and the local labour unrest could become an issue of political importance. The Czechs were quick to accuse the Poles of being responsible for the sudden decline in the local productivity. They claimed that lacking legal authority, the Polish Rada was unable to maintain order among the restless miners. The miners supposedly were being indoctrinated by Bolshevik agents penetrating Silesia from Galicia.<sup>2</sup> Taking advantage of French anti-Bolshevik attitude, Beneš tried to secure from Marshal Foch an authorization to occupy the entire Silesian Teschen either by Allied forces or by Czech units commanded by French officers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Karvin and Ostrava districts are the centres of Czech heavy industry. They produce 75% of Czech coal, 92.5% of coke, and 80% of raw iron. 50.7% of its population was employed in the local mining and industry. Otáhal, pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup>Beneš to Pichon, AMZV, "Paris Archive." No. 212; also SAO, Okresní hejtmanství Frydek, "Bolshevism and its persecutions", No. 432/19, quoted by Otáhal, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>Beneš to Pichon, January 10, 1919, AMZV, "Paris Archive," No. 212, cited by Hájek, p. 134. Marshal Foch's official capacity of Commander of Allied Forces would have lent legitimacy to Czech intervention. See Peroutka, Vol. II, pp. 603-604.

Masaryk followed up similar tactics in his conversation with the members of the Inter-Allied Economic Commission.<sup>1</sup>

The Allies did not have sufficient troops at their disposal. Preoccupied with the Armistice they did nothing to ease the tense Czech-Polish relations. The only reaction of the Great Powers towards the spreading anarchy in East Central Europe was a joint declaration, warning against any acts of aggression. They warned that any such act would "seriously prejudice the claims of those who use such means."<sup>2</sup> This warning was general and not specifically directed against the Czechs.

The precise role of France during the January negotiations is uncertain. Paris neither rejected the Czech proposals of occupying the Duchy, nor sent the promised French troops.<sup>3</sup> Yet the French Government must have been aware of the pending invasion, because on January 18, the resident French Minister in

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<sup>1</sup>Report by Major Amos J. Peaslee, David Hunter Miller, My Diary at the Peace Conference of Paris With Documents (New York: privately printed, 1928), Vol. III, pp. 320 ff.

<sup>2</sup>FR, Vol. III, p. 715. (January 24, 1919).

<sup>3</sup>Report by Archibald Cary Coolidge (Director of the American Mission in Austria, whose representatives investigated the Czech invasion), reprinted in FR, Vol. III, pp. 320-21. Also Peroutka, Vol. II, pp. 603-604.



Prague, Louis Clément-Simon, received an answer from Paris promising a French detachment of troops. He is reported to have notified the Czech Government and to have counceled patience.<sup>1</sup> During the actual intervention Clément-Simon conspicuously absented himself from Prague for a few days.<sup>2</sup>

The ambiguous attitude of France and the non-interfering policy of the Allies encouraged the Czech Government to take the possession of the Duchy and to risk the consequences later. The decisive factors responsible for the aggressiveness in Czech foreign policy were complex and numerous. Above all the political ideology (developed by Masaryk and Beneš during the war) based on close co-operation with the other Succession States was superceded by nationalist aspirations and domestic political exigencies which negated any sort of compromise over Teschen.<sup>3</sup> On the domestic political scene the President of the Council of Ministers, Dr. Karel Kramář; the Minister of Interior, Antonín Švehla; and the Minister of National

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<sup>1</sup>Report by Archibald Cary Coolidge, FR, Vol. XII, pp. 320-21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>In December the National Assembly moved to "reject the claims of the Polish State on all Teschen Silesia." Czechoslovakia, Národní Shromáždění, Těsnopisecké zprávy, 1918-1919, Vol. I, p. 1061, quoted by Wandycz, pp. 82-3. See also Peroutka, Vol. I, pp. 222-23.

Defense, V. Klofáč viewed the dispute over Lower Silesia from a purely national standpoint.<sup>1</sup> They did not understand the fragile equilibrium between rehabilitation and consolidation of Europe as envisaged by the Great Powers, and the delicate diplomacy undertaken by Beneš in order to extend Czechoslovak frontiers to the maximum without having to resort to open aggression.

Influential Silesian Czechs also applied pressure on the Government, demanding military protection against the Polish Rada.<sup>2</sup> While the nation clamored for action, outside of Czechoslovakia the situation was equally favourable for an offensive. If action were to take place in Teschen, it was to be accomplished before the new Polish Government had consolidated its powers and before the Polish elections had taken place. Furthermore, due to military engagement in Eastern Galicia, the Poles withdrew most of their troops from the Teschen area. Reassured by these factors, the Czech Government ignored Beneš's last minute warning against any form of aggression that might prejudice the Czech cause at the Peace Conference.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Karel Kramář was temporarily more popular than Masaryk. It was not till May 1919 that he lost his position in the Government.

<sup>2</sup>Peroutka, Vol. II, p. 602.

<sup>3</sup>FR, Vol. XII, pp. 320-21.

In order to justify the military operation, and to prepare the Peace Conference for the military coup, Svehla prepared a Memorandum enumerating Czech grievances and emphasizing once more the economic and ideological issues.<sup>1</sup> The note was a diplomatic warning of the impending invasion. It read:

Le Gouvernement tchécoslovaque a décidé d'envoyer dans la contrée de Tesin occupée par les Polonais, des troupes de l'Entente, afin d'améliorer la situation et avant tout de mettre de l'ordre et de l'unité dans l'administration publique.<sup>2</sup>

The Memorandum was then communicated to the Peace Conference and to Warsaw.<sup>3</sup>

The Memorandum indicates that the Czechs still hoped to gain Teschen without the need of fighting for it. There were two factors which, so the Government in Prague hoped, would persuade the Poles to retreat without resistance. First, the Czech forces were superior in number and in equipment to the Polish troops.<sup>4</sup> Second, the services of "Allied" officers

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<sup>1</sup>Czechoslovakia, Mémoire No. 4a, Memorandum sur la situation en Silésie (January 21, 1919), reprinted in Raschhofer, pp. 128-57.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 134 ff.

<sup>3</sup>The Polish authorities in Galicia had prevented the Czech note from reaching Warsaw in time. Temperley, Vol. IV, pp. 355-56.

<sup>4</sup>The Poles had one equipped battalion at Oderberg and half of a battalion in Dombrowa and Frystat. The rest were troops without artillery or cavalry. The Czechs sent sixteen battalions, some 15,000 men well equipped with artillery. They attacked in two formations:

were to be employed.<sup>1</sup> Not only were they to add authority to the Czech military coup, but pretending to act under the orders from the Entente Powers, they were to negotiate with the Poles in Teschen. Actually these men were stationed in Czechoslovakia as military instructors and were mostly of Czech origin. Significantly, the commanding officer, Colonel Armand Philippe, and his second-in-command, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Gillain, were Frenchmen.<sup>2</sup> These men were officers of the Allied forces, but it appears that they did not act on orders from Paris.<sup>3</sup> The instructions

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one marched against Oderberg-Frydek, and the other against the center of Teschen. Ferdinand Pelc, O Těšínsko: Vzpomínky a úvahy (Slezská Ostrava, 1928), pp. 194-95 in Soják, p. 46. For Polish figures see Grappin, p. 55.

<sup>1</sup>The officers were: Lieutenant Colonel Josef Šnejdársek, a naturalized Frenchman; Lieutenant Colonel Voska, a naturalized American and a long-time friend of Masaryk; Major Rozeda, who served in the Italian Army; and Major Crossfield, "representing" Great Britain. FR, Vol. XII, pp. 320-22; C. E. Callwell, Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, His Life and Letters (London: Cassell, 1927), Vol. II, p. 168; also Grappin, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Grappin, p. 55. Also FR, Vol. XII, pp. 320-22.

<sup>3</sup>The following communiqué was issued by the Inter-Allied Mission in Warsaw which investigated the invasion:

"Le capitaine Rawlings, représentant de la mission anglaise à Varsovie, et le lieutenant Foster, représentant de la mission américaine à Varsovie, sont revenus aujourd'hui (le 31 janvier) à Varsovie de Morawska Ostrawa et de Prague. A Prague, ils ont conféré avec le président Masaryk et avec le commandant en chef des troupes tchécoslovaques. Le résultat

they followed were from the Government in Prague, and revealed that the Czechs counted on taking Teschen swiftly. If resistance were met, the army was to consolidate itself along the Vistula. The following were the directives given to Lieutenant Colonel Josef Šnejdársek:

Nebude-li obav z odporu na polské straně, obsadíte zbylou část Slezska až po hranici. V případě, že polské vojsko projeví odpor, zadržíte se na Visle a zabezpečíte se tam, jakož i na severním konci Slezska proti eventuelnímu náporu se strany polské.<sup>1</sup>

The directives indicate that Prague feared the consequences of any prolonged struggle with the Poles.

Despite the careful planning and the presence of the "Allied" officers, the Czech bluff had failed. The commander of the Silesian troops, Colonel F. Latinik, rejected the Czech ultimatum presented to him on January 23. The ultimatum requested evacuation of Teschen within two hours by the Polish troops. Latinik succeeded in informing Warsaw of the Czech invasion

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de leur voyage a été de mettre hors de contestation le fait que l'Entente n'a pas autorisé l'armée tchèque à entreprendre une action en Silésie de Teschen et qu'aucun des officiers de l'Entente servant dans l'armée tchèque n'a reçu de son gouvernement l'autorisation de se donner le titre de chef de la commission interalliée ou de prendre la parole au nom des Alliés." Communiqué by Colonel Wade, Head of the British Mission, February 1, 1919. Reprinted in Grappin, p. 57.

<sup>1</sup>Directives reprinted by Peroutka, Vol. II, p. 610.

before the actual fighting began.<sup>1</sup> Encountering resistance, the Czech army did not cross the Vistula.

The Czech Government had underestimated the general reaction to the military coup. The price for occupying some three-quarters of Lower Silesia was to bring the boundary dispute before the international tribunal. The very thing that Beneš's diplomacy tried to avoid.<sup>2</sup> Within Poland the outcry against the "unexpected aggression" and "indescribable treachery" was boundless.<sup>3</sup> Not even the prompt investigation of the affair by the Allied missions in Warsaw and their public assurances that the "Allied" officers had not acted on orders from Paris could calm the Polish indignation.<sup>4</sup>

Thus ended the first phase of the Czech-Polish territorial controversy. It became evident that

<sup>1</sup>For details of events see the reports of the Collidge Commission which investigated the Czech attack, in FR, Vol. XII, pp. 317 ff.

<sup>2</sup>In a letter concerning Poland, Beneš favoured "Diplomatic neutrality" to Polish territorial claims. Beneš to Kramář, November 20, 1918, in Beneš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. III, p. 522.

<sup>3</sup>Poland, Sejm, Sprawozdania stenograficzne, 1919, (debates in the Polish Diet on February 20), Vols. II and III, pp. 68-72 and 104-105. Cited by Wandycz, p. 84. Also W. Baranowski, Rozmowy z Pilsudskim, 1916-1931 (Warsaw: 1938), p. 119, in Wandycz, p. 84.

<sup>4</sup>Communiqué by Colonel Wade, in Grappin, p. 57.

( ) the prestige and authority of the Peace Conference was required to settle the Teschen problem.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TESCHEN CONFLICT AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE

The reaction of the Great Powers towards the Czech invasion was one of embarrassment and annoyance. Contrary to the estimates of the Prague Government, the offensive could not have occurred in a less opportune moment. The Allies, preoccupied with military problems and issues dealing with Germany, were not inclined to get involved in East European territorial disputes. Lloyd George later stated that the Teschen affair "very nearly produced an angry conflict between two Allied States", and had forced the peacemakers "to interrupt the proceedings."<sup>1</sup> In addition to more pressing exigencies, the military coup demanded the reappraisal of British policy towards East Central Europe in general and towards Czechoslovakia and Poland in particular.

The war had revealed that East Central Europe was an important buffer between Germany's "Drang nach Osten" and British interests in the Near and Middle East. Influenced by these factors the Foreign Office had

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<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, House of Commons, Debates, Fifth Series, Vol. 114, April 16, 1919, columns 2938-2939.



prepared several memoranda for the British delegation. Their study reveals that the instructions for East Central Europe were fairly closely observed by the men who determined British policy at the Peace Conference. The memorandum simply titled "Europe" stressed that while Great Britain "has no direct territorial interests or ambitions, nor has it special peculiar commercial interests," it should see to it that "stable conditions" which would facilitate trade were achieved in Europe.<sup>1</sup> The pamphlet expressly warned against direct interference and cautioned British impartiality in all disputes as especially rewarding.<sup>2</sup>

On December 9, 1918 another memorandum, dealing with Poland, was issued. Its author warned against "exaggerated Polish claims" that might endanger Poland's future once Germany and Russia have recovered.<sup>3</sup> Only a national Poland having the least opportunity for border frictions was to be encouraged.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, Foreign Office, "Europe", p. 1. Can be found in Foster Papers, MS Group 27, II D 7, Vol. 45, subject file 80, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Idem., "Poland", p. 1 in Foster Papers.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

The memorandum devoted to the Czech question shows a predisposition for the young Republic. The author assumed that, due to its exposed geographical position, Czechoslovakia could not engage in expansionistic foreign policy but would have to maintain friendly relations with Germany and Russia.<sup>1</sup> Under these circumstances the Czechs were to have strategic boundaries that would assure the protection and economic stability of the new state. The author advocated overt, friendly British-Czech relations because "both politically and economically" Czechoslovakia should "prove a valuable link between the Anglo-Saxon Powers and Russia."<sup>2</sup> Analyzing Czech-Polish future relations, the author felt that while an alliance between the two republics was "desirable", it could "hardly be secured unless the Poles abandon altogether their aggressive imperialist schemes against Russia."<sup>3</sup>

As far as Teschen was concerned, the Foreign Office saw no reason why the Duchy should not be

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<sup>1</sup>Idem., "South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans", pp. 33-4, in Foster Papers.

<sup>2</sup>"South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans", pp. 33-4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

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divided in accordance with nationality. However, because Czechoslovakia is a landlocked state, a special importance was to be given to transportation facilities.<sup>1</sup> Similar views were expressed by the author of the Memorandum on Poland.<sup>2</sup> According to Lloyd George, the Foreign Office approved of awarding the eastern Bieliz region to Poland.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, Czech historical claims in Silesia were "economically justified, except in east (Polish section)."<sup>4</sup> As later events show, British policy towards the Duchy had to be continuously modified by pressures from elsewhere. However, wherever it was possible, the above directives were closely observed.

Just prior to the Teschen incident several points indicated by the memoranda were already followed up by the British delegation. Both Lloyd George and Balfour firmly believed that Germany and Russia ultimately would recover and assume their power

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Poland", p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Lloyd George, The Truth . . ., Vol. II, pp. 927-30.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

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positions in European politics.<sup>1</sup> Under these circumstances Polish aggressive aggrandizement was to be opposed. They feared that over-extension of Polish claims might later endanger the security of Poland itself.<sup>2</sup> In the interest of Great Britain Poland was to be strengthened in order to prevent an alliance between Germany and Russia, but her strength was to be in her national unity rather than at the expense of her neighbours.<sup>3</sup>

On this point British policy clashed with both France and the United States. France fearing resurgent Germany and spreading of communism was ready to build up "Greater Poland" as a potential buffer state.<sup>4</sup> In the Teschen conflict, however, (as later negotiations will reveal), the differences in approach

<sup>1</sup>Balfour's speech at the meeting of the Supreme War Council, January 22, 1919. FR, Vol. III, p. 672.

<sup>2</sup>General Smuts wrote the following about Poland: "La Pologne ne peut exister sans la bonne volonté de l'Allemagne et de la Russie." Paul Mantoux, Les Délibérations du Conseil des Quatre (24 mars-28 juin, 1919) (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1955), Vol. I, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>J. Headlam-Morley, Studies in Diplomatic History (London: Methuen, 1930), p. 183; also J. D. Gregory, On the Edge of Diplomacy (London: Hutchinson, n.d.), p. 169.

<sup>4</sup>Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement (New York: Doubleday, 1923), Vol. II, p. 13; also Beneš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. II, pp. 98-99.

between Great Britain and France were in the emphasis rather than in the direct policy affecting the Duchy. The American delegation, dominated by the will of President Woodrow Wilson, was not so much concerned with European balance of power, strategic frontiers, or the build-up of viable states. Their main emphasis was to strengthen national states based on the moral principle of self-determination. Nevertheless, self-interest should not be overlooked as Lloyd George had indicated that Polish vote in the United States had, to a degree, influenced the American pro-Polish bias manifested throughout the territorial negotiations pertaining to Teschen.<sup>1</sup>

To sum up, the attitude of Great Britain towards Czechoslovakia and Poland was influenced by wider and narrower interests. The Czech claims, being easier to adjust, led to more cordial relations with Great Britain than those of Poland. Another determining factor in British and Allied attitudes towards the two states was their respective representation at the Peace Conference. The Czech delegation, led by Drs. Karel Kramář<sup>V</sup> and Edvard Beneš<sup>V</sup>, Premier and Foreign Minister respectively,

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd George, The Truth . . ., Vol. I, p. 311.

was supported by a unified and consolidated Government in Prague. The Polish delegation was led by Roman Dmowski who held no political position in the weak Polish Cabinet. Psychological determinants also should not be discounted. Dmowski's extreme nationalism and anti-semitism alienated many influential diplomats.<sup>1</sup> Later, Ignacy Paderewski, holding the two portfolios of Premier and Foreign Minister, assumed the leadership of the Poles in Paris. A noted musician and patriot, Paderewski was popular among western delegates. Unfortunately he was no professional diplomatist.

This delicate interplay of contrasting interests was understood and exploited by Beneš.<sup>2</sup> Dealing with the men of Quai d'Orsay or the British Foreign Office Beneš tried to present Czechoslovakia as a democratic state, aware of its responsibilities and its position in Central Europe.<sup>2</sup> Above all he tried to avoid focus on Czech nationalism. By identifying

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<sup>1</sup>Dmowski called the position of the Polish Delegation as "delicate". Dmowski, p. 358. According to J. D. Gregory, Dmowski made "unfortunate impression" especially on English politicians. Gregory, p. 170. Also Beneš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. II, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup>Harold Nicolson mentions that Beneš never forgot to claim that the aim of Czechoslovakia "is the stability of Central Europe." Peacemaking, 1919 (London: Constable, 1933), Diary entry of January 16, p. 240.

the aspirations of Czechoslovakia "with the postulates of a settled peace,"<sup>1</sup> Beneš, in his own estimate, felt optimistic in gaining Teschen with British and French support.<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to the Czechs, the Poles were not satisfied with the role of a small power.<sup>3</sup> By the middle of January they were militarily engaged on almost all their frontiers. The Allies, alarmed by the events in Poland, planned to send a special mission there under the leadership of Joseph Noulens, former French Ambassador to St. Petersburg, and General Henri Niessel.<sup>4</sup> The mission was instructed to investigate the Polish situation on location and to advise a moderate foreign policy.<sup>5</sup> As it happened the concurrent Czech attack on Teschen clashed with the political developments at Paris. Under the impact of Czech

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<sup>1</sup>Emile J. Dillon, The Inside Story of the Peace Conference (New York: Harper, 1920), p. 85.

<sup>2</sup>Beneš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. II, p. 502.

<sup>3</sup>See Balfour's statement reprinted in FR, Vol. III, p. 672.

<sup>4</sup>FR, Vol. III, p. 674.

<sup>5</sup>FR, Vol. XII, p. 675. See also "Draft of Instructions for the Delegates of the Allied Governments in Poland," January 29, 1919, in FR, Vol. III, p. 779.

aggression the Allies could hardly demand Polish submissiveness. By miscalculating the consequences of the attack on Teschen, Prague had handicapped the Czech cause at the Peace Conference.<sup>1</sup> Great Britain and France who had favoured Czech possession of the Duchy temporarily suspended their support. Clemenceau, perceiving the opportunity of having the East Central European territorial issues studied before the peace treaty with Germany was completed, demanded that the two rival countries be given hearing.<sup>2</sup>

On January 29, the verbal battle between Beneš and Kramář on one side, and Dmowski on the other, took place before the Supreme Council. The roles of the two suppliant states were suddenly reversed. Instead of appearing as moderators, the Czechs had to defend an act of aggression; whereas the Poles were fortified by the American support. The American delegation, besides favouring the application of the principle of self-determination, had the Teschen affair thoroughly investigated by their observers. Their reports were generally hostile to the Czech cause.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>FR, Vol. III, p. 814. Also Miller, Diary . . ., Vol. I, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup>Report by Lieut. R. C. Foster. FR, Vol. III, pp. 218-22.



In general the Americans were inclined to divide Teschen along ethnographic lines disregarding the economic requirements of Czechoslovakia.<sup>1</sup>

At the hearing in front of the Supreme Council Dmowski was first to speak. He recalled the November Agreement and admitted that it "was approved by the Polish Government, but not by the Czecho-Slovak Government."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, he threatened with almost "inevitable" bloodshed were the Czech troops not immediately recalled. He terminated his plea by basing the Polish territorial claims on the frontiers of 1772 as "the point of departure."<sup>3</sup> Curiously he had overlooked that since 1335 the Duchy of Teschen had never been part of Poland. Therefore, appeals to the borderline of 1772 did not affect Teschen.<sup>4</sup>

In order to mitigate the Czech military offensive, Beneš prepared and distributed a special

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<sup>1</sup>Professor R. J. Kerner was the only American favoring such a division which would have preserved the Karvin and the railroad within Czechoslovakia. See "Report on the Czechoslovak Boundary Question," January 24, 1919, FR, Vol. XII, pp. 313-17. Also negative comments by Collidge, FR, Vol. XII, p. 312.

<sup>2</sup>FR, Vol. III, pp. 777-78.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>See above, p. 15.

memorandum which clarified the essential statistical, historical, ethnographic, and economic reasons why Teschen was indispensable to Czechoslovakia. He underlined that the strength of the Czechoslovak State was based on its economic strength. Only by being economically viable could the Republic escape from becoming a satellite of its more powerful neighbours. As far as political reasons were concerned, Beneš pointed out that dependence upon Poland for coal and transport would be a "political suicide."<sup>1</sup> In summary, the memorandum presented Beneš's main policy in regard to Teschen which he never gave up throughout the prolonged negotiations. In essence this policy consisted of preserving the strategic railroad and the important Karvin region for Czechoslovakia, yet at the same time extending an offer to negotiate a compromise. Were this to fail, Beneš disclosed his willingness to submit to the final decision of the Supreme Council. It appears that his acute sense for political reality made him aware that only an Allied intervention was capable of achieving a settlement in the Czech-Polish border dispute. Beneš stressed that any contrary decision

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<sup>1</sup>Czechoslovakia, Memorandum No. 4, Le problème de la Silésie de Teschen. Reprinted in Raschhofer, pp. 111-24.

would prevent Czechoslovakia from complete sovereignty over its international affairs and relations.<sup>1</sup>

Benes's<sup>v</sup> oral exposé was moderate in tone, re-emphasizing the factors already mentioned in his pamphlet. Kramář's<sup>v</sup> speech, however, was of a more nationalist tone.<sup>2</sup> He accused the Poles of having invaded Teschen despite the fact that Great Britain and France had officially left the Duchy under Czech jurisdiction. He also pointed to the mobilization of Silesian male population and to the planned Polish election. Finally he stressed the fear of communism and the ever present economic factor.<sup>3</sup>

The Supreme Council displayed a reluctance to commit itself to any final decision. While the economic and political factors mentioned in Beneš's memorandum were indisputable, accepting them would have implied that the Allies were sanctioning aggression. As a delay tactic, the case was referred to the Noulens mission with the request that recommendations and a report be drafted prior to the departure of the mission to Poland.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>There was an agreement between Beneš and Kramář that the latter would present a chauvinistic tone while Beneš would be more accommodating. Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 66.

<sup>3</sup>FR, Vol. III, pp. 777 and 783-84.

On January 31, Ambassador Moulens presented the final report.<sup>1</sup> Lacking expert knowledge of local conditions and the power of enforcement, the report suggested what might be called a temporary expedient. Moulens informed the Council that the Mission was unable to persuade Benes of the necessity to have the Czech forces withdrawn to the demarcation line of the November Agreement. The Czechs feared the consequences of such a retreat would have on their and Masaryk's political future. The Poles were equally obstinate in their demand that the Czechs retreat. In order to break the deadlock, Benes suggested a diplomatic compromise, namely, that the Czech and Polish troops be withdrawn and "the contested districts were occupied by three Allied battalions." A force sufficient to maintain order in the Duchy. Influenced by these circumstances the report recommended a demarcation line which would leave the Karvin basin and a section of the railroad (north of Teschen) under the Czech control. The Town of Teschen and the south-eastern part of the Duchy would remain under Polish authority. The administration

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<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise specified the following information is based on FR, Vol. III, pp. 818 ff.

and "other particulars" were to remain, until the final decision of the Peace Conference, in accordance with the November Agreement. Noulens agreed with the Czechs that disturbances might arise "as a result of the direct contact of the troops of the two nations along the railroad", and suggested Allied military intervention. Were such military neutralization of the railroad not possible, a formal agreement between Poland and Czechoslovakia was to be concluded.<sup>1</sup> The report advised that an Allied Commission be formed and sent to Teschen. It was to control the mining region and insure the distribution of the products. The Czechs, knowing that the Allies were concerned with the immediate problem of supplying Poland and that compliance on their part might turn the state of affairs in the end, promised to "furnish coal and a proportion of their manufactures, especially munitions and arms" to Poland.<sup>2</sup>

Beneš's diplomacy proved correct. The final decision of the Supreme Council displayed leniency towards the Czechs, and a preoccupation with the economic

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 818-19.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 820-21.

restoration of Europe.<sup>1</sup> The Council adopted the recommended provisory demarcation line and the dispatch of an Inter-Allied Commission. In order to prevent unnecessary frictions, the Polish elections within Teschen were not permitted - another Czech diplomatic victory.<sup>2</sup> The Council, however, refused to send Allied troops to the Duchy. The refusal of military intervention was a mistake which not only attested of Allied weakness in East Central Europe, but which undermined the authority of the above commission. Finally, a Czech-Polish Agreement was to be drafted. Under the pressure from the British delegation, the Great Powers took the precaution of signing the declaration before it was handed to Beneš and Dmowski for their approval.<sup>3</sup> British suspicions of a possible delay were well founded. Both Beneš and Kramář refused to sign.

Two reasons appear to have motivated their sudden change of mind. Concern for their political

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<sup>1</sup>In comparison with the November Agreement the Poles lost 48 communes and part of the Karvin coal mines. The loss of the mines may have been influenced by the fact "that whilst the Czecho-Slovaks had been producing 1,400 tons a day from their mines, the Poles were only getting 1,200 tons a day." Statement by General Botha, FR, Vol. III, p. 822.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Lloyd George and General Botha hoped that by signing the Agreement prior to handing it to the small powers the latter would have no other choice but to accept it. Ibid., p. 837.

positions in view of the nationalist feeling roused at Prague, and the realization that the February Agreement implied that Teschen was a contested area and that Czechoslovak borders could be revised.<sup>1</sup> The Agreement stated that the demarcation line was only temporary, but nevertheless it implied that division of the Duchy was a possibility. It was an implicit refutation of the Czechoslovak claims based on "historical rights."

The consequences of a prolonged impasse would have proved disastrous. As long as an agreement was not reached, the Poles remained cut off from transport by rail of supplies.<sup>2</sup> One may assume that the Czechs were not averse to weaken Poland in order to make it more amenable to Czechoslovak claims. Concerned with Poland's fate, President Wilson broke the deadlock by reaching Beneš through informal channels. The British journalist, Wickham Steed was asked "to persuade the Czechs to sign,"<sup>3</sup> while President Wilson hinted that as

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<sup>1</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>FR, Vol. III, pp. 820-22. Also Esme Howard, Theatre of Life: Life Seen from the Stalls (Boston: Little & Brown, 1936), pp. 3-5.

<sup>3</sup>Wickham Steed, Through Thirty Years, 1892-1922 (New York: Doubleday & Page, 1924), Vol. II, pp. 264-65, and 278-79.

a result of Czech obstructionism American support in other territorial issues might be withdrawn.<sup>1</sup> With the pending delimitation of Slovak boundaries, Beneš was in no position to risk the alienation of the American delegation.<sup>2</sup> On February 3, the Czech-Polish Provisory Agreement was signed.<sup>3</sup>

As Beneš had foreseen, in spite of his instructions to Švehla to adhere to the provisos he had signed, and the exchange of mutual assurances with Paderewski,<sup>4</sup> the Agreement failed to achieve a rapprochement between the Czechs and the Poles.

On the international scene the incident had several after-effects. The French support of Czechoslovakia became insufficient because the French objective aiming at close co-operation between Prague and Warsaw was being undermined by national interests of the two states. The indecision of the Supreme Council and the dispatch of the Inter-Allied Commission

<sup>1</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Only Beneš signed, Kramář refused to do so.

<sup>4</sup>Beneš to Švehla, February 21, 1919; Paderewski to Beneš, February 19; and Beneš to Paderewski, February 20, 1919, quoted by Miller, Diary . . ., Vol. XVII, p. 37.



with the instructions to gather data and to recommend a solution to the Teschen problem revealed lacunae in Allied plans for East Central Europe. Impressed by these developments, the Czechs and the Poles launched an active propaganda campaign aimed at the "uncommitted" nations such as Great Britain and the United States. Both the Czechs and the Poles published and circulated numerous official and semi-official memorandums clarifying their claims.<sup>1</sup> These works as well as the oral exposés by Dmowski and Beneš in front of the Supreme Council disclosed the unwillingness of both parties to moderate their demands.<sup>2</sup> The Poles retained their claim to the entire Teschen with the exception of Frydek; while the Czechs were ready to cede to the Poles the district of Bielitz only.

In his speech of February 5, Beneš openly appealed for British and French support. He stressed Czech "prudent and realistic" policy and once more

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<sup>1</sup>Poland, Commission Polonaise des Travaux Préparatoires au Congrès de la Paix, Mémoire concernant la délimitation des frontières entre les états Polonais et Tcheco-slovaque en Silésie de Cieszyn, Orawa et Spisz. For Czech memorandums see Rashhofer.

<sup>2</sup>Dmowski's speech of January 29, FR, Vol. III, pp. 773 ff. Speeches by Beneš and Kramář of February 5, FR, Vol. III, pp. 877-87.

tried to weaken the ethnic factor by pointing to the local Germans and Slonzaks and their unwillingness to join the Poles. Beneš even suggested a plebiscite, though at that time the outcome of a popular vote would have been questionable. He stressed that "the coal in Teschen was absolutely essential to the development of Czecho-Slovak industry." Division of the Karvin district Beneš rejected on the basis that the area formed "a geological whole." He stressed the national rather than the international value of the Oderberg-Jablunkau Line as the only link between Moravia and northern Slovakia.<sup>1</sup> Were the Poles to get it, Czechoslovakia would have been cut off the East by hostile Poland and Hungary, a solution not desired by either Great Britain or France.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the complexity of the entire Czech territorial issue, the Council constituted the Commission on Czechoslovak Affairs and referred the

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<sup>1</sup>FR, Vol. III, pp. 877-87.

<sup>2</sup>France, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Recueil des actes de la Conférence de la Paix (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1922-34), Vol. IV, (C), I, A., 17, (hereafter cited as Recueil).

( ) Czech claims to it for further study.<sup>1</sup> Temporarily the Teschen issue was withdrawn from the agenda of the Big Four.

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<sup>1</sup>The proposal that territorial problems be handled by special bodies was first made by the Quai d'Orsay on January 5. The Big Four rejected this proposal, favouring instead to grant individual hearings to the small nations. The proceedings however lacked planning or an agenda, and by the end of January the Supreme Council was forced to give in. Numerous territorial commissions were instituted ad hoc as needs arose. The Commission on Polish Affairs was formed on Balfour's initiative on February 12. FR, Vol. III, p. 887. See also Frank Swain Marston, The Peace Conference of 1919: Organization and Procedure (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), pp. 54-68.

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## CHAPTER V

### PROPOSALS AND COUNTER-PROPOSALS

The interval between the signing of the February Agreement and April (when the Teschen dispute once more figured on the agenda of the Peace Conference) may be divided into two arenas of diplomatic activity: Lower Silesia, where local elements tried to influence the decision of the Inter-Allied Commission; and Paris, where the joint Territorial Commissions for Poland and Czechoslovakia tried to formulate a solution to the Teschen problem.<sup>1</sup> The structure and work of these bodies has to be considered in some detail because the methods used by their respective members reveal the policy of each Great Power towards the two Slav States.

Under President Wilson's insistence the experts were to study technical to the exclusion of political aspects of territorial problems.<sup>2</sup> Not only did this prove unworkable, but it enabled those negotiators who followed the instructions of their

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<sup>1</sup>In order to coordinate the study of the Teschen conflict the Commission on Czechoslovak Affairs and the Commission on Polish Affairs united. The fusion was facilitated by the fact that Jules Cambon presided on both bodies.

<sup>2</sup>FR, Vol. III, p. 852.

foreign ministries to dominate the decision making processes. The value of expert negotiators was the more important because ultimately the Big Four, pressed by other commitments, almost invariably accepted the recommendations of their experts. France, paying only lip service to the idea of collective security and the League of Nations, and being vitally interested in the developments in East Central Europe, staffed the Commissions with experienced consular personnel, well co-ordinated and in touch with the policy of the Quai d'Orsay. Ambassador Jules Cambon presided over both commissions, which enabled him to harmonize French activities. His second in command was Jules Laroche, Chief of the Central European Section of the Quai. General Le Rond represented Marshal Foch's General Staff.<sup>1</sup>

The personnel of the British Delegation also worked as a co-ordinated and well informed unit. Sir Joseph Cook, the Australian Minister of the Navy, was nominally Head of the British section at the Commission for Czechoslovak Affairs. His lack of knowledge of East European Affairs dictated that the actual policy making was left to Harold Nicolson.<sup>2</sup> The latter was receptive

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<sup>1</sup>He later headed the Territorial Sub-Committee which was charged with the study of the preliminary report on Teschen.

<sup>2</sup>His official status was Secretary of Embassy, Third Class. Nicolson, Peacemaking . . ., p. 272.

to the Czech cause being influenced by the policy of the Foreign Office. Nicolson's superiors in the Foreign Office, Sir Eyre Crowe and Sir William Tyrrell (the latter being attached to the Polish Territorial Commission) were also friendly to the Czechs. According to Nicolson's testimony, Britain sought "territorial adjustment as closely in accordance with the principle of nationality as economic necessity would permit."<sup>1</sup> In the affair of Teschen, with the exception of the eastern part, they justified the transfer of the Duchy to Czechoslovakia.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, the British and the French representatives followed similar objectives. Their endeavours were opposed by the American and the Italian experts. Italy was interested in claims based on "strategic" boundaries. It was equally interested to strengthen Czechoslovakia against Austria; however, Czech alliance with Yugoslavia and hostility to Italy's sole possible ally against French expansion in the Danubian area, Hungary, dictated cautious policy in Czech eastern boundaries. It was in Italy's self-interest to see France embarrassed in its commitments

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolson, Peacemaking . . ., Diary entry of January 29, p. 252.

to Czechoslovakia and Poland over Teschen. Under these circumstances Italian representatives displayed pro-Polish tendencies in the Silesian negotiations.<sup>1</sup>

The Italian and the American delegations were divided by antagonism based on wider, mutually incompatible factors not restricted to the Teschen affair. This prevented them from forming a united front against their Anglo-French colleagues. The American resistance was never firm, being frustrated by several inherent weaknesses within the United States Delegation. In the first place they lacked experience in negotiating. They were amateur diplomats rather than men of the State Department. Added to their inexperience was also the lack of directives as to the American position towards East Central Europe. The only guide seems to have been the principle of self-determination, but this was not easily applied where other factors clashed with it. The Teschen dispute, for example, was not primarily an ethnic, but rather an economic problem.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jules A. Laroche, "La Question de Teschen devant la Conférence de la Paix, 1919-1920", Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, (1948), p. 13. Also Beneš, Světová válka . . ., Vol. III, pp. 458-61.

<sup>2</sup>A. W. Dubois, U.S. member of the Inter-Allied Commission, to Hugh C. Wallace, U.S. Ambassador to Paris, July 15, 1920, SDNA, 760c.60F/4. See also Charles Seymour, "Versailles in Perspective", The Virginia Quarterly Review, XIX (1943), p. 487.

The Inter-Allied Permanent Commission for Teschen displayed similar characteristics as far as policy and methods were concerned. By appointing Consul Grénard Chairman, France secured an influential position on the Commission. Grénard, besides being the only experienced diplomat, was also the only expert on East European politics among his colleagues.<sup>1</sup> Great Britain was represented by a military figure, Lieutenant Colonel B. J. B. Coulson. Similarly Italy sent Lieutenant Colonel Tissi. The American point of view was represented by a small town businessman, Marcus A. Coolidge, who was "entirely devoid of any experience . . . of European politics."<sup>2</sup>

The object of the mission was to enforce the February Agreement, to maintain peace among the miners, and to ensure regular distribution of coal. Faced with this task, the Commission had no coercive powers except the mandate from the Peace Conference and the prestige of the Great Powers. To add to its difficulties, the Commission (which arrived on February 13 in Teschen) had to report every action to the Peace Conference in

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<sup>1</sup>Jules Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Opinion expressed by James A. Roy, member of the British staff in Teschen. In April Coulson was replaced by Colonel Walsh. James A. Roy, Pole and Czech in Silesia (London: Lany, 1921), p. 56.



Paris and to the Allied Mission in Warsaw. Furthermore, before they could enforce their decrees upon the local authorities they had "to secure the assent of the Governments at Prague and Warsaw to each of its proposals."<sup>1</sup>

The Czechs, counting on French support, were reluctant to comply with the terms of the February Agreement.<sup>2</sup> Colonel Coulson feared that any further delay would strengthen the belief of the Poles "that despite . . . denials the Entente Powers were really behind Czech occupation."<sup>3</sup> It was not until the personal intervention of Generals Niessel and Romei of the Allied Mission in Warsaw, that the Czech troops retreated. However, Niessel's intervention was resented by the British representatives who interpreted it as a further extension of French influence in that part of Europe.<sup>4</sup> Both the French and British delegates in Teschen feared that the démarche by the Noulen's mission undermined their own authority within Teschen.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>FR, Vol. IV, p. 474.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Howard, p. 333.

<sup>4</sup>FR, Vol. IV, p. 474; also Roy, p. 33. See Appendix B, p. 246.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

The local situation was further complicated by the fact that the new demarcation line did not coincide with the administrative zones. Administration by local Czech and Polish councils was to continue in accordance with the November Agreement. This meant that Polish communes within the Czech zone remained under the authority of the Polish Rada and vice versa.<sup>1</sup> Such an arrangement would have been difficult even under the most cordial relations. In practice it gave licence to intimidation of the local population to those who controlled the particular area militarily. The demarcation line dividing the economic unity of Teschen stimulated labour unrest, because many Polish miners resided in Polish occupied Frystat, but worked in Karvin. Because the Czechs and the Poles had established customs on the demarcation line, the returning Polish workers faced difficulties in money exchange. For example, Polish miners were paid with Czech currency which brought higher rate of exchange than Polish money, but which could not, except for a limited sum be carried across the border. The miner could invest his wages into provision, but owing to the restrictions of the Czech customs he could not

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Wambaugh, Plebiscites Since the World War: With a Collection of Official Documents (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1933), Vol. I, p. 148.

transport them over the borders.<sup>1</sup> These constant frictions strengthened the German-Slonzak autonomist argument based on the need of preserving the Duchy as an economic unit.

The plan to neutralize Teschen was not new (see above, p. 27 ff.) but not until the Czech-Polish conflict was internationalized had it any chance of success. The choice of the German minority to ask for autonomous Lower Silesia under the protection of an international condominium rather than to demand annexation to either Germany or Austria was governed by economic and political determinants. Annexation to Germany would have been detrimental to local heavy industry which depended on Czech markets.<sup>2</sup> The only exception were the textile mills of Bielitz which faced competition in Czechoslovakia, but would easily find better markets in Poland. Ultimately they were the only Germans that willingly accepted Polish domination.<sup>3</sup> Politically, Germany did not encourage the separatist movement for

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<sup>1</sup>Roy, pp. 48-9.

<sup>2</sup>The records of the American Delegation to Negotiate Peace, January 17, 1919, SDNA, 184.01102/31.

<sup>3</sup>Z. Lasocki, Wspomnienia szefa administracji Polskiej Komisji Likwidacyjnej i Komisji Rządzej (Cracow, 1931), p. 31, in Valenta, Slezský Sborník, LVIII, p. 294.

fear of prejudicing its own position at the Peace Conference.<sup>1</sup> For similar reasons Austria officially divorced itself from the Germans of Teschen.<sup>2</sup> However, Viennese political and financial circles actively supported the separatists.<sup>3</sup> Lower Silesian industry not only enjoyed a key position in Austrian economy, but its location was an important link between Austria and Germany. Were Teschen neutralized, its industry would have remained under Austrian financial control. This, in turn, might have enabled Vienna to influence Czech internal affairs. From the point of view of power politics in East Central Europe, an independent Teschen would have had far-reaching effects.

It appears that the German-Slonzak leaders were mainly concerned with preserving the capital and the industry intact. Their main endeavours were to prevent the Karvin district from being partitioned

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<sup>1</sup>Czechoslovakia, AMO, NNR, Kr. 5, pp. 193 ff, in Valenta, ibid., p. 295.

<sup>2</sup>Report by R. Piesche (May 22, 1919) stated that beyond sympathies, the Austrian Government showed no positive action. AMO, NNR, No. 3, in Valenta, ibid., pp. 306-07.

<sup>3</sup>Austrian Memorandum of June 15, 1919. Reprinted in Nina Almond and R. H. Lutz (eds.), The Treaty of Saint Germain: A Documentary History of its Territorial and Political Clauses (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1935), p. 451.

between Czechoslovakia and Poland.<sup>1</sup> This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the alternative plan promoted with equal vigour by the same group of men. Namely, with the exception of the pro-Polish Bielitz Germans, the leaders of the autonomist movement adopted a policy of rapprochement with Prague.<sup>2</sup> This dual tactic, officially demanding neutralization of Teschen and unofficially negotiating with the Czech Government, was continued until the final settlement of the Teschen conflict. The choice of Prague over Warsaw appears to have been determined by already existing financial connections with the Czechs.

The German-Slonzak industrial circles were dominated by Count Larish-Moennich, the Guttman brothers, and the Austrian House of the Rothschilds. All three had connections or vested interests in either Austria or Czechoslovakia. In Teschen the Guttmans and the Rothschilds controlled the second largest mining concern, Vítkovické hutní a důlní těžířstvo. It produced some 2,000,000 tons of coal and some 600,000 tons of coke annually.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the above, the Guttmans

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<sup>1</sup>Czechoslovakia, AMO, NNR, Kr. 8, f. p. 84. Minutes of a meeting between German and Allied members of the Teschen Commission, June 10, 1919; quoted by Valenta, Slezský Sborník, LVIII, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup>Dziennik cieszyński, Nos. 202 and 232, October 5 and 23, 1919, quoted by Valenta, ibid., pp. 96-98.

<sup>3</sup>Otáhal, pp. 15-16.

had investments in other mines. Živnostenská Banka of Prague had investments in these mines.<sup>1</sup> Their mining capacity was roughly 1,200,000 tons of coal and 150,000 tons of coke annually.<sup>2</sup>

The Rothschilds were connected with the third largest concern in Teschen, the Severní Dráha Ferdinandova. In addition to the railway line connecting Teschen with Vienna, the company also owned eight mines. The production of these was some 1,500,000 tons of coal and 400,000 tons of coke annually.<sup>3</sup> The mines of Count Larisch were controlled by the Larisch family.<sup>4</sup>

The largest colliery and ironworks, the Berg und Huettengesellschaft (later known as Banská a hutní společnost), was originally controlled by Austrian investments. However, in the spring of 1920 the Austrian shares were acquired by the French concern of Schneider-Creusot.<sup>5</sup> As a result of this transaction,

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, W. S. Howell to Secretary of State, July 25, 1921. SDNA, 860F.51/99.

<sup>2</sup>Czechoslovakia, AMO, "Ředitelská konference ostravsko-karvinského revíru: statistické údaje, 1913-1921," in Otáhal, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>W. S. Howell to Secretary of State, SDNA, 860F.51/99. See also Kozusznik, pp. 91-102; and R. L. Buell, International Relations (New York: Henry Hold, 1925), p. 115.

the Berg und Huettengesellschaft became connected with the Czech Škoda Works, equally controlled by Schneider-Creusot.<sup>1</sup>

In summary it should be noted that the three largest, above mentioned, mining and industrial concerns of Teschen depended on Czech and Austrian, rather than Polish markets.<sup>2</sup> These reasons must have been considered by the German-Slonzak leaders. If Teschen could not gain autonomy, then the problem was which of the two countries, Czechoslovakia or Poland, was better qualified in conducting the economic affairs of the industrial region.<sup>3</sup>

The arrival of the Inter-Allied Commission enabled the German-Slonzak interest group to present its program to the Peace Conference.

The evidence indicates that to the men of the Commission, beset by local problems and anxious to eliminate the tense Czech-Polish relations, an

<sup>1</sup>In September 1919 Schneider-Creusot bought majority of shares of the Škoda Works. Berg und Huettengesellschaft had contracts with Škoda Works. W. S. Howell to Secretary of State, SDNA, 860F.51/99; also Czechoslovakia, AMZV, No. 239, cited by Soják, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>The above companies mined 65.5% of coal and 78.1% of coke in Teschen. Czechoslovakia, AMO, "Reditelská konference ostravsko-karvinského revíru: statistické údaje, 1913-1921", quoted by Otáhal, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>A. W. Dubois, member of the U.S. Delegation, to Hugh C. Wallace, U.S. Ambassador to Paris, July 15, 1920. SDNA, 760c.60F/48.

independent Silesia appeared as a possible alternative.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the French delegation, the British, American, and Italian representatives in Teschen actually incorporated the autonomist program into their recommendations presented to the Joint Territorial Commissions on March 26, 1919.<sup>2</sup>

There were several factors favoring neutralized Teschen. The desire to preserve the economic and geographic unity of the Duchy intact motivated the American and the British delegates.<sup>3</sup> The latter believed that due to the importance of the Karvin resources and the numerous conflicting interests involved, no solution could give complete satisfaction.<sup>4</sup> It appears that the local observers hoped that an independent Teschen would form a buffer between Czechoslovakia and Poland and that it would, in the long run, minimize frictions between the two states. Furthermore a small independent Teschen, offering

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Dubois favoured keeping Teschen intact. Also Czechoslovakia, AMO, NNR, VI, pp. 55-6, and 79-83. From the evidence it appears that Colonel Coulson was also inclined to the formation of an independent Teschen. Quoted by Valenta, Slezský Sborník, LVIII, p. 303.

<sup>2</sup>Recommendation by the Joint Commissions on Czechoslovakia and Polish Affairs, April 23, 1919, FR, Vol. IV, pp. 107 ff.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Seymour, Member of the Territorial Commission on Czechoslovak Affairs, "Czechoslovak Frontiers", Yale Review, XXVIII (1938), pp. 285-6.

<sup>4</sup>Views expressed by Captain J. A. Roy, member of the British Delegation. Roy, pp. 1-2.



custom free export and import of goods might have become a nucleus of East Central European economic union, similar to that which had existed, partially, within the Dual Monarchy. Many British and American experts were opposed to the emerging economic nationalism practiced by the small states. Both Czechoslovakia and Poland, in their haste to consolidate their states as viable economic units, displayed complete disregard for the needs of the international community.

To a lesser degree the Commission was concerned with the hostility of the indigenous population to Poland. It appears that the Commission over-estimated the number of Slonzaks.<sup>1</sup> They pointed out that in case the Duchy were divided, large number of an alien population would have to be absorbed by both Czechoslovakia and Poland.<sup>2</sup>

Consul Grénard and his French colleagues in Teschen dissented from the opinions expressed by the American, British, and Italian delegates. When on March 26, 1919, Lieutenant-Colonel Tissi presented the

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<sup>1</sup>"Rapport Complémentaire de la Commission de Teschen, April 28, 1919", Recueil IV, C (3), pp. 264-65. See Appendix C, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup>Recueil, IV, C (3) A, pp. 6-8.

summary on the work of the Inter-Allied Commission to the Joint Territorial Commissions in Paris, he regretfully admitted that unanimity had not been reached. Contrary to the recommendations summarized in the majority report, the minority report rejected the formation of an independent Teschen.<sup>1</sup>

From the minority report it is evident that Grénard followed the policy of the Quai d'Orsay rather than formulating an original program based on local considerations. He expressed doubts whether a separate Teschen wedged between hostile states could retain political independence. From the economic point of view it was doubtful that the enclave could become a viable state. An independent Teschen would almost certainly be politically dominated (through financial control) by Austrian and Silesian Germans.<sup>2</sup> Grénard stressed the dependence of Czech industry on Silesian coal. He felt that separating the Karvin basin from Czechoslovakia would create rather than eliminate Czech economic problems.<sup>3</sup> Concluding, Grénard recommended

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<sup>1</sup>Séance du 31 Mars 1919, Commission des Affaires Polonaises et Tchêco-Slovaques, Recueil IV, C (3), A, pp. 6-7. Also Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, pp. 10-12.

<sup>2</sup>See above, p. 90 ff.

<sup>3</sup>Séance du 31 Mars 1919, Recueil IV, C (3), A, pp. 6-8.

the adoption of the demarcation line which had been concurrently considered by the Joint Territorial Commissions in Paris. There is no evidence to indicate that Grénard's objections to an independent Teschen were caused by fear of a possible union between Lower and Upper Silesia. Though unlikely, such a union was proposed by some Silesian Germans.<sup>1</sup>

The two conflicting reports placed the Joint Territorial Commissions in a delicate and embarrassing position. Their own preliminary report, prepared by the expert sub-committee between March 1 and 13, was highly favourable to Czechoslovakia. Teschen was to be divided along the Vistula. Only the eastern district of Bielitz was to be assigned to Poland.<sup>2</sup> The report was the result of a close co-operation between the French and the English territorial experts.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the negotiations Italy followed similar policy. However, the rivalry between the French and the Italian military missions in Czechoslovakia, and Italy's rapprochement with Poland reflected on Italy's foreign

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<sup>1</sup> Czechoslovakia, AMO, NNR, kr. 3, pp. 79-83 (March 3, 1919), quoted by Valenta, Slezský Sborník, LVIII, p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> Recueil IV, C (1) A, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Both Laroche and Nicolson favored Czechoslovakia in the Teschen dispute. Ibid.; also Nicolson, Peacemaking . . ., p. 277.

policy in Paris.<sup>1</sup> Taking advantage of the majority report by the Inter-Allied Commission in Teschen, the Italian representatives on the Joint Commissions revoked their former consent and demanded, with success, that the whole problem of Teschen be referred to the expert subcommittee for further study.<sup>2</sup>

The last weeks of March and the beginning of April were devoted to the study of the two reports. The subcommittee, composed of experts from the Joint Commissions, definitely eliminated the formation of an independent Silesia. The size of Teschen, its vital importance to Czechoslovakia, and the reluctance to comply with desires advanced by German nationals must have influenced the committee's decision.<sup>3</sup> However, the members of the subcommittee were less united on a new demarcation line between Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Great Britain, represented by Sir Eyre Crowe and Harold Nicolson, followed the policy of the Foreign

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<sup>1</sup>Italy's General Luigi Piccione was named Acting Commander of Czech forces on December 1918. On February 13, 1919, the French General Maurice Pellé arrived in Czechoslovakia. France being a needed ally, Pellé was to command Czech armed forces. Piccione refused to subordinate. Rivalry between Piccione, who commanded Czech forces in Slovakia, and Pellé who commanded forces in Bohemia and Moravia. Peroutka, Vol. II, pp. 1067-72 passim. See below, pp. 99-100.

<sup>2</sup>Recueil, IV, C (3) A, pp. 24-5.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., C (3) B, pp. 141-42, pp. 148-52.

Office and joined their French colleagues in demands that Teschen (with the exception of Bielitz) be awarded to Czechoslovakia.<sup>1</sup> Contrary to the recommendations by the British delegates in Teschen who were concerned with finding a solution from the Silesian point of view the British delegates in Paris considered the conflict from a wider perspective. Though the policies and objectives of Great Britain and France towards Poland and Czechoslovakia differed, the means towards their achievement were similar. Great Britain did not share the French desire to control European coal. Nevertheless, the Allies were not blind to the economic needs of the two Succession States. Their policy was determined by the minerals already in possession of the respective countries; the stage of industrial development of each State; and the political implications of ownership of Karvin on Poland and Czechoslovakia. In the final analysis Poland's underdeveloped industry had more coal and oil than it needed.<sup>2</sup> Czech industrial development was closely dependent on Karvin coal.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ferdinand Friedensburg, Kohle und Eisen im Weltkriege und in den Friedensschluessen (Berlin: Verlag von R. Oldenburg, 1934), p. 12. Also Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>Laroche, ibid., p. 12. Also FR, Vol. IV, p. 608.

Also political determinants favoured the Czech claim. As already mentioned, Austrian reconstruction depended on Teschen coal and coke supplies. Czechoslovakia stood between the source of supply and the needy Austria. Obstructions in transportation might always lead to frictions. On the other hand, Austrian economic dependence on Czechoslovakia might, in the long run, lead to friendly co-existence between the two republics. A similar détente might be expected in Czech-Hungarian relations due to the latter's dependence on coal.<sup>1</sup> Were the situation reversed and Poland in control of Silesian coal, the Polish Hungarian hostile bloc towards Prague would have been strengthened. As Professor Wandycz pointed out, "the Teschen issue transcended a simple border controversy and affected the whole situation in East Central Europe".<sup>2</sup>

Precisely for the same considerations the Italians opposed the Anglo-French decision. Italy's dependence on imported coal and its friendly relations

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<sup>1</sup>In a letter to Beneš, Masaryk wrote that the possession of Karvin was a necessity because Czechoslovakia could supply Vienna, Budapest, and even Bavaria, and in turn gain influence over these states. Letter of January 5, 1919. Reprinted in Fr. Nečas et al, Dokumenty o protilidové a proti-národní politice T. G. Masaryka (Praha, 1953), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>Wandycz, pp. 92-93.

with Poland and Hungary dictated an opposite policy.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, they stressed a line based on ethnic considerations. This would have divided the industrial area as well as the railroad.<sup>2</sup>

The American experts were divided in their attitude towards Teschen. Professor Lord, displaying strong pro-Polish sympathies, sided with the Italians.<sup>3</sup> Whereas Professor Seymour was inclined to adhere to the Anglo-French proposals. The Italian-American dissenters held their ground and their point of view had to be included in the final report as a minority opinion.<sup>4</sup>

Before the recommendations could reach the Supreme Council, several events directly or indirectly bore on the Teschen issue, weakening the position of Czechoslovakia and favouring Poland. Indirectly, the efforts of the British Foreign Office were frustrated by the publication of Lloyd George's Fontainebleau Memorandum. By stressing strict application of ethnic criterion "irrespective of strategic or transportation

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<sup>1</sup>Friedensburg, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Recueil IV, C (3) A, pp. 24-25. Also FR, Vol. IV, pp. 609-10.

<sup>3</sup>According to Lloyd George, "the American Polish experts were fanatical pro-Poles, and their judgment in any dispute in which Poland was concerned was vitiated by an invincible partisanship." The Truth . . ., Vol. II, p. 991.

<sup>4</sup>Recueil IV, C (3), B, p. 151.

considerations" for Poland's corridor to Danzig, Lloyd George had deprived the British territorial experts from using the economic, strategic, and transportation arguments, justifying the Czech claims.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the Memorandum, Lloyd George (in a discussion with Wilson, Clemenceau, and Orlando) revealed that he was not above using Teschen as a diplomatic pawn in order to appease the Poles were Upper Silesia not awarded to them.<sup>2</sup> Besides political considerations, the loss of Silesia also implied that Poland's surplus of coal would be seriously diminished. Because of these considerations, the British negotiators had to adopt a more cautious attitude, favouring postponements of the Teschen issue rather than seeking a speedy settlement.

While the British delegation was temporarily hindered in its active support of the Czech claims, the American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, was searching for means to curb the expanding French

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd George, The Truth . . ., Vol. I, p. 413.

<sup>2</sup>Lloyd George stated: "Dans la question de Teschen, j'incline du côté des Polonais. La population de cette région paraît être en grande majorité polonaise. D'autre part, il est juste d'assurer à la Bohême un droit d'usage du charbon dans des conditions assez analogue à celles qui sont prévues pour la France au cas où le bassin de la Sarre redeviendrait allemand." Conversation of April 12, 1919. Mantoux, Les Délibérations, Vol. I, p. 232.



political, economic, and above all military influence over East Central Europe.<sup>1</sup> He assumed that were the Teschen dispute removed "from the jurisdiction of the Conference,"<sup>2</sup> (i.e. were the majority report by the joint Commissions prevented from being accepted) "the impression that France is the ultimate arbiter between the new states of Eastern Europe"<sup>3</sup> would be destroyed. Consequently, he approached Paderewski and suggested that "Poland and Bohemia should attempt to reach a friendly settlement between themselves, if possible, as it would leave a much better feeling than if it was settled by others."<sup>4</sup> Lansing had obviously underestimated the pressure of the Czech and the Polish public opinion.<sup>5</sup> As a result of this political

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<sup>1</sup>Lansing's apprehensions were based on the report by Major General F. J. Kernan who stressed the extent of French military influence in Eastern Europe. In addition, Hoover's attempt to have an American appointed to the management of Czech railroads was frustrated by Paris. For Hoover's report see FR, Vol. XI, pp. 100-103. Also AMZV, "Paris Archive," Nos. 757, 910, and 923, in Hájek, p. 141. Kerner's report is reprinted in Baker, Vol. I, p. 398.

<sup>2</sup>Lansing to Wilson, April 13, 1919. Robert Lansing Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress. Quoted by D. Perman, pp. 233-34.

<sup>3</sup>Lansing to Wilson, April 11, 1919. Woodrow Wilson Papers, Series VIII, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress. Quoted by Perman, pp. 233-34.

<sup>4</sup>Lansing to Wilson, April 13, 1919. Robert Lansing Papers, in Perman, pp. 233-34. Also FR, Vol. XI, pp. 152-53.

<sup>5</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 67; also Roy, p. 118.

reality, no negotiations between Beneš and Paderewski had any chance of success. Nevertheless, the two statesmen did not dare to oppose Lansing. On April 22 (a day before the majority report by the joint Commissions was to be discussed by the Council of Foreign Ministers) Beneš informed Lansing that his conversation with Paderewski brought no results. The Polish Premier stressed that Warsaw could not accept anything less than the borders based on ethnic considerations which, in turn, were not acceptable to Prague.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Beneš recommended that the decision of the Peace Conference be imposed.<sup>2</sup> Rejecting the warning, Lansing proceeded in his plan to prevent the majority report from being accepted by the Council.

The third factor detrimental to the territorial settlement as drawn up by the Joint Commissions was the dispatch of a revised report by the Inter-Allied Commission. Having realized that the plan for an independent Teschen had been rejected at Paris, the Allied observers in the Duchy unanimously recommended

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<sup>1</sup>Vladimír Vochoč, "Dr. Beneš a mírová konference pařížská," in Jaroslav Werstadt, ed., Dr. Edvard Beneš: spoluzakladatel nově svobody a tvůrce zahraniční politiky československé (Praha: Čin, 1924), p. 110.

<sup>2</sup>Beneš to Lansing, April 22, 1919. SDNA, 186.3114/130 in Perman, p. 235.

partition along ethnic lines, closely following the boundaries of the November Agreement.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the Oderberg-Jablunkau railroad and some 10 mines were to be awarded to Poland, while Czechoslovakia would retain 26 mines. A new railroad connecting Moravia with Slovakia was to be built. The report advised that the case of the Slonzaks be ignored because numerically they were in minority, while politically they were separatists and pro-German rather than pro-Czech. The signatories of the report demanded a solution "acceptable à la fois aux Tchêco-Slovaques et aux Polonais, qui ont un droit égal à la bienveillance de l'Entente."<sup>2</sup>

When, on April 23, the Teschen conflict appeared on the agenda of the Council of the Foreign Ministers of the Principal Powers, the latter had to consider two diametrically opposed reports.<sup>3</sup> The position of Balfour and Pichon towards the two Slav states was delicate. Though foreign policies of Great

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<sup>1</sup>The Czech cause in Teschen was weakened by the recall of Grénard. He was replaced by Major René Marchal. Also the Poles were able to prepare new data to the Commission, whereas the first report was based on German and Czech material. DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 93-94; also Recueil, IV, C (3), pp. 264-65. See Appendix B, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>FR, Vol. IV, pp. 608-12, passim.

( ) Britain and France were favourable to the majority report by the joint Commissions, the turn of events since the Fontainebleau Memorandum had been published, discouraged as arbitrarily imposed judgment. In addition, the Foreign Ministers could not ignore the report by the Teschen Commission. The minutes of the meeting indicate that Balfour and Pichon were both surprised and relieved by Henry White's statement made on behalf of the absent Secretary of State. According to White, Lansing,

Did not consider that the decision on the subject of Teschen was very urgent, as it did not affect the frontiers of Germany with which the Conference was at present concerned. Mr. Lansing thought, that it would be far better that representatives of the two states, namely, M. Paderewski and M. Benes, should discuss this problem in order that, failing complete agreement, they should at least reduce the divergences of view to the finest possible point.<sup>1</sup>

Despite Cambon's reminder that the Teschen settlement was "part of the Treaty with Austria" and as such "the solution . . . should not be too long delayed", the case was adjourned.<sup>2</sup>

Lansing's intervention brought no relief, but simply a postponement of the controversial settlement.

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<sup>1</sup>FR, Vol. IV, p. 610.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 611.

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His action testified that he had underestimated the force of Czech and Polish nationalist sentiments. By having removed the center of negotiations from the Peace Conference, Lansing prevented an early settlement of an issue upon which the economic rehabilitation of East Central Europe depended.<sup>1</sup> There was always the possibility that an early settlement might have prevented the later worsening Czech-Polish relations.

The proposed direct conversations between Prague and Warsaw unofficially began with Paderewski's visit to Masaryk on May 25. Nevertheless, due to internal and external forces neither party desired speed. In the spring of 1919 the political position of both governments was uncertain. Nationalist pressure and political factionalism prevented both governments from any active policy allowing an accommodating settlement. In Prague, Kramář's cabinet was nearing its end. Masaryk was desperately trying to preserve the semblance of national unity within the Government at least as long as the Peace Conference was in progress. His difficulties were immense. The

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<sup>1</sup>The British representatives on the Supreme Economic Council strongly recommended a speedy settlement of the Teschen conflict. The British Delegation to the Peace Conference to President Wilson, April 25, 1919, Wilson Papers, Series VIII, quoted by Perman, p. 236.

success depended not only on a steady internal influence, but also on a vigorous foreign policy. With a pending election for June 15, and the mismanaged military action against Běla Kun in Slovakia, the activities of the Czech Government were immobilized.<sup>1</sup> The only advantage the Czechs may have hoped for from the direct negotiations was to gain time; while attempts were made to conclude an understanding with the Silesian Germans and the Slonzaks.<sup>2</sup> Also there was always the chance that Poland's internal difficulties combined with its expansionistic foreign policy might harm the Polish case at the Peace Conference.<sup>3</sup> Beneš's belief was well founded, because the advance against the Ukraine had cost the Poles some support among the British as well as the American delegates.<sup>4</sup>

As far as Paderewski was concerned, even if he were genuinely interested in a compromise with

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<sup>1</sup>Peroutka, Vol. II, p. 980.

<sup>2</sup>Beneš circulated the "Declarations of President Masaryk and those of the Germans of Bohemia" as a bid for the support of the Silesian Germans, because the other frontiers were fairly assured by the Peace Conference by then. Almond and Lutz, pp. 461-64.

<sup>3</sup>Peroutka, Vol. II, p. 1265.

<sup>4</sup>DBFP, III, pp. 326-27, and 328. Mantoux, Les Délibérations, Vol. II, pp. 90, 92, and 131; also ibid., Vol. I, p. 505.

Prague, his own unstable political position would have prevented him from any policy generally unpopular in Poland. Skeptical as to the outcome of the planned conversations, and unwilling to risk their positions, neither Paderewski nor Beneš took part in them.<sup>1</sup> Instead it was agreed to constitute a Czech-Polish commission which would be authorized to deal with the Teschen problem. The commission, consisting of nine Czech and nine Polish delegates, did not meet till July 21, at Cracow. The delay was due to the cabinet crisis in Prague, followed by the formation of Tusar's Socialist-Agrarian Government.

In this politically charged atmosphere the negotiations began. The Polish Government, trying to exploit the conference for publicity purposes and to force the Czechs to accept a plebiscite as a means of settling the dispute, invited the Inter-Allied Commission to attend the deliberations "as guests and witnesses."<sup>2</sup> The Czechs, opposing a plebiscite and unable to offer any compromise over the Karvin region

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<sup>1</sup>Paderewski did not hide his pessimism in regard to the direct negotiations in his conversation with H. White. FR, Vol. XI. p. 337. Neither did Beneš. He told the Polish Minister Zamoycki that "no Czech would dare to sign a pact making any concessions to Poland." Kozusznik, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Colonel Pakenham Walsh to Balfour, July 24, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 92-3.

or the Oderberg railroad, did not desire any international publicity which might interpret their position as "uncompromising." They felt themselves forced to refuse the presence of the Allied observers at the meetings, but offered to inform them by daily reports.<sup>1</sup>

Colonel F. Walsh, the British representative, informed Balfour that no settlement should be expected because "the two delegations have each apparently a definite policy from which they will not alter."<sup>2</sup> The negotiations were further aggravated because the majority of the delegates were local Silesians who had vested interests in the Duchy.<sup>3</sup> As far as the proposed plebiscite was concerned, Walsh feared that it could not be carried out successfully unless Czech and Polish personnel, both military and administrative, evacuated the Duchy. He retained the opinion that the Czech claims were "entirely extravagant", and informed Balfour that the position of the British observers remained unchanged in regard to their last report.<sup>4</sup>

As foreseen by Walsh, after seven sessions and deliberations by their respective governments, the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>The Times (London), July 26, 1919, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Walsh to Balfour, Idem.; for report see above, pp. 103-104.



Czech and the Polish delegates admitted their failure to settle the controversy.<sup>1</sup> The Cracow conference was the last attempt at settling the Teschen conflict via bilateral negotiations. Once more the case reverted to the Peace Conference.

The eight months of negotiating (January to August 1919) had revealed that both France and Great Britain were fundamentally willing to support the Czech claims to the three districts of Teschen. However, their support had to be based on political reality. Neither France nor Great Britain were ready to rouse Polish antagonism by enforcing an unpopular arbitrary decision. The rejection of the plan to neutralize Teschen or to accept the revised pro-Polish report by the Inter-Allied Commission attest to the former hypothesis. The preference to delay the issue until peaceful territorial delimitations could be formulated support the second hypothesis.

The problem that Beneš faced was to keep the Czechoslovak Government from impatient, categorical demands on the Allies, and to wait for an opportune moment which would enable Great Britain and France to intervene amicably between Poland and Czechoslovakia.

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<sup>1</sup>Colonel P. Walsh to Balfour, August 1, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI, p. 116.

## CHAPTER VI

### REALPOLITIK AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION

The aim of this chapter is to present a survey of the forces influencing the Peace Conference during the later summer and winter months of 1919, and how they influenced British policy towards the Teschen affair. During this period a number of political events occurred which were detrimental to the Czech cause at the Peace Conference. The consequences of some of these events were responsible for changed Allied, especially British, attitude towards the Czech claims to Teschen. It appears that only the determined support of the French and Beneš's active diplomacy prevented the Czechs from losing the greater part of Teschen.

The prolonged negotiations in Cracow had not worked in Czechoslovakia's favour. Sensing the alienation to the Czech claims, Jules Cambon played for time. He suggested that the Teschen dispute be re-examined by the Joint Commissions before it was presented to the Council of Five.<sup>1</sup> His suggestion was

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, pp. 364-65.

accepted. The postponement enabled Beneš to try to ascertain himself of British support. Because the Japanese representatives did not take part in deliberations concerning Europe, but always voted with the majority, the British vote in the forthcoming deliberations held the balance.

It was on Crowe's instructions that Nicolson had a long conversation with the Czech statesman. Beneš stressed that "the fate of Teschen was really dependent upon the attitude adopted by the British Delegations."<sup>1</sup> He was confident that with the British and French support "the Americans and Italians would come into line."<sup>2</sup> Beneš confided to Nicolson that Czech-Polish mutual agreement or arbitration by the Conference were, for political reasons, unacceptable to either party. Therefore, "the only hope was to impose a solution upon both parties." As a persuasive argument, Beneš tried to impress upon Nicolson that any decision by the Conference that could be interpreted in Prague as detrimental to Czechoslovakia would result in a cabinet crisis. The extremist Kramář party would come to power. Were the "anti-Polish party" to lead

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<sup>1</sup>Note by Nicolson of a conversation with Beneš, Paris, August 4, 1919. DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 122-23.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Czech politics, there would be no détente in Czech-Polish relations.<sup>1</sup> As far as economic or strategic reasons were concerned, nothing new was or could be added.

In essence Nicolson agreed with Beneš, because he used several of Beneš's arguments at the following meeting of the Joint Commissions.<sup>2</sup> Similarly Crowe, whose note accompanied Nicolson's report to Balfour, tried to impress upon the latter the validity of the Czech argument. Crowe notified Balfour of his conversation with General Le Rond. According to the General, Teschen was

Infinitely more important to the Czechs than to the Poles and that a compromise favourable to the Czechs would both avert a grave political crisis at Prague and prove negotiable with Mr. Paderewski in the general interest of good relations between the two countries which would be jeopardized by a change of government at Prague.<sup>3</sup>

Following the French policy of postponement, Le Rond also warned against any "hasty decision in the Council of Five" and pleaded for "further delay."<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Record of a meeting of the Subcommittee on Polish and Czechoslovak Affairs," August 18, 1919. DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 159-60.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, p. 123.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

document bears Balfour's remark indicating his willingness to postpone any decision on his part.<sup>1</sup>

The Council of Five did adopt the policy of delay by referring the Teschen dispute for further study to the Joint Commissions. Once more, the minutes of the deliberations of the territorial experts indicate to what extent the changed political situation in Europe was reflected in the re-alignment of votes among the Allies. The experts were forced to admit that the problem of Teschen was not a technical problem but a political one. As Nicolson pointed out, the crux of the issue was that,

Si l'on part du point de vue que la décision prise ne peut satisfaire à la fois les Tchèques et les Polonais, on est conduit à se demander lequel des deux pays mérite, dans l'intérêt général de l'Europe, le plus de ménagements.<sup>2</sup>

Using Beneš's argument, Nicolson emphasized that Poland's geography dictated its foreign policy. Namely, being wedged between hostile Russia and Germany, Poland had no choice but to look towards the protection of the Entente Powers. In the case of Czechoslovakia the situation was more complex. Prague

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. By August the negotiators were Balfour, Clemenceau, Lansing, Signor Tittoni, and Baron Makino.

<sup>2</sup>"Record of a meeting in Paris of the Sub-Commission on Polish and Czechoslovak Affairs," August 18, 1919. DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 159-60.

could turn to Russia as well as the West.<sup>1</sup> In such a case Nicolson feared that "une déception trop forte sur l'affaire de Teschen risque de rejeter les Tchèques vers Péetrograd, si non même vers Berlin."<sup>2</sup> In conclusion he pointed out that

Les répercussions politiques de la décision que la Commission a à prendre, peuvent donc être très importante, et la Délégation britannique se demande s'il ne conviendrait pas d'exposer au Conseil suprême que la Commission est unanime sur les questions de fait, mais croit devoir laisser au Conseil suprême le règlement définitif d'une question dont les conséquences politiques peuvent être considérables, et échappent<sup>3</sup> à la compétence d'une commission d'experts.

Nicolson's suggestion that the Commission abstain from formulating final recommendations for the Supreme Council was probably motivated by several factors. (1) He knew that the Commission would not reopen the study of the Teschen conflict. Therefore the experts would reconsider the two available reports: the preliminary report prepared by the Joint Commissions in March, favourable to Prague; or the revised report by the Inter-Allied Commission, favouring Warsaw.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>4</sup>See Chapter V for details. Also Appendix C, p. 252.

(2) The preliminary report was obviously not acceptable to the Italians. The fact that Dr. Robert Howard Lord had replaced Professor Charles Seymour at the territorial subcommittee indicated that increased opposition from the Americans might be expected. Dr. Lord was known for his pro-Polish sentiment.<sup>1</sup> (3) In the least, disunity among the experts would have to be publicly acknowledged. Such an admission would unnecessarily focus attention on the particular policy propagated by the respective delegates. (4) Clarification of facts without the need of drawing conclusions might facilitate unanimity and circumvent discord.

Nicolson's argument failed. The American, Italian, and Japanese delegates rejected his suggestion.<sup>2</sup> General Le Rond, representing France and presiding the meeting, was prevented from openly siding with any pro-Czech suggestions. At the opening of the session, Le Rond had been placed in an awkward position on account of a tactless remark uttered by a Czech delegate at the Cracow Conference. Namely, that France was committed to secure Teschen for Czechoslovakia. Le Rond had to defend France that,

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<sup>1</sup>Seth P. Tillman, Anglo-American Diplomatic Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 203.

<sup>2</sup>"Record of a meeting of the Subcommission on Polish and Czechoslovak Affairs," August 18, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI, p. 160.

( ) Il n'existe aucun engagement de cette nature, et la Délégation française conserve dans la question de Teschen toute sa liberté d'action.<sup>1</sup>

This temporary impotence on the French side enabled the Italians and the Americans to press for the adoption of the revised report by the Inter-Allied Teschen Commission.<sup>2</sup>

Having retreated in the question of Upper Silesia, the American Delegation felt itself honour bound to support Polish demands for Teschen coal and for a plebiscite.<sup>3</sup> On the next meeting of the Joint Commissions (August 19), Dr. Lord, jointly with the Italians, formally asked for the rejection of the preliminary report by the Commissions, and for vote on the Inter-Allied report favourable to Poland.<sup>4</sup> The only concession Lord was willing to make was that, in the mining district, wherever ethnic figures were debatable, the benefit of the doubt should be given to Czechoslovakia.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 160-62; also FR, Vol. XI, p. 381.

<sup>3</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 67.

<sup>4</sup>"Record of a Meeting of the Commissions on Polish and Czechoslovak Affairs," August 19, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 164-65. Also FR, Vol. XI, p. 381.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

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As already mentioned, until the meeting of August 19, the British policy in regard to Teschen coincided with the policy of France. On August 19, however, the British representatives, unexpectedly, cast their vote with the Americans and the Italians. In contradiction with his own principles and the original British attitude, Nicolson was forced to adopt the ethnic factor over the economic determinant. The political considerations, the very essence of his former defence of the Czech cause, he dismissed as purely "hypothetical".<sup>1</sup> There are no indications explaining this sudden volte face in the British foreign policy. According to Dr. Kramář (whose comments are not always trustworthy), the change was due to instructions from the higher echelons of the British Government.<sup>2</sup> It is more likely that the Czech military weakness, Bolshevik agitations, and political instability accounted for the declining political importance which was attached to Czechoslovakia by Britain.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup>Karel Kramář, Kramářův soud nad Benešem (Praha: Tempo, 1938), pp. 86-7.

<sup>3</sup>Czech prestige suffered because of the unsuccessful venture against Běla Kun. Also Czech position was weakened by the possible hostile bloc of Hungary, Poland, and Rumania due to the presence of Archduke Joseph of Habsburg in Hungary. Rattigan to Curzon, August 19, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI, p. 173. The dispatches from Cecil Gosling, British Chargé d'Affaires at Prague, continued to warn of Czech

The evidence indicates that neither Lloyd George, Balfour, nor Crowe had any special affection for the Polish cause. However, the exigencies of political reality required that British policy towards East Central Europe be re-examined and revised. The study of British activities reveals that up to the end of May Britain acquiesced with the French aim of giving the Czechs "the greater part of Teschen and expansion in Hungary and to turn Polish ambitions toward Galicia and the east."<sup>1</sup> However, the offensive and the early successes of the White Armies against the Bolsheviks made the Foreign Office reluctant to sanction permanent annexation of Galicia by Poland.<sup>2</sup> Both Great Britain and France had to reconsider Galicia as a potential sphere of Russian interest.<sup>3</sup> Seen against the Russian background, the Teschen dispute gained new dimensions. Were the Poles to lose Galician oil, they would need the resources of Lower Silesia.

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national instability. He distrusted the large alien minority which he considered a weakening factor. Were Teschen annexed to Czechoslovakia, this minority would be increased by hostile Poles. DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 3-4.

<sup>1</sup>Hugh Gibson, American Minister to Warsaw, to Secretary of State, May 15, 1919. SDNA, 860c.01/253, in Wandycz, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup>Sir Eyre Crowe felt that "no obstacle should be placed in the way of an ultimate union of East Galicia with Russia." While Lloyd George admitted that "no one thought seriously about this country [East Galicia] except as being part of Russia." Report No. 5, FR, Vol. VIII, pp. 272-73, quoted by Wandycz, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The second factor indirectly influencing British policy toward Teschen, was Britain's active opposition to Polish claims in Upper Silesia. In June, at a meeting between members of the British Cabinet and the British Empire Delegation, it was decided to forestall a possible German refusal to sign the peace treaty by proposing territorial concessions on Germany's eastern borders. This implied that territorially the Poles were to give way in Upper Silesia where a plebiscite was to determine the final boundaries.<sup>1</sup> The British delegates obviously hoped that the signing of peace with Germany and stability in Europe could be achieved at the expense to the Polish claims. In the ensuing verbal struggle to persuade the other Great Powers, Lloyd George was compelled to stress the plebiscite as the only just means by which the people concerned could be consulted. Paderewski, who knew when a case was lost, accepted plebiscite for Upper Silesia, but later claimed plebiscite for Teschen.<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion we may add that to the men who dictated British foreign policy, the relatively greater economic importance of Teschen to Czechoslovakia

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd George, The Truth . . ., Vol. I, pp. 689-720.

<sup>2</sup>P. Mantoux, Les D lib rations . . ., Vol. II, pp. 420-23. Also Recueil, Vol. IV, C (3), A, p. 53.

than to Poland was not the only major consideration. A compromise assuring a lasting solution was sought. If no accommodating settlement acceptable to both parties were possible, then they would not press any solution which would lead to an unstable situation in an area that was of no direct British interest.

The French suddenly found themselves in a minority of one. Realizing that further opposition was useless, they withdrew their objections, but warned that political unrest in Czechoslovakia should be expected.<sup>1</sup> General Le Rond claimed that in order to make the report acceptable to the Czech Government,

It would be necessary for the Council to arrange for the signature of Agreements between the two parties for the regulation of the economic relations and railway communications between the two parts of the territory of Teschen.<sup>2</sup>

The final report was presented to the Supreme Council on August 22. It bore marks of the French diplomatic struggle. Le Rond had managed to weaken the recommendations by inserting important qualifying clauses. The report divided the industrial region in such a way that Czechoslovakia would gain approximately 60 per cent. of the coal and approximately 69 per cent.

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 165-66.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 61-3.

of the coke. The Oderberg-Jablunkau railroad would go to Poland. These recommendations were accompanied by a warning that Czechoslovakia would become dependent on Poland in production of coal and coke. The Czechs would also be forced to construct expensive railway connections between the mining regions of Ostrava-Karvin and Slovakia.<sup>1</sup>

The equity of the report cannot be questioned. The division implied that some 171,770 Poles and 10,443 Czechs would be assigned to Poland, while some 105,161 Czechs and some 62,080 Poles were to be ceded to Czechoslovakia.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, seen against the background of European politics in general and French aims for East Central Europe in particular, the report was unacceptable to France. As far as Great Britain was concerned, despite the fact that unity between the territorial experts and the higher political circles existed, there was no indication that Balfour was in any haste to have the report accepted or even implemented. The reluctance of the Supreme Council to accept the report was based on several factors.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 617-18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 618.

First, in the deliberations concerning Europe, the American Delegation was losing its influence. The uncertainty whether the Congress would ratify the Versailles Treaty was reflected in Paris. Second, the Supreme Council was not prepared to enforce its decision in Teschen. The whole issue was not important enough for either of the Allies to disturb the equilibrium at home by making demands financially or in terms of man power. Yet on account of intense nationalist feeling between the Czechs and the Poles, the division of the Duchy could hardly be enforced peacefully.

The Prague Government was well aware of this, and in order to advance their case, the Czech press was allowed to publish news about the adverse decision in regard to Teschen taken in Paris. As a result of nationalist publicity, unrest and mass demonstrations convulsed the country.<sup>1</sup> The Allied observers in Czechoslovakia were gravely concerned over the situation, and their reports were full of foreboding. On August 30, General Pellé informed Paris that acceptance of the Commissions' report "would exclude all possibility of a future rapprochement between the

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<sup>1</sup>Colonel Walsh to Balfour, September 1, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 199-201.

Czechoslovak state and Poland."<sup>1</sup> He warned of "the possibility of a government crisis reaching the President and creating a revolutionary situation" were the report accepted.<sup>2</sup>

Cecil Gosling, H.M. Chargé d'Affaires at Prague, informed the Foreign Office that Czech public opinion was roused to such a degree that a demonstration of some 50,000 persons protested in front of the British legation in Prague.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously demonstrations and strikes convulsed Teschen.<sup>4</sup> In Moravská Ostrava (the center of coal mining industry) a mass demonstration of some 20,000 miners took place.<sup>5</sup> The unrest spread throughout the Duchy. At Orlova the demonstrators took a resolution to resort to armed resistance and initiate general strike unless the controversy was not settled in Czechoslovakia's favour.<sup>6</sup> Similar rousing anti-Polish slogans were voiced by nationalist Czech deputies in the Prague Parliament.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Recueil, Vol. IV, C (3), p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 197-98.

<sup>4</sup>Colonel Walsh, British delegate in Teschen, to Balfour, September 11, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 199-201.

<sup>5</sup>Czechoslovakia, SAO, pol. kom. Moravská Ostrava, spisy 1919, No. 2299. Quoted by Otáhal, p. 110.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Czechoslovakia, Narodní Shromáždění, Těsnopisecké zprávy, 1919, Vol. II, pp. 2355, 2369-2370, and 2376, in Wandycz, p. 99.

Encouraged by the Council's hesitancy and the situation in Czechoslovakia, Beneš demanded a hearing by the Council. His request was accepted and both Beneš and Dmowski were to plead their cause once more.<sup>1</sup>

When on September 4, Beneš was admitted in front of the Council of the Heads of Delegations, he was conscious that not only the fate of Teschen, but his own political career would be settled by the results of this conference. As such he threw off his usual conciliatory attitude and attacked the Polish claims where they were the most vulnerable. He pointed out that "if the supply of coal . . . were taken from" Czechoslovakia, the latter would depend "upon Poland for the essential elements of [its] existence."<sup>2</sup> Such an economic dependence entailed political dependency as well, because "in a period of strained relations . . . Poland would only have to hold up the railway traffic into Czechoslovakia to paralyse that country in twenty-four hours."<sup>3</sup> He appealed obviously for British support when he emphasized that if Czechoslovakia "were to remain free of the existing political confusion

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, p. 613.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 625-26.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



in Central Europe," it had to be "reconstituted on a firm economic basis."<sup>1</sup> He warned that Poland's main involvement would be with Russia. In such a case Poland would depend on Czech collaboration. Czechoslovakia, however, would not retain friendly relations with Poland if his country "were deprived of Teschen."<sup>2</sup>

Dmowski spoke on September 5. The Polish statesman showed less understanding of the European considerations motivating the decision of the Allies. His main argument was based on ethnic criterion. As far as economic dependence was concerned, Dmowski offered "to sign a Convention to supply Bohemia with enough coal for her industries."<sup>3</sup> His argument revealed that he misunderstood Beneš's implications, namely, that economic considerations were predominantly political in nature. Czech political orientation would be contingent on the duration of such an economic convention. Such a dependence would reflect on Czechoslovakia's sovereignty. As Beneš had remarked,

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<sup>1</sup>Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, p. 626.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, pp. 636-37.

"if Poland and Czechoslovakia were independent of one another in respect of their vital needs, agreement between them would be easy."<sup>1</sup> Dmowski's second tactical error was his emphasis on the international value of the Oderberg-Kashau line. By stressing that aspect of the line's importance rather than the fact that it was a vital link between Moravia and Slovakia he emphasized that it was "the main line between Berlin and Budapest."<sup>2</sup> This exposed the possible co-operation between Germany, Poland, and Hungary, an eventuality which neither England nor France desired.

Paderewski, who spoke later, was emotional rather than diplomatic in his presentation of the Polish cause. He rejected partition of the Duchy and claimed the entire area on the ground that Poland "est la vraie mère" of that territory.<sup>3</sup> Paderewski's emotive style was realistically appraised by Laroche who commented that the speech was,

Qu'un brillant morceau de concert qu'on écoute avec délices, après quoi en retourne à ses affaires.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 640.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 637.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, p. 639. Also Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, Vol. LXII, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Laroche, ibid.

Following the Polish defence, Clemenceau adroitly prevented any decision being taken by adjourning the session. The controversy was to be discussed again on September 10, at Saint-Germain-en Laye. The interregnum was exploited by the Czech Government in Prague and by the Czech Delegation in Paris in order to prevail upon the decision of the Great Powers.

At Prague the Chairman of the National Assembly, Tomášek, and the Premier, Dr. Tusar, officially assured the public that the Government would not permit their delegates in Paris to sign any agreement unfavourable to Czechoslovakia. Tomášek stated:

Narodní shromáždění vyjadřuje jednomyslně vůli celého národa, prohlašujíc, že Těšínsko, jako integrující součást republiky československé,<sup>1</sup> musí s ní zůstatí trvale a organicky spojeno.

The Czech historian Ferdinand Peroutka interpreted the speeches in the National Assembly as an attempt by the Government to rouse public opinion and use the threat of possible riots within Czechoslovakia as means of intimidation at Paris.<sup>2</sup>

Concurrently at Paris, Beneš accused the

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<sup>1</sup>Peroutka, Vol. II, p. 1270.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Poles of subversive anti-Czech activities.<sup>1</sup> He based his accusation on the overt support and encouragements the Polish Government extended to the small, but articulate Slovak separatist group led by Father Andrej Hlinka. In summer 1919 Hlinka clandestinely crossed the Czech border and appealed to Pilsudski for military aid against the Czechs. This plea was for obvious reasons refused. However, in order to embarrass the Czechoslovak Delegation at Paris, Pilsudski advised Hlinka to seek help from the Peace Conference.<sup>2</sup> Pilsudski was quoted saying: "Mais si à Paris on ne vous écoute pas, accordez-vous avec les Magyars, retournez en Hongrie."<sup>3</sup> In order to enable the Slovaks to enter France, Poland had supplied them with Polish passports.

Once in Paris, Hlinka prepared a memorandum demanding that Slovakia be separated from Bohemia. Tactlessly he wrote: "C'est sur le conseil de M. Paderewski . . . que nous y avons inséré le passage relatif au plébiscite."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Osuský to Clemenceau, September 24, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup>François Jehlička, a follower of Hlinka and a witness to the conversation, Andrě Hlinka à la Conférence de la Paix de Paris (Genève, 1938), pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup>Nasza Przyszłość, May-June 1938, quoted by Jehlička, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

Hlinka's clandestine presence in Paris enabled Beneš to accuse the Poles of trying to subvert Czech stability, and for aiming at a Polish-Hungarian anti-Czech alliance.<sup>1</sup> Beneš's tactics indicate that his objective was to present Poland's negative foreign policy as opposed to Czech positive realism in European statesmanship. As a concluding proof of Czechoslovakia's good faith, Beneš suggested a new compromise; a newly drawn up demarcation line following the river Olsa. Contrary to the political statements prepared by the Czech Government for domestic consumption, Beneš's proposals testified to Czech willingness to divide the Duchy.<sup>2</sup> The problem was to draw up such a boundary that would preserve the Karvin coal and the strategic railroad within the Czech borders. In order to do so, Beneš was willing to sacrifice the town of Teschen.<sup>3</sup>

Beneš's argument found strong support among the French. At the meeting of the Heads of Delegation on September 10, the unfavourable partition of Teschen as suggested by the report of August 22 was opposed by Pichon, Berthelot, and Clemenceau.<sup>4</sup> Pichon warned that

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<sup>1</sup>Stefan Osuský to Clemenceau, September 24, 1919. DBFP, Vol. VI, p. 261. Also Rattigan to Curzon, August 19, 1919. Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 123-24.

<sup>3</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., pp. 67-8.

<sup>4</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, pp. 667-68.

acceptance of the unfavourable report would result in Beneš's resignation and would reflect on future Czech-Polish relations.<sup>1</sup> The proposal was not acceptable to either the United States or Italy. The British delegation had not changed its views either. The new line was objected to by Balfour on grounds that it was a purely arbitrary division which would cut off the "Polish population from the place where it worked."<sup>2</sup> Balfour rejected any partition that might stimulate social unrest. As far as the Commissions' report of August 22 was concerned, Balfour saw "no serious objection to cutting the coalfield into two halves."<sup>3</sup>

Seeing that Balfour was adamant, and knowing that without the British support the Czech cause would be lost, Clemenceau personally intervened in order to prevent any decision from being taken. He stated that while "Mr. Balfour could not agree with Mr. Pichon, he, himself, could not agree with the Committee's proposals."<sup>4</sup> Hence he proposed,

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, pp. 666-68.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 667.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 669.

To refer the whole question back to the Joint Committees [sic], who, as they had changed their minds several times, could certainly do so again, and present another report.<sup>1</sup>

Clemenceau categorically rejected the division of the coal basin. His suggestion was accepted, and the Teschen problem was once more referred back for further study to the Joint Commissions.<sup>2</sup>

When the Joint Commissions resumed discussions on Teschen, September 11, the French territorial experts were formally instructed by the Quai d'Orsay to try to persuade their colleagues to accept the Olsa line as the maximum the Czechoslovak Government was willing to cede.<sup>3</sup> In case of failure, they were to demand a plebiscite based on communal vote. The latter seemed to be the only compromise acceptable to both Benes and Dmowski.<sup>4</sup> The instructions by the Quai d'Orsay are indicative of French support of the Czechs. The Teschen conflict was becoming a political contention between the Czech parties and was threatening

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 669-70.

<sup>3</sup>Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

the stability of the Prague Government. France was concerned over the possible political consequences resulting from an unfavourable decision over Teschen.

The deliberations of the Joint Commissions lasted only one day which indicates that the session was a pro forma meeting rather than an attempt to re-evaluate the complex problem. The Allied representatives had to appraise two alternative proposals. Their own report which was based on ethnic lines, and Beneš's proposal. Were the Commissions' report accepted, economic agreements between Czechoslovakia and Poland would have to be concluded which would regulate the transportation system and the coal distribution between the two countries. The experts were aware that such a decision was bound to bring political tensions in the future. On the other hand, were the Olsa borderline (economically favourable to Czechoslovakia) accepted, there was the risk of an immediate conflict between the Czechs and the Poles in Teschen. Under these considerations the British, American, and Italian representatives maintained the rectitude of their original report; however, as a second alternative, they were not opposed to the adoption of a plebiscite.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Rapport présenté au Conseil Suprême par la Commission des Affaires Polonaises et la Commission des Affaires Tchéco-Slovaques Réunies sur la Question de Teschen," September 10, 1919, in DBFP, Vol. I, pp. 682-85. Also FR, Vol. VIII, pp. 195-96. See Appendix D. p. 258.



Beneš had resigned himself to a plebiscite only after a consultation with Dr. Kramář and a delegation from Teschen, composed of Czechs, Germans, and Slonzaks who assured him of their support.<sup>1</sup> There were several motives behind Beneš's sudden acceptance of the plebiscite which, though for long advocated by the Poles, had been continuously rejected by him. Principally he was motivated by the necessity to prevent the unfavourable Commissions' report from being accepted by the Peace Conference. Seeing that no immediate success could be gained, Beneš was willing to temporize. According to Laroche, Beneš preferred plebiscite to any line that could have been interpreted as detrimental to Czechoslovakia, and as a concession on his part by the Czech public opinion.<sup>2</sup> It appears that Beneš's difficult political position was not fully understood by Balfour. The latter was obviously surprised that Beneš was willing to risk a plebiscite rather than to accept the partition of the coalfields.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., pp. 67-68.

<sup>2</sup>Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>FR, Vol. VIII, p. 184.

In the end Balfour voted with the rest of his colleagues in favour of a plebiscite.<sup>1</sup> It was in British interest not to encourage any further crises in East Central Europe. Also there remained the danger that any sudden arbitrary division of the Duchy might harm the output and the distribution of the Karvin coal. Plebiscite was favoured because it implied that the fate of Teschen was in the hands of the local population. Consequently, it freed the peacemakers from responsibilities involved in any arbitrarily imposed judgment. Their choice was made the more attractive because of the willingness, on the part of the Poles, to accept plebiscite as the final means of settling the complex Polono-Czech dispute.<sup>2</sup>

It was not until September 27, that the Supreme Council officially approved the formation of the Allied Plebiscite Commission.<sup>3</sup> The protracted negotiations were a further proof of different interest among the Allies in regard to the settlement of Teschen. Both France and Czechoslovakia regarded the plebiscite

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<sup>1</sup>Laroche, Au Quai d'Orsay avec Briand et Poincaré 1913-1926 (Paris: Hachette, 1957), p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>FR, Vol. VIII, pp. 184-85.

<sup>3</sup>Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, p. 18.

as a mere postponement of the issue till some later, more propitious date. Consequently, they were categorically opposed to the retention of the unpopular personnel of the Inter-Allied Commission.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Great Britain and Italy demanded persistently that the staff already acquainted with the Teschen affair be merely re-enforced. The British negotiators obviously considered the plebiscite as a means of settling the conflict. In the end the Franco-Czech point of view prevailed, and the Allied Plebiscite Commission was composed of a new personnel.<sup>2</sup>

The second point of contention was the problem of Allied armed forces that were to police the Teschen area. At first, Great Britain favoured the division of the plebiscite territory into "zones of occupation," namely, each power would have been responsible for its own sector.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. objected to this view. They were manifesting gradual disinterest in European affairs. The French requested that

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, pp. 767 and 867.

<sup>2</sup>See below, pp. 85 ff. for description of the personnel.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, p. 756.

"collective responsibility" be imposed.<sup>1</sup> The French objections may have been motivated by the desire to prevent the British personnel from being too closely involved in the local affairs. Were the British representatives only a part of the Allied staff, the French could prevent them from becoming a firm opposition bloc. Ultimately, on account of its military commitments in Upper Silesia, Great Britain failed to send any forces to Teschen.<sup>2</sup> France and Italy supplied one battalion each. Hence a force of less than 3,000 men was to police an agitated area "where the mining population was well organized and could bring out 10,000 to 12,000 men at short notice."<sup>3</sup> This numerical weakness was accentuated by orders from the Supreme Council "that no force should be used against either side, as both were Allies."<sup>4</sup>

Despite its numerical weakness, the Plebiscite Commission was entrusted with a difficult task. The Commission was to have "all the powers necessary" to

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, p. 757.

<sup>2</sup>Wambaugh, Vol. I, p. 152.

<sup>3</sup>Wilton to Curzon, April 17, 1920, in DBFP, Vol. X, p. 665; also Wambaugh, Vol. I, p. 152.

<sup>4</sup>Wambaugh, Ibid.

maintain order in the Duchy.<sup>1</sup> If needed, the Commission could recruit a local police force, because the Peace Conference had requested the evacuation of the Czech and Polish troops from Teschen. The duties of the Commission were to police and administer the Duchy. To do so, the Czech and Polish governments were instructed to supply their representatives to the Commission, while the latter was to take advantage of local advisers who would be selected from among the population.<sup>2</sup> It was left to the Commission's discretion how far it would exercise its powers and which powers would be left to the local authorities.<sup>3</sup>

The actual plebiscite was originally set at not "later than three months after the notification of the present decision."<sup>4</sup> In reality, the Commission began its official duties only on February 3, 1920.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Decision of the Supreme Council of the Principal Allied and Associate Powers, Dated September 27th, 1919, With Regard to the Territory of Teschen," reprinted in Permanent Court of International Justice, The Hague, Publications, Acts and Documents Relating to Judgments and Advisory Opinions Given by the Court (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff's, n.d.), Series C, Fourth Session, Vol. IX, Document No. 4, p. 117. (Hereafter referred to as PCLJ).

<sup>2</sup>PCLJ, pp. 116-20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, p. 18.

The result of the plebiscite was to be by communes and the majority vote was to be decisive. "In the event of an equal division of votes, the President, who will be appointed by the Commission, will have a casting vote."<sup>1</sup> The right to vote was given to all persons over 21 who could prove permanent domicile or legal domicile in that area since 1914. This decision was detrimental to Poland. The latter protested that,

Elle fit observer qu'en Autriche le droit d'indigenat était une arme politique, que l'on refusait ce droit à certaines personnes habitant déjà depuis longtemps la commune et qu'on l'accordait aux personnes n'ayant pas d'attache solide avec la commune.<sup>2</sup>

The droit de l'indigenat was obviously congenial to the Czechs because it excluded many Poles permanently domiciled in Galicia.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the population of the Duchy was swelled by Polish war refugees and post-war agitators from Galicia. The governmental employees or those who had acquired domicile through official appointments were disqualified.<sup>4</sup>

The events of August and September 1919, reveal that despite friendly relations between the

<sup>1</sup>PCIJ, pp. 116-20.

<sup>2</sup>Raubal, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>PCIJ, pp. 116-20.

British Foreign Office and the Czechs, the collaboration between France and Czechoslovakia was more profound, being based on mutual self-interests. Great Britain was primarily concerned with establishing an equilibrium in East Central Europe. Seen from this perspective, delimitation of boundaries based on a plebiscite seemed to be the most effective means of achieving a détente in Czech-Polish relations. France, however, was vitally interested in establishing strong and viable allies in East Central Europe. Czechoslovakia's strategic and military strength was intrinsically bound with its economic independence. Under these considerations it was essential that Czechoslovakia gain possession over the Teschen coal, its industrial districts, and the strategic railroad.

The preference for a plebiscite may also be interpreted as a consequence of political changes influencing the delegates at the Peace Conference. By the fall of 1919, Paris was no longer the center of world's diplomatic activities. The main negotiators had returned to their countries. Whatever problems remained to be settled were dealt with either by the remaining Conference of Ambassadors, or through normal diplomatic channels. The former body was created by the Supreme Council and followed closely the Council's

policy. Essentially Great Britain and France dominated the Ambassadorial Conference.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, within Teschen, the Czechs and the Poles embarked on a bitter struggle to intimidate the local population in their respective favour. The fact that the Peace Conference had constituted a special Plebiscite Commission with extended powers did not, as later events were to prove, mitigate local violence.

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<sup>1</sup>Gerhard Paul Pink, The Conference of Ambassadors: Paris 1920-1931 (Geneva: Geneva Research Centre, 1942), pp. 41-6, passim.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE CONFLICT REVERTS BACK TO TESCHEN

The decision to hold a plebiscite failed to bring about a détente in Czech-Polish relations. To the contrary, the attempts of the two states to influence the Commission's members, to intimidate the local population, and to rouse the public opinion by "deliberately printing exaggerated rumours" about conditions in Teschen, created an explosive atmosphere in which militant voices on both sides raised the possibility of war.<sup>1</sup> The problem was aggravated by the resentment of the Poles who suspected, with some reason, that the Commission harbored pro-Czech sympathies. These suspicions were grounded on the obvious position of leadership which the French enjoyed within the Plebiscite Commission. Originally, the Council of the Heads of Delegations had planned to appoint an American to the presidency of the Commission. However, the U.S. desire to extricate itself from European commitments, and the temporary British

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<sup>1</sup>Czechoslovakia, Národní Shromáždění, Těsnopisecké zprávy, 1920, Vol. IV, 38883 ff; also Poland, Sejm, Sprawozdania stenograficzne, 1920, Vol. CXXXI/47 ff, in Wandycz, pp. 148-49.

disinterest in the Teschen affair on account of their preoccupation in Upper Silesia, enabled France to secure the leading position for its own national. Count Gustave de Manneville, in addition to being responsible for the strategically important departments of administration and communication of the Duchy, became the Commission's Chairman.<sup>1</sup> He was aided by J. E. Pichon, a former professor at the university of Prague, and Captain Flipo, editor of La République Tchecoslovaque. Both men were partial to the Czech cause.<sup>2</sup> Because no British troops were sent, the French battalion occupied the important northern industrial district up to Oderberg (including the railroad), and the town of Teschen with its railroad connection.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the French controlled the area contested by Czechoslovakia.

Italy, represented by Marchese L. Borsarelli, was in charge of food supply and arrangements pertaining to the plebiscite. The Italian battalion patrolled the Beskids (including the Jablunkau Pass), up to the district of Bielitz.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Wambaugh, Vol. I, pp. 151-52.

<sup>2</sup>Wandycz, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup>Witt, p. 157.

<sup>4</sup>Wambaugh, Vol. I, pp. 151-52. Also Witt, p. 157.

Sir Ernest C. Wilton represented Great Britain. Under his jurisdiction were the offices dealing with the economic life of Teschen. He supervised local commerce, industry, price tariffs, and arbitrated in labour disputes. His duties were closely co-ordinated with those of the International Coal Commission.<sup>1</sup> Being constantly in touch with the economic importance of the Duchy to East Central Europe, it may be assumed that he was aware that a stable Czech economy would be the best assurance for the industry of Teschen.

Dr. S. Yamada, the Japanese representative, was charged with the administration of local education and justice. The German-educated professor was on good terms with the local Slonzaks and Germans, and, in turn, approachable through them to the Czech cause.<sup>2</sup> Almost all members of the Commission were familiar with the German language.

Despite its able leadership, the Commission had to deal with problems above its managing capabilities. Essentially, the difficulties dated back to the former administrative and military division of

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<sup>1</sup>Wambaugh, Vol. I, pp. 151-52.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

the Duchy, and to the Commission's lack of man power. Unable to control the rising nationalist agitations, Manneville had to use the services of the local Czech and Polish police units.<sup>1</sup> Similar arrangements were made in the administration of the Duchy. With the exception of the mining district where the Allied personnel was in effective control, the Czechs and Poles continued to administer and police their respective zones. (The Czech zone being extended throughout the French controlled territory). Considering the nationalist feelings and mutual hostility between the Czech and Polish elements within the Duchy, the above arrangement was an open invitation to intimidation and violence by those nationals who controlled the particular sector. Ultimately, the Poles within the Czech zone were left on the mercy of the Czech police and vice versa. These conditions were aggravated by the fact, that while the Czech Council had dissolved and the Czech organs obeyed instructions directly from Prague, the Polish Rada Narodowa remained active. The latter displayed greater independence from Warsaw and "adopted a policy of systematic hostility to the International Commission."<sup>2</sup> The result was that the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>2</sup>Wambaugh, Vol. I, p. 153.

local Czech organs followed a more diplomatic and systematic policy which impressed both the local Germans and the Allies. The Polish Rada, on the other hand, displayed extreme nationalism that was harmful to the Polish cause.

Once the military weakness of the Commission was exposed, there was no longer any hindrance to violence in Teschen. The Czechs and the Poles resorted to techniques of intimidation best suited to their objectives. The Czechs employed propaganda via communication media and granted extensive social reforms.<sup>1</sup> They supported financially the local newspaper, Teschener Korrespondenz and Kořdon's Slazak.<sup>2</sup> Both papers reported anything that might harm the Poles.<sup>3</sup> News of governmental incompetence, its "reactionary nature", anti-semitic pogroms or other acts of terror were kept before the Silesians' eyes.<sup>4</sup>

The Czechs seem to have been more effective in their appeal for the support of the local labour

<sup>1</sup>Wilton to Curzon, April 17, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 664.

<sup>2</sup>Valenta, Slezský Sborník, LVIII, p. 309. Also Witt, pp. 151-52.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Dělnický deník, February 2, 1920, quoted by Otáhal, p. 102.

force. Despite the fact that both Czechs and Poles exploited the local labour for nationalist purposes, the Czechs legislated social reforms which became a persuasive means of propaganda. Under the pressure from the Czech Minister for Public Works, Staněk, the Silesian worker was assured minimum wage of 13 korun (compared to normal wage of 16.25 korun), eight hour day's work, and numerous social benefits.<sup>1</sup> Considering that under the Czech currency reform by Dr. Rašín the value of the Czech koruna was three times that of the Polish currency, the Czech appeal had solid foundations.<sup>2</sup>

If we are to believe the biased, pro-Polish Dzennik Berlinski, then there were strong ties between the Government in Prague and the local industry. According to Dzennik Berlinski, these ties dated from January 1919 when Mr. Guenther, Manager of the powerful Berg und Huettenwerkgesellschaft, had signed a convention on behalf of Lower Silesian collieries by which Silesian financial and industrial interests were to back the Czechoslovak claims for Teschen.<sup>3</sup> With the

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<sup>1</sup>Na zdar, January 22, 1919; Duch času, January 15, 1919, cited by Otáhal, pp. 23, 92-3.

<sup>2</sup>Confidential report by Wilton, August 10, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 716-17; also Wambaugh, Vol. I, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup>Dzennik Berlinski, February 15, 1919, quoted by Witt, p. 115.

exception of the paper's article, there is no other available source that could corroborate the above statement.

The main objective of Czech propaganda, however, was to sway in Prague's favour the German and Slonzak minorities who held the decisive vote in the plebiscite. This exigency forced Prague to follow an ambiguous policy. Having accepted the plebiscite, Czechoslovakia had surrendered its claim of "historic rights" to the Duchy, and acknowledged the possibility of partition of Teschen.<sup>1</sup> Yet publicly the Czech Government could not admit division of the territory because such an admission would go against the objectives of the local industrial and financial circles.<sup>2</sup> As already mentioned, the primary concern of the local Germans and Slonzaks was to preserve the economic unity of the Duchy intact.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the knowledge of an inevitable partition would have prevented many Germans residing in the Polish district from casting their vote in favour of Czechoslovakia and

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<sup>1</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Bohemia, November 13, 1919, reported that the German Silesian parties took a resolution to demand the retention of Teschen as a political unit regardless to which nation it be annexed. The parties resolved to support that nation which might have better chance in getting the Duchy. Quoted by Witt, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup>See above, Chapter V, pp. 89 ff.

thus predispose the Poles against them.<sup>1</sup> (In the Bielitz district were domiciled some 40 per cent. of Silesian Germans). Similar reasoning motivated the Poles. Thus the interval between February 1920 and the final settlement in July 1920 witnessed exaggerated claims by both contending parties, and roused both sides to violence.

The Polish methods were less subtle and far more violent. It appears that the local Czechs acted in national rather than regional interest, and that they were better controlled from Prague. The Polish Rada Narodowa enjoyed greater independence from Warsaw. The conduct of its members implies that they were influenced by extreme chauvinism which actually harmed rather than reinforced the Polish cause. Dr. Guenther, who represented the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Teschen, confidentially reported to his superiors that the local tactics were mishandled.<sup>2</sup> As early as

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<sup>1</sup>Ferdinand Pelc, O Těšínsko: Vzpomínky a úvahy (Slezská Ostrava, 1928), no page number indicated by Peroutka, Vol. III, pp. 1905-06.

Beneš officially also claimed that Czechoslovakia would protect the integrity of its state, and that officially the entire Teschen would be claimed. Beneš's statement in front of the National Assembly, September 30, 1919. Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of March 16, 1920, in Poland, Akta Adjutantury Generalnej Naczelnego Dowodztwa, 50/5812. Can be located at Jozef Pilsudski Institute of America, New York. Quoted in Wandycz, p. 149.

There is no relationship between Dr. Guenther, who represented the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Teschen, and Mr. Guenther, manager of the Berg und Huettenwerkgesellschaft in Teschen.



April 13, 1919 he warned the Ministry, "wenn das Plebiszit stallfinden sollte, werden wir alles verlieren."<sup>1</sup>

Much of harm was done by the two battalions of military force, the so-called Polska Organizacya Wojskowa, or POW.<sup>2</sup> Its activities were oriented against anti-Polish elements. In its zeal the POW prevented any possible co-operation which might have been concluded between the local Slonzaks and Germans.<sup>3</sup>

As far as the Germans were concerned, the decision by the Peace Conference to hold a plebiscite in the Duchy gave a new impetus to their political activities. They were aware of their importance in the coming plebiscite and they endeavoured to regain, through shrewd bargaining with the governments of Prague and Warsaw, their former privileged status in Teschen.<sup>4</sup> With the growing uncertainty as to the outcome of the plebiscite, the Poles appeared to be

<sup>1</sup>Schlesische Volkspartei, Polskie kłamstwa prasowe, Nieco z tajnej polskiej dyplomacyi (March 1920), pp. 23 ff, in Witt, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>Witt, p. 152. Also Wilton to Curzon, May 15, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 670.

<sup>3</sup>In May 1919 Poland had approached the leader of the Silesian Germans, Dr. Fuehrer, suggesting German-Polish co-operation. Paul Molisch, Die sudetendeutsche Freiheitsbewegung in den Jahren 1918-1919 (Wien-Leipzig, 1932), p. 150. Quoted by Witt, p. 134.

<sup>4</sup>Czechoslovakia, AMZV, Memorandum, II, No. 7843, 1919, cited by Valenta, Slezský Sborník, LVIII, p. 308.

favourably inclined to the German demands. By March 1920 Warsaw reportedly promised not to encroach on German internal affairs within the Duchy, and to grant a semi-autonomous status to either the Duchy of Teschen, or to constitute a union between Upper and Lower Silesia, in case both were awarded to Poland.<sup>1</sup> However, the activities of the Rada and the POW antagonized the Silesian Germans and Slonzaks. They officially requested that non-active political agitators be expelled and the Plebiscite Commission take complete control over local affairs.<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to Warsaw, Prague was unable to offer any concessions beyond those already enjoyed by other minority groups within the Republic.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, close economic, political, and social ties between the German Silesians and the Czechs spoke in the latter's favour. Since the fall of Kramář's nationalist government, both the Silesian Germans and

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<sup>1</sup>Schlesische Volkzeitung, March 30, 1920, No. 157, cited Witt, p. 150. For Polish promises see M. Jarosz, Wojewodztwo Slaskie (Cieszyn, 1919), quoted by Valenta, ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Schlesische Volkspartei, Pamphlet No. I, February 18, 1920. Quoted by Wambaugh, Vol. I, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup>Czechoslovakia, AMO, NNR, minutes of meetings between German leaders and Ministers, Tusar and Švehla, on October 13 and 14, 1919, pp. 167-72, quoted by Valenta, Slezsky Sborník, LVIII, p. 308.

the Slonzaks began to take interest in Czech politics. The Czech Premier, Dr. Tusar, was a Social Democrat and well-known for his sympathies with the German plight in Czechoslovakia. In comparison with nationalist Poland, Czechoslovakia appeared to promise peace and good administration prerequisite for economic expansion of the Duchy. Furthermore, were they to unite with the other Germans within the Republic, they could form a substantial political bloc which could exert power within the Republic.<sup>1</sup> In spite of these negotiations, the German minority group renewed its separatist tendencies.

The presence of the Plebiscite Commission enabled them to present a detailed memorandum, recapitulating their objectives. They suggested that the plan of an independent Teschen be incorporated as the third elective choice in the coming plebiscite.<sup>2</sup> The memorandum also requested that Germans be represented among the native advisers selected by the Commission.<sup>3</sup> They based their request on the fact that while they made up only one fifth of the Teschen population, they

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<sup>1</sup>Witt, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup>Czechoslovakia, AMO, NNR, I, pp. 146-47. Minutes of the meeting of September 27, 1919 and a letter to J. Cambon, October 3, 1919. Quoted by Valenta, Slezský Sborník, LVIII, pp. 308-309.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

contributed two thirds of local tax revenue.<sup>1</sup>

The German plan to constitute an independent Teschen had hardly any chance of influencing the higher echelons of international policy-makers who disapproved of awarding territory to Germans where their own allies were concerned. Furthermore, the political reality of late 1919 discouraged any additional balkanization of the already existing small states.

Among the lower circles of Allied representatives, however, especially among those associated with the European Coal Commission, the plan found several supporters.<sup>2</sup> They were essentially motivated by the dependence of Central Europe on three sources of coal supply: Upper Silesia, Teschen, and Poland.<sup>3</sup> They reasoned that because of the post-war decline in coal production and the nationalist unrest in Teschen, the formation of a small neutral state might assure better coal distribution through international control.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>AMO, NNR, "Ententekommission", II, pp. 7-9, February 11, 1920. Quoted by Valenta, ibid., p. 309.

<sup>2</sup>Rzeczpospolita, No. 23, July 7, 1920, commented on A. W. Dubois' statement that, "neutral Teschen is the only safeguard for peaceful settlement." Quoted by Valenta, ibid., p. 310; also Dubois to Hugh Wallace, July 15, 1920, SDNA, 760c.60F/48.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, p. 463.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Furthermore, there was the risk that Poland might yet gain Upper Silesia and at least part of Teschen, in which case Poland would virtually monopolize East European supply of coal and, in turn, would economically dominate East Central Europe. The arguments in favour of an independent Duchy indirectly helped the Czech economic claims, because in many details they coincided. Ultimately these same arguments were to influence the British, and lead to a change of attitude with regard to the Teschen settlement.

While the Czechs, Poles, and Germans were trying to manipulate local affairs in their respective favour, the situation in Teschen grew steadily worse. Throughout the turbulent winter and spring of 1919-1920 the territory was swayed by violence, demonstrations, and labour strikes detrimental to coal production and its distribution. The unrest manifested the Commission's total inadequacy at controlling the agitated area. It also revealed that both Prague and Warsaw used the unrest in the Karvin basin to their own political advantage. Neither of the two governments made any attempt at calming the restless labour in order to improve local coal production. The nationalist agitation among the workers was facilitated by the division of the labour organizations along national

lines. The Polska Partya Socjalistyczna, led by extreme Polish nationalists such as Madame Kluszyńska and the Galician Pole, Tadeus Reger (member of the Rada), concentrated their efforts on exploiting the grievances of the local agrarian and labour proletariat.<sup>1</sup> The Czechs had organized a clandestine organization called "Black Hand" which operated in the mining districts.<sup>2</sup> The miners themselves were unwilling "to increase production until they knew to whom the mines would fall."<sup>3</sup>

Because of lack of coal, several industrial plants in Czechoslovakia were forced to close down. Even the Polish press had to concede that non-delivery of Teschen coal to Czechoslovakia could become a "catastrophe" for that country.<sup>4</sup> For Austria, the strike resulted in a virtual period of socio-economic crisis. Politically, the coal hunger worked in Prague's favour. It enabled the Czech Government to demonstrate its willingness at co-operating with Austria by assuring that country of coal supplies.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Otáhal, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>Witt, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, p. 464.

<sup>4</sup>Glost Robotníci, January 17, 1920, cited by Otáhal, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup>Minister of Public Works, Hampl, to Colonel Nutt, January 17, 1920, Státní Ústřední Archiv, Praha, Ministerstvo Veřejných Prací, odd. V, cited by Otáhal, p. 26.

It also enabled Czech politicians to stress the dependence of Czech industry on Teschen coal.

Viewed from a wider perspective both local and international affairs were, once more, turning in Czechoslovakia's favour. Prague, now openly counting with the Slonzak and German support, displayed optimism in the outcome of the plebiscite.<sup>1</sup> The Poles, who had originally requested the plebiscite, now began to express anxiety as to its outcome. In their search for answers, many chauvinistic parliamentary deputies denounced the Czechs or accused the Plebiscite Commission of pro-Czech activities; the more moderate elements among the Poles, however, confessed that much of Polish misfortune was due to "lamentable want of tact" among the Polish delegates in Teschen.<sup>2</sup>

To a degree both allegations were true. According to Wilton, the Polish delegate, Jan Zamorski, "came completely under the influence" of the Rada Narodowa and displayed a definitely antagonistic and obstructionistic attitude towards the Commission.<sup>3</sup> With the exception of the Italians, all members of the

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<sup>1</sup>Wilton to Curzon, April 29, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 667.

<sup>2</sup>Sir Horace Rumbold to Curzon, March 21, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 655-56. Also "Teschen: No Rupture" The Times (London), June 3, 1920, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Wilton to Curzon, April 17, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 663 ff.

Commission were attacked by the Polish and Silesian press.<sup>1</sup> The Poles willfully disobeyed the Allied orders and held mass meetings during which they fanned Polish nationalism against the Czechs in the Duchy.<sup>2</sup> On direct orders from the Rada, the Poles living under the Czech or Western prefect "were induced to protest" despite the fact that they had no grievances to redress.<sup>3</sup> The Rada also instigated the Silesian Poles to boycott local taxes.<sup>4</sup> Despite their political activism, Wilton believed that the régime of the Rada "probably contributed the most valuable of all propaganda work in favour of the Czechs."<sup>5</sup> He expressed concern over the Rada's "amateur and jejune methods [which] would have resulted in financial disaster had not the Central Government come to their relief with substantial subsidies."<sup>6</sup> To make matters worse, the Rada displayed "little or no practical experience" in administration.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 664.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.



Being wholly "absorbed in chauvinistic politics" the Poles disregarded "the important economic questions of this small but highly industrialized area."<sup>1</sup> Wilton was of the opinion that had the plebiscite been held in January, the "region claimed by the Poles as overwhelmingly Polish would with the notable exception of the Karvin mining district, have voted for union with Czechoslovakia rather than with Poland."<sup>2</sup> The same view was expressed by the Third Secretary of the United States Legation in Warsaw, J. P. Moffat who reported the following: "The prospects of Polish success which at one time seemed assured, have continually waned until they have now reached a point where the loss of the whole area is not considered as beyond the range of possibility."<sup>3</sup>

The terrorism, the administrative incompetence, and possibly Poland's anti-Russian policy alienated several social groups from the Polish cause. By May 1920 some 6,000 miners, members of the Polish Miners' Union, went over to the Czechs.<sup>4</sup> According to the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Moffat to Secretary of State, May 4, 1920, SDNA, 760c.60F/4.

<sup>4</sup>Wilton to Curzon, May 15, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 665.

Union's President the vote within the mining district, former stronghold of Polish nationalism, was less predictable by then. Similar cleavage between the extremists and those who were opposed to violence occurred within the Ironworkers' Unions and among the Polish bourgeoisie.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, while the position of the Poles was steadily deteriorating, the Czechs were assuming a more aggressive policy, expecting favourable results from the plebiscite.<sup>2</sup>

The seriousness of the conflict and its possible effect on Polish-Czech relations was evaluated by British observers. Sir George R. Clerk, H.M. Minister to Czechoslovakia confirmed Colonel Coulson's and Sir Ernest Wilton's misgivings in regard to the plebiscite. The British representatives feared that the plebiscite would not satisfy the expectations of either of the two contending states, and that, in case of a pro-Czech vote, the militant Poles might decide "to maintain their position by force of arms."<sup>3</sup> Clerk informed the Foreign Office that, though optimistic as far as the plebiscite was concerned, the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 673.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., also Moffat to Secretary of State, SDNA, 760c.60F/4.

<sup>3</sup>Clerk to Curzon, April 26, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 665.

( ) official Czech circles were not opposed to a compromise enforced from above. The Czechs apparently were motivated by the desire to prevent a military clash with Poland. Clerk was sympathetic to this plan but felt that because of the Italians who worked "entirely in favour of the Poles", unanimity between the Allies would be hard to get.<sup>1</sup>

Similar intelligence was dispatched by Wilton following his interview with Beneš<sup>v</sup> at Prague. Beneš<sup>v</sup> assured Wilton of his readiness to come to an agreement with the Poles.<sup>2</sup> However, he expressed concern over the bellicose temper among the extremists within both governments which might lead to an armed conflict between Czechoslovakia and Poland. Beneš<sup>v</sup> admitted that neither state was strong enough to wage a prolonged war.<sup>3</sup> As a proof of his good will, he indicated that he had notified the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Patek, of his intention to discuss the Teschen conflict with him at Paris.<sup>4</sup> The sincerity of Beneš's démarche is rather dubious. Patek was not officially notified, but through the services of a third

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Wilton to Curzon, April 29, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 666 ff.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 667.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

person. Beneš himself arrived at Paris only after Patek had left.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout his conversation with Wilton, Beneš continued to claim the area of Teschen up to the Olsa river as the minimum of Czech requirements. Wilton was of the opinion that this line was unacceptable to Warsaw and that its enforcement would lead to "an outburst of fury from the Poles."<sup>2</sup> He conceded, however, that the area between Karvin and Dombrowa (which would go to Poland) was a potential coal-field needing development.<sup>3</sup>

The conversation between Beneš and Wilton indicates to what degree the political situation had changed since September 1919. By April Beneš no longer desired postponement of the Teschen issue, but once more resumed active interest in negotiating. He was aware that the political circumstances were detrimental to Poland. Polish extreme demands on its eastern frontiers and the furtive pact with Petliura over the Ukraine resulted in the Russo-Polish war. It appears that Beneš hoped that Poland, being militarily engaged

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<sup>1</sup>Sir Horace Rumbold to Curzon, May 22, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 676.

<sup>2</sup>Wilton to Curzon, April 29, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 668-69.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

on its eastern front, would display a conciliatory attitude in regard to Teschen.

The Polish Government was, however, in no hurry to negotiate with Prague while its political position was insecure. The Poles also lost interest in the plebiscite, as they could no longer be sure of its result.<sup>1</sup> Motivated by these considerations, they resorted to delaying tactics, hoping to defer the plebiscite until international politics were more favourable or until they were assured of their own eastern front. Using the outbreak of Russo-Polish hostilities as an excuse, Warsaw requested the postponement of the plebiscite. In order to overcome objections from Prague and Paris, the Silesian Poles were ordered to boycott the plebiscite preparations.<sup>2</sup> As a result of Polish obstructionism, out of 214 communes only 93 completed their voting lists on time.<sup>3</sup> Unable to enforce its decrees, the International Commission was forced to inform the Conference of Ambassadors of its inability to cope with the local situation and to suggest deferment of the plebiscite to a later date.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Report on conditions in Teschen, J. P. Moffat to Secretary of State, May 4, 1920, SDNA, 760c.60F/4.

<sup>2</sup>Wambaugh, Vol. I, pp. 157-58.

<sup>3</sup>Wilton to Curzon, May 20, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 674.

<sup>4</sup>"International Plebiscite Commission of Teschen to the Conference of Ambassadors", April 19, 1920, E. S. H. Bulletin No. 361, Hoover Institute. Quoted by D. Perman, p. 267.

Lacking spare Allied troops that might reinforce the Commission in Teschen, and lacking sufficient authority to prevail upon the governments of Prague and Warsaw, the Conference of Ambassadors had no other alternative but to postpone the plebiscite for two months.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that the Poles decided to prevent the plebiscite from taking place at all. Instead of subsiding, violence in Teschen was increased. In a confidential note to Curzon, Wilton reported a serious riot of May 18, in Teschen. According to Wilton, the Town of Teschen was "terrorised by bands of workmen from the Polish iron-works at Trzyniec and local rowdies."<sup>2</sup> The terror was oriented against the Germans and Slonzaks. Kozydon's newspaper office was destroyed, German shops were invaded where goods were demanded and paid for by "small sum of money".<sup>3</sup> Apparently the "Polish gendarmerie on duty . . . made no attempt at interference."<sup>4</sup> The situation was serious, because with the exception of the hard-pressed Franco-Italian

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. X, p. 669; also Wambaugh, Vol. I, pp. 157-58.

<sup>2</sup>Wilton to Curzon, June 7, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 688.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

forces, the region east of Karvin was "policed entirely by Polish gendarmes."<sup>1</sup> Wilton assessed the French battalion of having only 186 rifles "available for patrol duty."<sup>2</sup>

On May 21, on account of the above violence and renewed wave of strikes, "seven mines and two coke-ovens" were inactive. The miners explained the action "as a protest against the failure [by the Czechs] to supply them with flour and against the presence of Czechs gendarmes at Karwin."<sup>3</sup> Considering the overwhelming Polish police force in the other districts of the Duchy, the complaint had hardly any foundation. Wilton was of the opinion that "the strike has been deliberately fostered and maintained by Polish politicians."<sup>4</sup>

It appears that the violent demonstration was organized and led by the Rada Narodowa.<sup>5</sup> First, the Rada had informed the miners that it possessed the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 689.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 691.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 688. (Wilton used the German spelling of Karvin).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 691.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

needed supplies, but would not distribute them unless "they obtained certain political concessions from the International Commission."<sup>1</sup> Second, when the Czechs proposed to buy the flour from the Rada, the Poles refused to sell it.<sup>2</sup> Third, when the miners were informed by the International Commission that the division of police force into zones was the result of a Czech-Polish agreement (a mixed force was rejected as unworkable by local prefects), the Polish sub-prefect, Mr. Adamecki, refused to acknowledge this former arrangement. Wilton accused Adamecki of "complete disregard of his oath of allegiance to the Commission" and of being under the direct orders of the Rada.<sup>3</sup>

Concluding his report, Wilton expressed the concern over the possible consequences the continued hate campaign could have on Czech-Polish relations in the future. A restored East Central Europe required political equilibrium between the two countries; therefore, termination of the tense situation in Teschen

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 689.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 691.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 689.



should not be postponed. Wilton's report to Curzon was accompanied by a note from Sir Eyre Crowe who confirmed, in essence, Wilton's apprehensions.<sup>1</sup>

Possibly as a result of the local disturbances, Wilton's report, and the growing awareness of the Foreign Office of the necessity to resume firmer policy in regard to East Central Europe, E. H. Carr, Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with special interest in North-Eastern Europe, was sent to Teschen to observe the local situation.

Like almost all other investigations, Carr's report failed to offer any decisive solution to the complex dispute. Essentially he considered the situation in Teschen a,

pure farce and a salutary warning to any who may still be tempted to take the new nations of central and eastern Europe too seriously.<sup>2</sup>

He conceded the evident helplessness of the Plebiscite Commission, and the danger of a Czech-Polish military clash were the plebiscite carried through.<sup>3</sup> However,

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<sup>1</sup>A note by Sir Eyre Crowe, accompanied Wilton's report to Curzon, ibid., p. 692.

<sup>2</sup>Report by E. H. Carr on his tour to Danzig, Warsaw and the Eastern Plebiscite Areas, June 12, 1920. DBFP, Vol. X, p. 698.

<sup>3</sup>He based his observations on the fact that both parties were preparing for the eventuality of war. Carr saw trenches and barbed wire entanglements on the Czechoslovak border; while the Poles were installing field telegraphs on their side. Ibid., pp. 698-99 passim.

because the Western Powers had no apparent motives for getting themselves involved in the Czech-Polish hostilities, Carr advocated the enforcement of the plebiscite and a settlement in accordance with the vote. Having done so, and not "being prepared for an indefinite occupation", the Great Powers should then leave the area to its own fate.<sup>1</sup>

The warnings by British observers of an approaching armed clash between Czechoslovakia and Poland were confirmed by the militant speeches uttered by Polish politicians in the Warsaw Sejm. They demanded full support of the Silesian Poles and suspension of diplomatic relations with Prague.<sup>2</sup>

Alarmed by the bellicose temper of the Sejm, and desiring to settle the dispute peacefully, both British and French diplomats searched for some other means by which the conflict could be terminated. Their efforts were eased by unexpected co-operation from Beneš. In a conversation with Sir Eyre Crowe in Paris, Beneš expressed his desire to avoid gaining possession of the Duchy in a way that could be construed by Poland

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<sup>1</sup>Carr felt that the attitude of the Allies should be "après moi le déluge," *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>Kattowitzer Zeitung, June 2, 1920, No. 127, quoted by Witt, p. 170; also Wambaugh, Vol. I, pp. 157-58; and Temperley, Vol. IV, pp. 360-61. See also "Teschen: No Rupture", The Times (London) June 3, 1920, p. 15.

as a "squeeze", while they were at war with Russia.<sup>1</sup> However, taking into consideration the temper of the Czech and Polish public opinion, mutual negotiations were unlikely to be useful. Therefore he suggested arbitration by some neutral power. The U.S. and Italians were unacceptable to Prague, for similar reasons Warsaw would oppose arbitration by either the French or the British. He advised that the King of the Belgians be approached as a suitable arbitrator.<sup>2</sup> In a discussion concerning the eventual dividing line, Benes<sup>v</sup> once more proposed the line along the Olsa river. He indicated his willingness to surrender the town of Teschen as the last resort, hoping that this gesture might satisfy Polish extremists.<sup>3</sup> The last concession reveals that for the price of an economically favourable settlement, Benes was<sup>v</sup> ready to sacrifice his German supporters. (The town of Teschen was predominantly German).

Crowe recommended that Benes's<sup>v</sup> advice be followed. He suggested that Harold Nicolson be

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<sup>1</sup>Record by Sir Eyre Crowe of a conversation with Mr. Benes, May 31, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 681 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 681-82.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 682-83.

appointed to "assist Lord Derby in dealing with the matter."<sup>1</sup> Considering Nicolson's pro-Czech sympathies, this indicates that Crowe rejected the former passive attitude of Great Britain and resumed the line of policy originally planned by the Foreign Office for the Duchy. He also followed the recommendations of the earlier Foreign Office Memorandum which advised that,

The task of arbitration should only come in consideration when it has appeared that the parties themselves cannot come to an agreement.<sup>2</sup>

With renewed British interest in Teschen, the conflict once more reverted to Paris for further deliberation.

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<sup>1</sup>Lord Derby was British delegate at the Conference of Ambassadors. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Great Britain, Foreign Office, Memorandum, "Europe", p. 3, in Foster Papers, Vol. 45, subject file 80.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RE-APPRAISAL OF BRITISH ATTITUDE AND POLICY IN REGARD TO TESCHEN

The British decision to assume firmer policy toward the Teschen dispute and Beneš's willingness to leave the affair to international arbitration (at a time when Czech objectives were nearing their realization) were based on very similar political considerations fundamental to the political turn of events in Central and Eastern Europe. Officially Beneš defended his action by stressing anxiety over extended Russo-Polish conflict which, if added to a conflict over Teschen, might have weakened Poland to such a degree that communism might easily have spread westward.<sup>1</sup> To accept his reasoning at its face value would mean to simplify contemporary politics to a minimum. Essentially British and Czech foreign policies reflected their concern over French active interests in the Danubian region. Beneš feared encirclement by a Polish-Hungarian bloc, while Great Britain displayed uneasiness over French expansionistic ambitions in Eastern and

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<sup>1</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 71.

South-eastern Europe. In addition to the above factor there were two other determinants influential in British foreign policy. The one was concerned with the future of Austria, and the other with British policy in regard to Russia. Both objectives also concerned Prague.

Politically, the Foreign Office displayed concern over the "gradual grouping of the new states and the remnants of the old states in two combinations."<sup>1</sup> There was the Polish-Hungarian bloc supported by Italy, and the Czech-Yugoslavian bloc depending upon France. Despite the fact that both Czechoslovakia and Poland were considered satellites within the French orbit, there were differences in degree as far as French policy was concerned. In its approach to the two states France, like Great Britain, was motivated by the pragmatic assumption that by upholding its commitments to Prague, it would be assured of Czech subservience. It was neither in French nor British interest to push Czechoslovakia towards either Germany or Russia.

The case of Poland was different. Poland's domestic policy was unstable and its territorial

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<sup>1</sup>Rumbold to Curzon, May 29, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 679-80.

settlement required re-adjustments of almost all its borders. The struggle to expand to a maximum its frontiers implied that Poland would depend on French diplomatic and military support. In addition, both British and French contemporaries believed that Poland's geographical position between two great powers, Russia and Germany, would be a factor in Poland's pro-western foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> France then counted on a position of influence in Polish politics.

As far as Great Britain was concerned, Poland's aggressive policy impeded British aims of restoring "peace, normalcy, and stability" in Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, while France considered Poland a part of its alliance system against the imbalance of power between itself and Germany, Great Britain was not concerned over a resurgent Germany. On the contrary, were Germany and Russia to continue as weak states, then the French defence system based on a bloc of East European states might assure France a dominant position in Europe. Such a position would undermine the necessary balance of power on the Continent. From the

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<sup>1</sup>Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, p. 12; also DBFP, Vol. VI, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup>Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France Between Two Wars (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1946), p. 203.

British point of view Poland was seen as an instrument of French expansionistic foreign policy.

As far as Czechoslovakia was concerned, until the French election in November 1919 Beneš could always count with the full support of the French Foreign Ministry. With the fall of Clemenceau, a centrist conservative government supported by clericals soon introduced a new line in foreign policy. With the conservative Maurice Paléologue as the new Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay, France displayed greater emphasis on improving its relations with Hungary. Therefore, while officially France continued to support the Czech claims in Teschen, French policy towards Poland and Hungary underwent change.

Sensing the turn in the political climate, Hungary approached Poland offering co-operation based on mutually compatible objectives. The price for closer relations was to be a common Polish-Hungarian frontier. Officially, this plan was presented as a protective barrier against Soviet Russia.<sup>1</sup> Beneš,

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<sup>1</sup>Hungary, Foreign Relation (will hereafter be cited as HFR, followed by the appropriate subtitle), "The Political Diary of the Hungarian Peace Delegation," entry of January 28, 1920. Quoted by Francis Deak, Hungary at the Paris Peace Conference: the Diplomatic History of the Treaty of Trianon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), p. 216.



however, was well aware that such a frontier would not only "insure effective and immediate Hungarian assistance" against Russia, but could equally effectively be used against Czechoslovakia.<sup>1</sup> At a time when Czech-Polish relations bordered on declaration of war, Benes<sup>v</sup> could not ignore the secret Polish-Hungarian negotiations. Arbitration by a friendly neutral was preferable to war on two frontiers. French position in these negotiations was uncertain due to the clerical support of Catholic Poland and Hungary, and financial interest lobbying for extensive economic concessions in Hungary.<sup>2</sup> In exchange for economic concessions France was ready to appoint a special commission under French chairmanship which was to revise territorial adjustments between Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.<sup>3</sup> France also suggested to Hungary a "military and economic convention" followed by a political rapprochement between Rumania and Hungary.<sup>4</sup> In return Hungary was

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<sup>1</sup>Count Somssich to Count Csekonic, January 26; Count Somssich to the Peace Delegation, January 26, 1920. HFR, I, Docs., 94, 96, 116, and cf. "Political Diary", entry of January 23, 1920. Quoted by Deak, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup>Main negotiators were men of the Schneider-Creusot concern. Deak, pp. 272-73.

<sup>3</sup>Note Sec. IX, Ex. IV, 1920/6752 of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Paris, April 15, 1920. HFR, I, Doc. 226, cited by Deak, p. 268.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Deak, p. 270.

to extend a long-term lease of the Hungarian State Railways and of the Railway Locomotive Works. French interests were to control the Hungarian General Credit Bank, and the concern of Schneider-Creusot was to build a commercial port on the Danube.<sup>1</sup>

To the British Foreign Office the French scheme of establishing "a Danubian Federation, built on a centralized and unified railway system . . . under French control", as well as "the exploitation of navigation on the Danube by a French concern" was nothing less than the beginning of the traditional Franco-British rivalry over spheres of interest.<sup>2</sup> Significantly one of the largest British financial enterprise in that part of Europe was the formation of the Danube River Syndicate with headquarters in Vienna. According to the American Chargé d'Affaires, W. S. Howell, "the company was backed by people close to the British Foreign Office."<sup>3</sup> In addition to immediate interests, in the pre-war period British shipping predominated on

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<sup>1</sup>HFR, I, Doc. 240, quoted by Deak, pp. 272-73.

<sup>2</sup>Count Teleki to Count Csaky, June 5, 1920, HFR, I, Doc. 314, in Deak, p. 292. Also "Political Diary," entry of March 29, 1920, HFR, I, in Deak, p. 262.

<sup>3</sup>Report on French financial interests in Europe, July 29, 1921, SDNA, 860F.51/101.

the Danube. In 1914 British tonnage was 461,800 tons as opposed to Austrian 106,178; Italy's 96,958; and the French tonnage of only 26,173 tons annually.<sup>1</sup> It was in British interest to safeguard "British shipping from any unfair discrimination."<sup>2</sup> The clashing political and vested interests motivated the British official protests in Hungary and France.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously the conflicting interests disclosed the gradual breaking down of the post-war settlement. Re-examination of contemporary political realities dictated a more active British policy towards the Central European states, with the emphasis on Austria and Czechoslovakia.

The second determinant guiding the policy of the Foreign Office was British concern to restore Austrian economy and at the same time profit by Austrian friendship by extending British influence there. A memorandum, prepared by Howard Smith for the Foreign Office, stated that by gaining "a strong position in Vienna" Great Britain would "immediately

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<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, Memorandum by the Board of Trade (revised edition December 1918), Annex V, pp. ix-x, in Foster Papers, MS Group 27, II D 7, vol. 63, subject file 147.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Memorandum on British Representations Concerning the Negotiations With France," June 30, 1920, in HFR, I, Doc. 409, quoted by Deak, p. 302.

( ) strengthen [its] position in Bohemia, in Hungary and even in Jugo-Slavia."<sup>1</sup> This would give Britain "a position of peculiar strength in the centre of Europe."<sup>2</sup>

An opportunity was offered when in summer 1919 Austria made an official bid for British financial aid by offering option on 20 per cent. of the capital on its leading industrial firms.<sup>3</sup> While it was in Britain's interest to see Austria restored both financially and industrially, the Foreign Office failed to promote any significant interest among private British capital to invest in Austria.<sup>4</sup> The only other alternative was to assure Austrian future by close ties with her neighbour states. Sir Francis Oppenheimer, British Financial Commissioner, expressed the view that the former economic interdependence between the succession states and Austria should be encouraged.<sup>5</sup> He felt that Prague could utilize Viennese markets as a "clearing house" for its exports, while Austria depended on Czech

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<sup>1</sup>Memorandum of August 15, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI. pp. 154 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>4</sup>Note Submitted by Lord Robert Cecil on the General Economic Position, April 5, 1919, p. 40, in Foster Papers, Vol. 63, No. 147.

<sup>5</sup>Report of June 3, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 47 ff.

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raw materials.<sup>1</sup> Economic co-operation would, in turn, eliminate the need for a customs' union.<sup>2</sup> Such a policy would find support among the British Liberal and Labour parties that favoured large trading units in Central Europe.<sup>3</sup> The figures for 1920 vindicated Sir Francis' advice. Austria occupied the second place in Czech foreign trade.<sup>4</sup>

Teschen figured prominently in Austrian-Czech rapprochement due to the connection between the local mining industry and Viennese financial circles. For example, the second largest mining concern in the Duchy which employed approximately one third of local labour, the Vítkovické hutní a důlní těžířstvo, was controlled by the Austrian branch of the Rothschilds and the Guttmans family.<sup>5</sup> The Guttmans had additional mining and industrial interests in the Duchy. The main

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 45-6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>3</sup>Great Britain, House of Commons, Debates, Fifth Series, Vol. 125, column 1895.

<sup>4</sup>S. W. Howell to Secretary of State, July 25, 1921, in SDNA 860F.51/99.

<sup>5</sup>Otáhal, pp. 15-6.

creditor was the Czech Živnostenská Banka with headquarters in Prague.<sup>1</sup> The Austrian Alpine Montan Works were completely dependent on coke shipments from the above Vitkovické a hutní, while in turn it supplied them with ore. This exchange was to continue due to a pending agreement between the Alpine Montan and the Government in Prague.<sup>2</sup>

The policy of mutual co-operation was also congenial to Beneš's and Dr. Renner's foreign policies.<sup>3</sup> Czech foreign policy, as initiated by both Masaryk and Beneš, was in need of a strong, consolidated Central Europe. In order to prevent Austrian "Anschluss", it was advantageous to Prague to extend economic and financial aid to Vienna. Prague then could point out that unification, be it political or economic, was not necessary as Central European states would co-operate voluntarily. This policy was based on the assumption that Austria would be protected from future expansion by both Italy and France. In turn, if Central Europe was to be rehabilitated, then Austria and Czechoslovakia

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.; also Kozusznik, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>S. W. Howell to Secretary of State, July 25, 1921, SDNA, 860F.51/99.

<sup>3</sup>In a conversation with the Hungarian representative, Dr. Gratz, Renner "stated that Austria's economic interests required close co-operation with Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Jugoslavia rather than Hungary." Dr. Gratz to Count Somssich, January 28, 1920, HFR, I, Doc. 102, quoted by Deak, p. 222.

should be viable states, not dependent for coal supplies on Poland. Yet coal stood "foremost among raw materials needed" by both countries.<sup>1</sup> Austrian dependence upon Teschen coal and coke was demonstrated throughout the winter crisis of 1919-1920.<sup>2</sup> It became evident that were the Karvin Basin, or even part of it, awarded to Poland, the latter could dictate Central European politics through economic power. Ultimately, by monopolizing Upper and Lower Silesian resources, Poland could strengthen its influence on France. The European economic and political equilibrium would be better served were Teschen coal assigned to Czechoslovakia.

In addition to political considerations, both British and French financial circles had vested interests in Teschen. Prominent among these was the French concern of Schneider-Creusot which controlled over half of the shares of the largest coal and coke producing firm in Czechoslovakia, the Berg und Huettenwerkgesellschaft. In the Karvin-Ostrava district it owned 9 mines; 5 within the Duchy of Teschen and 4 in nearby Moravia. It produced between 2,300,000 to 3,000,000 tons of coal annually and employed over 20,000 workers. In its 4 coke producing mills it

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<sup>1</sup>Report by Sir Francis Oppenheimer, DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 45-6.

<sup>2</sup>Lindley to Curzon, November 4, 1919, DBFP, Vol. VI, pp. 329-30.

averaged 630,000 tons of coke.<sup>1</sup> Both Schneider-Creusot and the Anglo-International Bank had controlling shares in the Škoda Works, which had factory branches and mines in Teschen.<sup>2</sup> As already mentioned in Chapter V, the locally prominent financiers with international contacts, the Larisch family and the Guttman, used their influence abroad to preserve the industrial district intact and within one country, preferably within Czechoslovakia.<sup>3</sup> However, scarcity of evidence prevents a detailed analysis of their activities as well as the extent of their influence on the actual settlement of the Teschen affair. Essentially the close relationship between Czech industry and Teschen coal, as well as the Polish entanglement with Russia predisposed many in favour of Czechoslovakia.

Regardless of the above underlying considerations, the immediate cause that enabled Beneš to win the support of Great Britain and France for his "compromise" line along the Olsa river, was the Russo-Polish war. To a degree, the state interests of

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<sup>1</sup>Otáhal, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Czechoslovakia, AMZV, "Paris Archive", 1920, No. 239, quoted by Soják, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.; also Sir Horace Rumbold to Curzon, May 29, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 679.



Great Britain and Czechoslovakia were parallel. Both were in the process of resuming trading relations with Russia.<sup>1</sup> Both countries were under political pressure from their Leftist parties to remain neutral in the Russo-Polish conflict; while political exigencies mitigated the anti-Communist sentiment among the Rightist groups.<sup>2</sup> Whereas Britain's power position enabled it an independent policy of openly warning the Poles against anti-Russian activities, while at the same time initiating trade talks with the Soviets,

Benes had to maneuver . . . between political pressure put on him by the Czechoslovak Socialists, who clamored for recognition of Soviet Russia, and French diplomacy, which pursued opposite aims.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Anglo-Soviet negotiations took place between May 31 - June 7, 1920. For Czech policy see G. Clerk, H.M. Minister at Prague, to Curzon, February 29, 1920, DBFP, Vol. XI, pp. 235-36.

<sup>2</sup>In Prague both the Leftist Social Democrats and the Rightist National Democrats were, for different reasons, attracted to Russia. G. V. Chicherin's offer to initiate negotiations leading to diplomatic relations was encouraged by the Government. Czechoslovakia, Sborník Zahraniční Politiky, 1920-1921, No. 7, April 15, 1920, p. 157, Supplement No. I, cited by Soják, p. 65. For evaluation of British policy towards Russia see: Great Britain, Foreign Office, Memorandum, "Russia", p. 3, in Foster Papers, Vol. 45, subject file 80; also A. L. Kennedy, Old Diplomacy and New (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 319 ff.

<sup>3</sup>Kennedy, p. 336; also DBFP, Vol. VIII, p. 324; DBFP, Vol. VII, p. 328; and DBFP, Vol. XI, p. 366.

Nevertheless, both countries acknowledged the necessity of upholding Poland's independence as essential to Western democracy.

Poland's survival depended on unobstructed transport of war material. French munition shipments could reach Poland through three routes: through the Free City of Danzig; via overland route through Germany; or through Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Possibly on account of the unsettled situation between Germany and Poland, and due to German unofficial neutrality (official neutrality was declared only in July) towards the Russo-Polish war, the overland route via Germany was apparently not used.

The problem of a transit through Danzig appears to be more complex. The City of Danzig was then "under the authority of a high commissioner of the League of Nations, the British diplomat Sir Reginald Tower."<sup>1</sup> On the basis of reports by contemporary Italian and U.S. diplomats, Professor P. Wandycz expounds the hypothesis that Tower "followed instructions from London" when he failed to make any "real effort to overcome" the German workers'

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<sup>1</sup>Wandycz, p. 163.

opposition to unload war material for Poland.<sup>1</sup> As evidence, Professor Wandycz quotes part of a report written by the U.S. Minister in Warsaw, Hugh Gibson.

The whole matter, as usual, rests on the divergence of French and British interests. The British influence is exerted to prevent Poland from receiving war supplies . . . and the French influence is exerted to enable the Polish government to increase and improve its war equipment.<sup>2</sup>

Similar view was expressed by another U.S. diplomat, Jay Pierrepont Moffat.<sup>3</sup> Under these circumstances the only available transit was through Czechoslovakia.

Officially Prague was treaty-bound to let supplies through.<sup>4</sup> However, precisely this dependence on Czech transit gave Beneš the necessary leeway in international bargaining. With the tacit approval of the authorities, the Czech railway workers were allowed to impede shipments of needed war material to Poland.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>According to Wandycz, "Tower took all his archives to London instead of leaving them to his successor in Danzig. Francesco Tommasini, Italian minister in Warsaw, Odrodzenie Polski (Warsaw, 1928), p. 196, cited by Wandycz, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup>Gibson to Secretary of State, January 31, 1920, SDNA, 860c.00/266, reprinted in Wandycz, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup>Nancy Harvison Hooker, ed., The Moffat Papers: Selections From the Diplomatic Journal of Jay Pierrepont Moffat, 1919-1943 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>Czech-Polish Convention of March 26, 1919.

<sup>5</sup>Czechoslovakia, AMZV, "Paris Archive", No. 7420, telegram No. 2313 of June 1, 1920, quoted by Soják, p. 69. Also Hájek, p. 147.

The time was propitious to take advantage of the standstill in Czechoslovakia's favour. In order to be able to appear as a moderator, Beneš instructed the Government to allow passage to trains with war material every second or third day. Simultaneously, the leaders of the Social Democratic Party, with Leftist sympathies, were given a hint to attack moderately this aid to Poland.<sup>1</sup> Once the domestic stage was set, Beneš left Paris for London.

He arrived at London in the first week of June. Officially to find out British attitude in regard to the pending Czech-Russian trade talks;<sup>2</sup> unofficially Beneš tried to obtain the Foreign Office's definite approval for an "amicable" settlement of the Teschen dispute based on a pre-arranged boundary line.<sup>3</sup>

Once more Beneš's démarche was perfectly timed. Though his London conversation with Curzon was

<sup>1</sup>Czechoslovakia, AMZV, "Paris Archive", No. 7421, May 21, 1920, cited by Soják, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>Contrary to France, both Italy and Great Britain encouraged Czech-Russian trade agreements. During his June visit of London Beneš met Leonid Krassin there. No final decision was taken because Beneš awaited the outcome of the Anglo-Russian talks. Czechoslovakia, AMZV, "Paris Archive", No. 6919 and 7310, June 1, 1920 (Beneš's own aide memoire). Also AMZV, "Londýn 1920", No. 67a. Quoted by Soják, pp. 66-7.

<sup>3</sup>Czechoslovakia, AMZV, "Paris Archive", Nos. 6919 and 7310. Quoted by Soják, p. 67. See Chapter VII, pp. 168 ff.

shrouded in secrecy, its outcome indicates that Curzon was won over to Beneš's line of compromise along the Olsa river.<sup>1</sup> We may assume that Curzon was influenced by the apprehensive reports concerning the situation in Teschen and by recommendations of the Foreign Office.<sup>2</sup> Also from a political point of view, the proposed division had its advantages. Such a partition of Teschen would preserve for Czechoslovakia the industrial and mining region of Karvin which would be more competently administered by the Czechs who could offer internal stability and Austrian markets, rather than by the Poles whose very existence was insecure. Considered from regional needs, the eastern rural areas of the Duchy with traditionally conservative peasantry would strengthen the agrarian, less adventurous forces within Poland. Beneš's line, dividing the Duchy along the political and social groupings was tactically advantageous. By assuring the Czechs with the entire Oderberg-Jablunkau line, the link between Poland and Hungary would be weakened. In turn there should be

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<sup>1</sup>AMZV, telegraphic message No. 2313, June 1, 1920, cited by Soják, p. 69. Curzon confirmed his conversation with Beneš at Spa, July 11, at the meeting of the Inter-Allied Conference. DBFP, Vol. VIII, pp. 548-49.

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter VII. Due to the May riots in Teschen the Plebiscite Commission sent an urgent appeal to the Council of Ambassadors for military reinforcement. Wilton to Curzon, May 29, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 677.

expected a détente between Hungary and Czechoslovakia on account of mutual trading intercourse.

Beneš's offer to sacrifice the town of Teschen as the main Czech compromise suggested a diminished Germany minority within the Republic. On the other hand, within the Polish half of the Duchy, it could be hoped, the German minority might provide the needed leadership and management. Furthermore, the renunciation might mollify those who could question the violation of the ethnic principle in the final settlement. However, above all the Teschen conflict stood as an obstacle between closer Czech-Polish relations. In view of Poland's struggle with the Russians, it was in the interest of the Western statesmen to terminate the Silesian affair.

On June 3, the Earl of Derby, who represented Great Britain at the Conference of Ambassadors in Paris, was authorized "to have private conversation with the French Foreign Office bringing the question of Teschen and the new suggestions before Ambassadors' Conference."<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office counted with French support. The problem was rather whether Italy could be persuaded to

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<sup>1</sup>Curzon to Derby, June 3, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 683.

their point of view. However, the secret Franco-Hungarian negotiations had also alarmed the Italian Government which had joined the Foreign Office in their protest against French expansion in the Danubian area.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, it was hoped that this factor might lead to a revision of Italian policy towards Teschen. Moreover, Italy's dependence on coal imports would hardly encourage a policy that might antagonize the government that had the greatest chance of later controlling the Karvin coal output.<sup>2</sup>

The British diplomats were successful in eliciting the support of the Ambassadors' Conference. On June 5, Jules Cambon, who had replaced Alexandre Millerand as President of the above Conference, officially proposed that the Teschen question "be referred to arbitration of King of the Belgians."<sup>3</sup> The motion was accepted by all delegates with the exception of the U.S. delegate who reserved his decision, "pending further instructions from his Government."<sup>4</sup>

Legally the cancellation of the Plebiscite was possible because it was not based on any formal

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<sup>1</sup>Notes of the Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on his conversation with the Italian High Commissioner, July 3, 1920, HER, I, Doc. 415, cited by Deak, pp. 302-303.

<sup>2</sup>Friedensburg, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>Derby to Curzon, June 6, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 693.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

treaty, but on a mutual agreement which could be mutually terminated.<sup>1</sup> Poland, undergoing another cabinet crisis and facing Russian offensive had no alternative but to accept. Hoping to delay the settlement by arbitration until some later and more opportune moment, the Warsaw Government suggested preliminary Czech-Polish talks which were to determine which areas were "undisputably Czech or Polish" within the Duchy, and leave only the most delicate areas for arbitration.<sup>2</sup> Curzon rejected these proposals. He reasoned that preliminary discussions would only "lead to delay and increased friction."<sup>3</sup> He expressed concern that such talks,

Might place Czechs in a difficult position since the Bielitz district, which will apparently vote for Czecho-Slovakia, constitutes their best card in a bargain over the two central districts, and they will be unwilling to abandon this district at this stage in return only for the Frydek district which they regard as theirs anyhow.<sup>4</sup>

Curzon, like almost all British delegates at Paris, displayed a reserved but nevertheless sympathetic attitude towards the Czechs.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Sir Horace Rumbold to Curzon, June 6, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 686.

<sup>3</sup>Curzon to Derby, June 8, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 693.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



On June 13 arbitration was officially accepted by the Conference of Ambassadors. On June 25 the Polish and Czechoslovak Governments were officially asked to "entrust to a personality of incontrovertible moral authority the task of settling their misunderstanding."<sup>1</sup>

In Poland Wladyslaw Grabski's new Government was ready to accept the recommended arbitration. In Prague, however, the Teschen affair became a political issue between the weak Government and the chauvinistic members of Parliament, led by the National Democratic Party. The latter roused Czech nationalism with slogans promising to uphold the "indivisibility" of the entire Duchy.<sup>2</sup> Considering the changed military situation in the Ukraine, their argument carried weight.<sup>3</sup> Taking account of Polish military defeats and supported by German and Slonzak deputations, the Czechoslovak Parliament expressed the belief that a plebiscite would result in a more favourable settlement for the Republic.<sup>4</sup> Arbitration was rejected and the Teschen conflict was

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<sup>1</sup>President of the Conference of Ambassadors to President of the Polish Delegation, June 25, 1920; an identical note was sent to Beneš, U.S., E.S.H. Bulletin, No. 647, Hoover Library, Stanford University. Quoted by D. Perman, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup>Peroutka, Vol. III, p. 1880.

<sup>3</sup>By June 10, on account of the Russian offensive, the Poles had to evacuate Kiev.

<sup>4</sup>Peroutka, Vol. III, p. 1880; Also Derby to Lord Hardinge, July 1, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 701.

once more in a deadlock.<sup>1</sup>

Beneš's foreign policy based on the exigencies of European politics was defeated. However, the developments of 1920 revealed that the international political and diplomatic situation was, in general, favourable to Czechoslovakia. By summer 1920 Beneš could count on active British support in the Teschen settlement. As far as France was concerned, Jules Cambon's activities at the Conference of Ambassadors disclosed that Maurice Paléologue's Hungarian policy did not aim at changing the former French support of Czech claims. While not detrimental to Czechoslovakia, the secret Franco-Hungarian talks led Italy to modify its foreign policy in regard to Teschen. At the Conference of Ambassadors Italy no longer opposed Czech claims, but accepted the suggested arbitration and the line along the Olsa. The problem that Beneš faced was under what circumstances could he persuade his Government to accept partition of Teschen along the Olsa river.

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<sup>1</sup>On July 1, 1920 Derby informed Lord Hardinge that the "Czech Parliament had definitely rejected" arbitration. Ibid.

## CHAPTER IX

### PROGRESSION TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT

In spite of the Czech rejection of arbitration, the situation in Europe demanded final settlement of the Teschen dispute and quick legalization of the Czech-Polish boundaries. While the Poles, pre-occupied with vital issues elsewhere, failed to organize an effective diplomatic defence of their claims,<sup>1</sup> Czech foreign policy, as practiced by Beneš, succeeded in moulding Allied tentative plans into a definitely pro-Czech scheme. Ignoring the nationalist Parliament, Beneš proceeded in his policy of accepting partition of Teschen as inevitable.<sup>2</sup> He never gave up the view that the Teschen conflict could be settled peacefully solely by an imposed decision by the Peace Conference. A decision by the Great Powers would have to be observed by both the Czech and the Polish Governments. The prestige of the Western Powers would prevent any further armed clashes between the two nations.

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. XI. p. 199.

<sup>2</sup>In a later statement in front of the permanent committee of the Czechoslovak National Assembly, (August 4, 1920) Beneš accused the Czechs of self-delusion by hoping that the whole Duchy might have been gained by Czechoslovakia through the plebiscite. He revealed that the whole area was claimed merely for tactical purposes. Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 62.

Beneš's activities during the 1920's reveal his profound understanding of international politics in general and British political determinants in particular. He was aware that the political climate of the summer 1920 was favourable to the termination of the protracted conflict. The former political alignment against Czechoslovakia was dissolved. The erstwhile hostile bloc was no longer of any consequence. Italy's vote was mitigated by anxiety over the secret Franco-Hungarian talks. Despite being tempted with "future supply of coal in the case of a favorable Italian decision" by Poland, Italy's concern over the Teschen dispute was markedly cool.<sup>1</sup> This decrease may have been also influenced by Italy's loss of its main ally, the support of the United States. The latter was less actively occupied with European territorial settlements. Significantly, it was not until the summer of 1920 that F. Dolbeare was dispatched to join the Plebiscite Commission in Teschen.<sup>2</sup> This sudden U.S. interest was actuated by the concern of the

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<sup>1</sup>Carlos Sforza, Diplomatic Europe Since The Treaty of Versailles (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928), p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Derby to Hardinge, July 8, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 702.

Government to protect Poland against any arbitrarily imposed line based on Beneš's line of "compromise". According to Derby, the United States Government "was particularly insistent that the plebiscite should only be waived with the free consent of both parties." The Americans believed that this was the only condition justifying departure "from the decision of the Supreme Council."<sup>1</sup> As Derby pointed out, the American "views cannot on this occasion be ignored", since the United States were party to the decision of the Supreme Council.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence indicates that as far as the two major European Powers were concerned, both France and Great Britain were in agreement to terminate the protracted conflict;<sup>3</sup> preferably not by a public vote but by some other means. In a message to Earl Curzon at Spa, Lord Hardinge expressed the opinion that an imposed line or enforced arbitration by the Conference of Ambassadors was preferable to the plebiscite which he thought would "have fatal results."<sup>4</sup> The line

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<sup>1</sup>Derby to Hardinge, July 8, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, 702.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, pp. 20-21.

<sup>4</sup>July 3, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 702.

generally spoken of at this late date was Beneš's "compromise" line of September 1919. Significantly, even before the Conference had assembled at Spa, both the British Foreign Office and the French Quai d'Orsay were mutually agreed upon the borderline which was ultimately forced upon the Poles. Beneš's efforts during the last month of the negotiations were not to persuade London and Paris in Czech favour, but rather to press for a quick termination of the issue while the political climate was favourable. In his endeavours he was aided by the openly admitted loss of control over the local affairs by the Plebiscite Commission,<sup>1</sup> and above all by the turn of events on the Russo-Polish front.

Unlike the Poles, who came to Spa in the humble role of suppliants, Beneš travelled to the conference on Millerand's invitation and in de Manneville's company.<sup>2</sup> Beneš had prepared his ground well. Knowing that Manneville had found it impossible to proceed with

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<sup>1</sup>Report to the Conference of Ambassadors, July 5, 1920, Recueil, Vol. IV, pp. 272 ff. Quoted by Wandycz, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup>The Conference was to deal with German reparations which were of no concern to Prague. The invitation indicates that even if no definite plan had as yet been formulated, both France and Great Britain were collaborating in their endeavours to bring the Teschen dispute to a close. Beneš, Problémy . . ., p. 76.

with the plebiscite, and was travelling to Spa in order to prevail upon the Supreme Council to end the conflict by some other means, Beneš<sup>V</sup> joined him.<sup>1</sup> He exposed to Manneville his desire to come to some conclusive compromise with the Poles; and suggested that were the compromise to fail (as it was to be expected), the Great Powers should impose their final decision upon Poland and Czechoslovakia.<sup>2</sup> In order to add weight to his argument, Beneš<sup>V</sup> hinted that while in London, he already had talked with Lord Curzon who assured him that,

L'Angleterre était prête à s'associer aux autres alliés pour imposer une frontière qu'il avait tracée devant lui sur la carte et qui lassait aux Tchèques la voie ferrée Oderberg-Jablunkow et aux Polonais la ville de Teschen (la gare restant à la Tchécoslovaquie).<sup>3</sup>

Beneš<sup>V</sup>'s views corroborated with the opinions of the members of the Plebiscite Commission. De Manneville, supporting Beneš<sup>V</sup>, reported of his conversation to Millerand. He expressed the view that even if the plebiscite were held - which seemed improbable due to the local disturbances - the result

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<sup>1</sup>Laroche, Au Quai d'Orsay . . ., p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>Laroche, Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, LXII, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 21.

of the public vote would not ease the situation. Manneville agreed with Beneš that the Poles were bound to gain majority in certain areas, which would prevent the Czechs from gaining possession of the entire coal-fields and the strategic railroad.<sup>1</sup> To Beneš it was advantageous to have a settlement imposed, assuring the Czechs all they wanted, yet giving the impression of a mutual Czech-Polish compromise. As a price for French support, Beneš assured Manneville that once the partition was achieved, his government would readily sign any economic or other convention with the Poles.<sup>2</sup> He implied the release of the paralyzed overland transport of much needed war supplies to Poland. Besides of Czechoslovakia, the German Republic had also refused assistance to munition transport. Under these conditions Beneš's offer at a détente with Poland weighed heavily in the coming French deliberations.<sup>3</sup> As a result of Beneš's talk with de Manneville, official conversations between members of the French and British delegations took place.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-22; also Deak, pp. 316-17.



The Poles were in no such strong bargaining position. In July 1920, Poland's political prestige had reached its nadir. Despite British and French warnings, the Poles had launched the ill-fated venture in the Ukraine where they suffered several serious military defeats.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the military debacle, Poland underwent another of its cabinet crises. Only after a prolonged party strife was Wladyslaw Grabski able to form his new cabinet. Considering the internal political insecurity of the new government, and the military setbacks, Poland could not "negotiate with strength" at Spa.<sup>2</sup>

The Polish delegation found itself isolated and without support. The United States were not represented at Spa, while Italy was pre-occupied with its own conflict with Yugoslavia. The British and French delegates did not hide their annoyance over Poland's aggressive policy which led to the Bolshevik advance. The French position was ambiguous. Self-interest dictated the preservation of Polish

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<sup>1</sup>The Polish General, Tadeusz Rozwadowski, wrote that the "fall of Kiev made a great impression" in Paris and that it "undermined" Polish position. He warned that it would "influence unfavorably" the negotiations at Spa. Telegram of June 15, 1920, Akta Adjutantury Generalnej Naczelnego Dowodztwa, No. 24/3795/T2. Jozef Pilsudski Institute of America, New York, cited by Wandycz, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup>Wandycz, p. 153.

independence; yet France recoiled from any activity which might lead to direct Franco-Russian negotiations which, in turn, might be interpreted as French de facto recognition of the Soviet régime.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, French interests over the question of German reparations forced Millerand to adopt a cautious policy where Britain was concerned.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, upon their arrival at Spa, the Poles discovered that the British delegation, headed by Lloyd George, was in full control of the Conference;<sup>3</sup> and "that to raise the question of assistance to Poland would bring into the open political problems connected with Polish borders."<sup>4</sup>

The dominant position of Lloyd George indicated that the Poles would have to count with a difficult opponent. He profoundly distrusted Pilsudski, whom he regarded as a "mere adventurer."<sup>5</sup> Throughout

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. VIII, pp. 280 and 514-15.

<sup>2</sup>Professor Roman Debicki claims that Millerand supported Lloyd George in the hope of British support in the question of reparations. Foreign Policy of Poland, 1919-1939 (New York: Prager, 1962), p. 32. Also see conversation between Lloyd George, Millerand, and Marshal Foch (July 8, 1920), which indicates French uncertainty in regard to Poland. DBFP, Vol. VIII, p. 490.

<sup>3</sup>Laroche, Au Quai d'Orsay . . ., pp. 113-14.

<sup>4</sup>Wandycz, p. 153.

<sup>5</sup>Conversation with Take Jonescu, October 20, 1920, DBFP, Vol. VIII, pp. 796-97.

the peace negotiations Lloyd George, the Foreign Office, and the delegates from the Dominions voiced apprehensions over Polish militant expansionistic policy.<sup>1</sup> They considered Polish extended frontiers and its tense relations with its neighbours dangerous to future Polish security.<sup>2</sup> Under such circumstances the Polish Delegation could hardly expect support from the British quarters. From a personal point of view, Lloyd George did not regard the Poles as fully accredited allies; he went so far as to remind Paderewski of the fact that Poland had won her independence "by blood of others."<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Lloyd George's attitude was based on the criterion that it was not in the interest of Great Britain or the Dominions to support or to get involved in another European conflict.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mantoux, Les D lib rations, Vol. I, p. 48; also G. A. Riddell, Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After (London: Gollancz, 1933), entry of May 30, 1920, pp. 198-99; also Curzon to Rumbold, June 30, 1920, DBFP, Vol. XI, p. 366.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.; Lloyd George confronted Patek by saying that, "Poland would never get the active sympathy and support of Great Britain so long as she pursued an imperialist policy." He warned that if Poland quarrelled with her neighbours, specifically with Czechoslovakia, Warsaw should not count on British sympathy. DBFP, Vol. VIII, pp. 442, and 713-14.

<sup>3</sup>June 5, 1919, DBFP, Vol. III, p. 352.

<sup>4</sup>In a later statement at the Third Conference of Hythe, Lloyd George declared that the "English public opinion would not stand" for armed intervention to save Poland. Furthermore, the only way to reach Poland was "to send the British fleet to the Baltic" which, as he pointed out, "would cost £10,000,000 a year

His objectives at Spa were to secure secession of the Russo-Polish hostilities, "to maintain Poland as defined by the Treaty", and "to make peace with Russia."<sup>1</sup> As far as Lloyd George was concerned, the irritating Teschen conflict figured merely as a by-product of his over-all plan to pacify the dangerous East European trouble zone. He was realist enough to perceive that due to the fierce nationalist emotions no voluntary bilateral rapprochement between Poland and Czechoslovakia could be achieved. The foreign policies of both countries aimed at extending their frontiers as far as possible regardless their potential or ability of preserving their new acquisitions. In addition, local and international interests prevented the former Duchy from being awarded in its entirety to either of the two contending nations. Taking these problems into consideration, Lloyd George appreciated an enforced settlement that would appear as a mutual agreement. The termination of the Teschen dispute was incorporated among his desiderata with which he confronted the Polish premier, Grabski, on July 9 and 10.<sup>2</sup>

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in peace time, and might amount to £ 30,000,000 or £ 40,000,000 in a state of war." DBFP, Vol. VIII, pp. 713-14.

<sup>1</sup>Riddell, entry of May 30, 1920, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. VIII, pp. 503 ff and 524 ff.

Just prior to seeing Grabski, Lloyd George held a meeting with Millerand and Marshal Foch. Though France was partially responsible for the Polish aggressiveness, Millerand was forced to admit that no French military aid should be expected.<sup>1</sup> Neither could he advance any positive French policy as far as the Russo-Polish war was concerned.<sup>2</sup> The full initiative then to act was left open to Lloyd George.

To the Poles, Allied help was of the utmost importance. The advance of the Russian armies had to be stopped. The Polish delegates must have been conscious of the probability that the line along which the Russians would eventually stop, could become Poland's eastern frontier. With these considerations in mind, Grabski was admitted to plead the cause of Poland. It is not surprising that the Polish premier lost his nerve. By his own later admission, he failed to stress the role

Poland had played in staving off Bolshevism; he made no threat to 'open the front' if Europe did not assist; he did not even verify if Lloyd George was speaking for the French as well as the British Government.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 514-15.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol.VIII, p. 490.

<sup>3</sup>Hooker, p. 32.

Grabski merely extended his willingness to negotiate peace with the Soviets, but feared that this might be interpreted as Polish capitulation. He, therefore, implored "the Great Powers to help Poland to make peace."<sup>1</sup> Lloyd George reminded the premier that the Poles were responsible for their own predicament. He pointed out that the Soviets had sounded out the Germans to find out their attitude in case the Red Army over-ran Poland.<sup>2</sup> Because it was not in French nor British interest to let Russia join Germany in a common frontier, Lloyd George indicated that the Allies might consider preserving the integrity of Poland if the latter were to abandon its expansionistic policy and accepted "independence within its own ethnographic frontiers."<sup>3</sup> Lloyd George then enumerated Allied conditions prerequisite for Allied vague promises of help. Among the desiderata Grabski was asked "to come to terms with the Czechs."<sup>4</sup> "Crestfallen and nervous", Grabski gave in and accepted all the stipulated conditions.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the meeting held on July 9, 1920, DBFP, Vol. VIII, pp. 503 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 504.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 505.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 506.

<sup>5</sup>Kennedy, p. 322. Also DBFP, Vol. VIII, p. 506.

The first round leading towards the settlement of the Czech-Polish conflict was concluded. The second round was initiated unofficially behind the backs of the Polish delegation, by Sir Eyre Crowe who represented the Foreign Office at Spa. In the evening of July 9, Crowe invited Laroche and Beneš<sup>v</sup> to discuss and draw up the final boundary line dividing Teschen which would be presented to the Supreme Council for approval.<sup>1</sup> As could be expected, the line ultimately decided upon was the one Beneš<sup>v</sup> had suggested in September 1919 to the Quai d'Orsay and in May/June 1920 to Crowe and Curzon respectively.<sup>2</sup> It was the so-called "compromise" line, dividing the town of Teschen but preserving the railroad and the Karvin district intact. The entire industrial region would be assigned to Czechoslovakia.

Beneš<sup>v</sup> was then entrusted with the task of approaching the Polish delegation and persuading them to accept arbitration by the Great Powers rather than an ultimatum.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, arbitration based on mutual agreement would be more acceptable to public opinion in

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<sup>1</sup>Laroche, Au Quai d'Orsay . . ., p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>For more information see above, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup>Laroche, Au Quai d'Orsay . . ., p. 125.

both Poland and Czechoslovakia. One should note that an agreement might forestall the eventuality of Polish claims that they were forced to give up Teschen under the duress of circumstances. From the legal point of view a mutual agreement, it was hoped, would curtail any later opposition from the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently what the Poles were not told was that the territorial line had already been agreed upon.

To the Poles, the nationalist drive for possession of the Duchy of Teschen (viewed against the background of the Russian offensive and the eventuality of losing Eastern Galicia), was greatly reduced in magnitude. Grabski, ignorant of the pre-arranged Anglo-French agreement to Beneš's line and conscious that delay would only facilitate the Russian advance into Polish territory, which in turn would prejudice future Russo-Polish peace negotiations, agreed to submit the Czech-Polish dispute to the Allied arbitration. In return he received vague promises of Allied technical and material assistance and the offer to initiate negotiations with the Soviet Government.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For U.S. objections see above, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. VIII, p. 518; also Laroche, Au Quai d'Orsay . . ., p. 124.



On July 10, Benes<sup>V</sup> and Grabski issued their joint declaration stating that in view of the local disturbances they

have decided to accept the final settlement of the dispute by the Allied Powers. On behalf, therefore, of their respective governments, they agreed that the plebiscite in Teschen . . . shall be suspended, and that the Allied Powers, after hearing both parties, shall take the necessary measures for the final settlement of the dispute.<sup>1</sup>

On the following day the main Allied negotiators assembled to decide on the policy to be taken in regard to the above declaration. The deliberations reveal that from the moment Curzon brought up the subject of Teschen, the British delegation assumed complete command over the deliberations. Curzon did not mention the pre-arranged borderline (possibly considering the sentiment of the Italians), but stated that "it was inevitable that the actual line of frontier be drawn by the Allied Powers."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, "a draft resolution had been prepared and was before the conference." He suggested the necessity of giving

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<sup>1</sup>"Declaration of the Polish and Czechoslovak Delegates to the Conference of Spa With Regard to the Question of Teschen in Silesia," PCIJ, Document 6, pp. 123-24.

<sup>2</sup>DBFP, Vol. VIII, p. 548.

some indication of the line it was intended to adopt to the Ambassadors Conference in Paris, who should be instructed to hear both sides, and then to adjudicate upon the future frontiers.<sup>1</sup>

He also counselled that the United States be informed about the Allied decision, in order that the Government "authorise their representative in Paris to be present."<sup>2</sup>

The French delegation, motivated by the belief that once the boundary line was settled Czech-Polish relations would ease and the transport of war material via Czechoslovakia be resumed, opposed any pro forma delays. Millerand asked that the conflict be settled by the Conference at Spa.<sup>3</sup>

Crowe wisely rejected any hasty settlement which would leave the United States unrepresented. If the Teschen conflict were to be permanently settled, it required the legal backing and enforcement by the Allied and Associate Powers. Crowe pointed to the importance of gaining

the co-operation of the United States which at present was taking the line that the Supreme Council, as at present constituted, was a body which comprised no American representative, and they were not disposed, therefore, to recognise its authority.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 548-49.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 549.

<sup>4</sup>DBFP, Vol. VIII, p. 549.

He then proposed the acceptance of the drafted resolution consisting of two parts:

(a) a text to be communicated to the Poles that the Supreme Council had decided to remit to the Ambassadors Conference in Paris the question of working out in detail the new frontier; (b) a general outline as a guide to the Ambassadorial Conference in Paris, giving them a line on which they could work.<sup>1</sup>

Crowe concluded by voicing Derby's confidence that the latter's "colleagues in Paris would be prepared to adopt" the suggested line.<sup>2</sup> The British motion carried the day and the Conference resolved,

that an identic communication should be made by the four principal Allied Governments to their respective representatives in Washington instructing the latter to inform the United States Government of the decision that had been reached.<sup>3</sup>

The deliberations revealed that, while the British delegates were unanimously in favour of Czechoslovakia, they aimed at securing a binding legal formula which would forestall any later Polish irrendentist appeals for territorial revisions. Motivated by these considerations, the British delegates prevented any hasty settlement of the Teschen dispute

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>DBFP, Vol. VIII, p. 551.

( ) to be concluded at Spa. The settlement was to be negotiated under internationally acceptable conditions by the Conference of Ambassadors at Paris. However, in order to assure Czechoslovakia of the industrial districts and the Oderberg-Jablunkau railroad, the Allied delegates confidentially informed their representatives at the Conference in Paris of the exact line of the new Czech-Polish frontier was to take in Teschen. According to their instructions,

The Duchy of Teschen shall be divided between Czechoslovakia and Poland by a line running from the North-West to the South-East starting east of the village of Prstna and drawn so as to leave to Czechoslovakia the town of Frystadt; then running south in the direction of Teschen along the river Olsa, and then South-East in such a way as to leave to Czechoslovakia the whole of the railway running north and south, but including in Poland the town of Teschen.<sup>1</sup>

The Supreme Council did not allow any freedom of action to the Conference of Ambassadors. The latter were merely authorized "to elaborate a decision on bases on which they [the Supreme Council] have already come to unanimous agreement."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Resolution of the Spa Conference, July 11, 1920, PCIJ, Annex I, Document 7, pp. 126-27.

<sup>2</sup>British Ambassador Geddes to Secretary of State, July 14, 1920, in U.S., Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1920 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1935-36), Vol. I, pp. 46-7. (Hereafter cited as FR 1920).

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This precautionary measure proved tactically correct because the negotiations at Paris were rendered difficult on account of temporary resistance from the French, Italian, and American negotiators. The Franco-Italian resistance to the line as drawn up by Beneš was due to Laroche's absence from Paris. The line, as Beneš had sketched it on a smaller map, was "quite inaccurate."<sup>1</sup> A careful examination of the suggested borderline on a larger map revealed, that were the Czechs to gain the uninterrupted Oderberg-Jablunkau line, the town of Teschen would be severed from its suburbs on the western bank of the Olsa river. Both the French and Italian delegates contended that to divide the town of Teschen would violate the stipulations that the "town should go to Poland."<sup>2</sup> The position of the British delegation remained unchanged. Derby closely followed Curzon's instructions that the "guiding consideration should be that the through line should fall to Czechs."<sup>3</sup> The Allied Ambassadors were to be reminded "that the handing over of town of Teschen to Poles was the special and principal concession

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<sup>1</sup>Derby to Curzon, July 17, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 705.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Curzon to Derby, July 18, 1920, ibid., p. 706.

offered by Beneš as price of settlement."<sup>1</sup> As there were two railway stations, "the western one together with the main line running north and south would go to Czecho-Slovakia, whilst eastern station would become Polish."<sup>2</sup> With the return of Laroche from Spa the Franco-Italian opposition was surmounted. The line separating the town of Teschen from its suburbs remained.

The second, more serious resistance emanated from the United States. The U.S. Government objected to "imposing boundaries upon weaker powers," and raised once more the subject of "arbitration by impartial judges, or by plebiscites fairly conducted."<sup>3</sup> While ready to admit that moral or ethnic principles were not easily applied in the Teschen dispute, the United States Government was fundamentally opposed to any hurried arbitrary settlement which contravened their political ethics.<sup>4</sup> Their apprehensions were only accentuated by "a remarkable discrepancy between

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Secretary of State, Colby, to Hugh C. Wallace, U.S. Ambassador to France, July 21, 1920, FR 1920, Vol. I, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup>According to the former representative at the Teschen Inter-Allied Commission, A. W. Dubois, the question of Teschen was "economic and not primarily . . . ethnographic." Dubois to Hugh C. Wallace, July 15, 1920, SDNA, 760c.60F/48; also Geddes to Curzon, July 22, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 709.

the English and French text[s] of the telegram sent from Spa to Washington."<sup>1</sup> Namely, while the English text stated that the initiative to have the decision imposed by the Great Powers had originated by the Czech and Polish delegations; the French text stated the reverse of the contents of the sentence, giving the appearance that the Allies had prevailed upon the two Slav states.<sup>2</sup> It was up to Jules Cambon to clarify the misunderstanding through an explanatory note.<sup>3</sup>

The United States had also to consider reports by their own Ambassador in Prague, Richard Crane, which were in favour of Czechoslovakia. The latter reported an earlier conversation with Beneš. Apparently Beneš used the threat of spreading Communism and anarchy in Czechoslovakia were the Allies to favour the Poles in the Teschen settlement. He pointed out that such a decision would decisively weaken his own and Masaryk's position, and would give rise to a strong pro-Russian reaction in the country.<sup>4</sup> Similar persuasive arguments were employed by the British

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<sup>1</sup>Derby to Curzon, July 23, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 711.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.; for text of the telegrams see FR 1920, Vol. I, pp. 51-2.

<sup>3</sup>FR 1920, Vol. I, pp. 57-8; also DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 711-12.

<sup>4</sup>Crane to Secretary of State, July 7, 1920, FR 1920, Vol. I, p. 49.

Ambassador, Sir Eric Geddes, in Washington.<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously, with the objective of swaying the U.S. in their favour, the Poles also launched vigorous diplomatic activity. Paderewski's appeals for "an American veto" of the decision of the Conference at Spa were both unrealistic and, by then, futile.<sup>2</sup> Due to the rejection of the Versailles Treaty by the United States Senate, the American Government was in no position to enforce its policies on the Great European Powers. In addition, to this temporary political eclipse of the United States in European political affairs, the Conference of Ambassadors had resolved that even if the American Government failed to consent by July 27, "the Conference would be compelled to take a decision by a majority without awaiting the concurrence of the United States Government."<sup>3</sup>

Concurrently at Paris, Paderewski's exaggerated claims to the entire Karvin region and most of the railway were met by Cambon's reminder that both parties (Poles and Czechs) had to abide by "whatever decision" was taken by the Conference. Having no other

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<sup>1</sup>FR 1920, Vol. I, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup>Paderewski to House, July 23, 1920, E. M. House Papers. E. M. House Collection, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University. Quoted by Perman, p. 272.

<sup>3</sup>Derby to Curzon, July 23, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 711-12.



alternative Paderewski was forced to agree."with this understanding."<sup>1</sup>

On July 27, the Conference of Ambassadors resumed its deliberations on the Teschen settlement. In deference to the protests of the United States Ambassador, several modifications were introduced into the final resolution.<sup>2</sup> These changes did not affect the essence of the instructions concluded at Spa. The Duchy of Teschen was to be divided along the Crowe-Beneš's line. Article VIII of the Resolution assured transit facilities and access to the two stations within the town of Teschen (one being assigned to Poland, the other, belonging to the suburbs, remained within Czechoslovakia).<sup>3</sup> An area of some 1,013 square kilometres with a population of 137,900 was to be awarded to Poland. Among these were 92,700 Poles and some 40,000 Germans. The Czech part of Teschen was to consist of some 1,269 square kilometres, with population of 298,000. Out of these 140,000 were Poles and 30,000 were Germans. In all, the Czechs were to receive

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<sup>1</sup>Derby to Curzon, July 20, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 707-708.

<sup>2</sup>Derby to Curzon, July 27, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 712.

<sup>3</sup>Resolution of the Conference of Ambassadors, July 28, 1920, PCIJ, Document 8, Article VIII, pp. 135-36.

approximately 56 per cent. of the territory of the former Duchy of Teschen and 67 per cent. of its population.<sup>1</sup>

It was decided further, that the frontier delimitation be undertaken under the supervision of a French Delimitation Commission, consisting of representatives of the Allied and Associate Powers as well as of Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Commission was empowered to propose slight modifications "in the neighbourhood of the frontier line."<sup>2</sup> The time for the formation of the Commission was extended from fifteen days to four weeks in order to enable Washington to send their own representative.<sup>3</sup> In the interest of the local industry and to prevent discrimination, both Poland and Czechoslovakia were bound to respect the

Concessions and privileges acquired by private persons or companies, especially by mining or industrial companies, in the former Duchy of Teschen . . . for a period of 25 years no legislative measure affecting mines, industry or commerce, shall be put in force in the said territories, which is not equally applicable throughout the whole territory of Poland or Czechoslovakia as the case may be.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Friedrich Weil, Tschechoslowakei (Gotha-Stuttgart, 1924), no page indicated, in Witt, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup>Resolution of the Conference of Ambassadors, July 28, 1920, PCIJ, Document 8, Article II, p. 131.

<sup>3</sup>Derby to Curzon, July 27, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 712.

<sup>4</sup>Resolution of the Conference of Ambassadors, PCIJ, Document 8, Article VI, p. 134.

( ) As a result of the American objections, Poland was not bound to supply Czechoslovakia with any predetermined quantity of oil. The Czechs, however, were asked to supply coal for a period of 5 years "to countries which had drawn coal from the area in 1913."<sup>1</sup> This included Poland, Austria, and Hungary. Furthermore, the resolution assured these countries that the coal would not be inferior in quality to that delivered during the year of 1913. In order to protect Czechoslovakia, in case of lower production the quantity of coal exported could be proportionally diminished.<sup>2</sup>

On July 28 the official settlement of the Teschen dispute was signed by the four Allied Powers, Paderewski and Beneš<sup>v</sup> signed for Poland and Czechoslovakia respectively, the United States abstained.<sup>3</sup> Following the publication of the resolution, the Prague Government was then officially invited to take immediate possession of the territory delimited to

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<sup>1</sup>Derby to Curzon, July 27, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, p. 712.

<sup>2</sup>Resolution of the Conference of Ambassadors, PCIJ, Document 8, Article VII, pp. 134-35.

<sup>3</sup>The signatories were: Derby for Great Britain, Jules Cambon for France, Bonin for Italy, and K. Matsui for Japan.

( )

Czechoslovakia.<sup>1</sup>

The Allied decision was received with mixed emotions in both Czechoslovakia and Poland. If we are to believe the local correspondent of The Times, which supported the Czechs, the more moderate elements within Poland considered the settlement far more favourable to Poland than the result of a plebiscite could ever have been.<sup>2</sup> However, the majority of the public opinion, the press, and the more nationalist-minded politicians in both countries greeted the settlement with indignation. The Poles were especially bitter, ascribing the adverse settlement to Allied exploitation of their temporary military weakness on the eastern front. Paderewski's organ, the Warsaw Rzeczpospolita claimed that Poland had "lost Karvin at Kiev."<sup>3</sup> While the Gazeta Ludowa (Katovice) appeared to express the general feeling by threatening that "sooner or later we shall get our lands back."<sup>4</sup> The American Minister in Warsaw, Hugh Gibson, was persuaded that "a large current of Polish public opinion" was "disposed to regard the loss of Teschen as not irrevocable."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Millerand to Beneš, July 28, 1920, PCIJ, Document 9, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>July 27, 1920, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted by Witt, p. 187.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Tel. No. 586, November 4, 1920, SDNA, 60F/71, cited by Z. J. Gasiorowski, "Polish-Czech Relations

Impelled by this wave of indignation, Paderewski registered an official protest with Millerand in the latter's capacity of President of both the Peace Conference and the Conference of Ambassadors at Paris.<sup>1</sup> The factor on which he based his accusation leaves the impression that Paderewski accepted the final settlement, but desired to justify his own and his government's actions in the eyes of the Polish public opinion. He accused, rather illogically, the Great Powers of having violated the principle of self-determination as guaranteed by President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points in the Teschen settlement. Paderewski pointed out that while the principle of self-determination was overlooked in the Teschen dispute, it formed the very core of the "Curzon Note" sent to the Soviet Government. According to the note, "la frontière entre la Russie et la Pologne doit être conforme, autant que possible aux vœux des populations intéressées."<sup>2</sup> As far as the Teschen settlement was concerned, the wishes of the Polish minority were ignored.

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1918-1922", Slavonic and East European Review, XXXV, No. 84 (1956-57), pp. 186-87.

<sup>1</sup>M. I. J. Paderewski au Président de la Conférence de la Paix, July 30, 1920, PCIJ, Document 10, pp. 138-40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

It is inconceivable to accept Paderewski's note on its face value. By isolating the morally sound but politically impractical principle of self-determination Paderewski jeopardized most of Poland's frontier delimitations, especially those between Poland and Russia. Were the principle rigidly enforced in all frontier settlements, Poland's territory would have been significantly reduced.

From the international point of view, Paderewski's conclusion was more significant than his main argument. Namely, he expressed the doubt as to whether the objective of the Supreme Council to establish harmony between the two republics could be achieved under the conditions of the settlement.<sup>1</sup>

In Czechoslovakia the Ambassadorial resolution was equally unpopular. With the exception of the business circles, who expressed satisfaction with the "settlement as announced," hoping that it should "bring quiet in Teschen and enable [the] country to pursue policy of economic rehabilitation."<sup>2</sup> The Government organs only "half-heartedly supported the settlement, trying to justify it "as a sacrifice for Slav concord."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 139-40.

<sup>2</sup>Crane to Secretary of State, July 31, 1920, SDNA, 760c.60F/44.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The National Democratic Party took advantage of the general unpopularity of the settlement and attacked the Government and Beneš's foreign policy. Their organ, České Slovo, claimed that the Allies had handled the border dispute as if Czechoslovakia were a mere colony,<sup>1</sup> and refused "to recognize [the] settlement under any circumstances."<sup>2</sup>

In his confidential report to Curzon, Wilton noted equally mixed reaction in Teschen. The Czechs were on the whole "gratified", but the Slonzaks and the Germans were "bitterly disappointed at having been thrown to the Poles."<sup>3</sup> With the exception of the Rada Narodowa, which "addressed a protest to President Wilson," and other political agitators, the Silesian Poles were calm.<sup>4</sup> The peasantry was "indifferent," while the miners, who were expected to protest, "remained quietly at work."<sup>5</sup> Wilton was of the opinion that,

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<sup>1</sup>Cited by Witt, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup>Crane to Secretary of State, July 31, 1920, SDNA, 760c.60F/44.

<sup>3</sup>August 10, 1920, DBFP, Vol. X, pp. 716 ff.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

The whole of the Polish-speaking population handed over to Czechoslovakia has shown little if any feeling of resentment and appears indeed to be relieved at having been severed from connection with distressful Poland and annexed to a country which, whatever its drawbacks may be has at least a stronger Government and a more stable currency.<sup>1</sup>

Wilton reported that in general the local Czechs, possibly inspired by the Foreign Office at Prague, were disposed "to meet the Poles half way."<sup>2</sup> It was to be regretted that only "a very few . . . of the Polish funcionarios appear to be animated by the same desire."<sup>3</sup> According to Wilton, the arbitrary "division of the town of Teschen was hard both on the population and on the industry as often units were separated."<sup>4</sup> (For example, the reservoir from waterworks, schools and hospitals from gasworks, etc.). Yet in spite of the inherent difficulties of the arbitrary division Wilton's report was optimistic in tone.

As far as Beneš<sup>y</sup> was concerned, he naturally considered the settlement (which to a great degree was the result of his own endeavours) a diplomatic victory for Czechoslovakia.<sup>5</sup> In his statement in front of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 716-17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 717.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., pp. 61-2.



permanent committee of the Czechoslovak National Assembly (August 4, 1920), Beneš ascribed the nation's hostility to the Allied decision to the irresponsible politicians who had failed to inform and prepare the public for the inevitable partition of the Duchy of Teschen.<sup>1</sup> He pointed out that the so-called "principle of historic rights" was never the decisive determinant in Allied territorial deliberations.<sup>2</sup> Their main considerations were: the position of Czechoslovakia and Poland in European power politics and the concern which of the two republics would be better able to maintain order and prosperity in the industrial part of the Duchy. As to the political criterion, Poland was a formidable opponent due to its demography. Poland's strategic location between Russia and Germany gave it a strong bargaining position in Paris.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from what Beneš considered an advantageous settlement, and the fact that the transfer of power in the former Duchy was carried out peacefully, the Allies had failed to achieve a détente in Czech-Polish relations. It may only be assumed that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Beneš, Problémy . . ., pp. 62-4.

had the Great Powers forced a settlement in January 1919, instead of July 1920, the relations between the two Slav states would have been less seriously affected. In January 1919 both Poland and Czechoslovakia were in no position to resist Allied intervention, diplomatically or any other way. Whereas Czech independence was acknowledged, Poland was not, as yet, recognized. Its frontiers were not formally established. The Allies could have used these two factors to force Prague and Warsaw to accept division of Teschen. Probably, the territorial settlement would not have differed to any great extent from the one actually taken in 1920, but the removal of the Teschen affair from the international scene might have prevented deterioration in Czech-Polish relations. The prolongation of the border dispute in conjunction with later international developments seriously affected the future Czech-Polish relations.

Viewed against the background of the Russo-Polish crisis, the settlement of July 1920, only stimulated Polish suspicions in regard to Allied motives and Czech integrity. Furthermore, the settlement occurred at a time when political and economic objectives of the two states were not congenial to a rapprochement.

By 1920 both republics were involved in rivalry over leadership in East Central Europe. Each engaged in building alliances that clashed with the interests of the other. By 1920 Czechoslovakia could not support Polish territorial aspirations which were bound to entail either Russian or German alienation.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, Czech relations with Poland had to be subordinated to relations with Germany and Russia which were of the paramount political and economic importance to Czechoslovakia.<sup>2</sup> By August 1920 the antagonism between the two republics which grew out of the Teschen dispute was beyond healing by an enforced Allied settlement. Nevertheless, as far as the Great Powers were concerned, the publication of the Resolution of the Conference of Ambassadors implied termination of an irritating conflict. With the formation of the Allied Boundary Commission (August 5, 1920), the affair of Teschen was removed from the

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<sup>1</sup>Gasiorowski, Slavonic and East European Review, XXXV, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup>In economy Germany occupied the "first place in Czechoslovakia's foreign trade in both imports and exports." S. H. Howell to Secretary of State, July 25, 1921, SDNA, 860F.51/99. Beneš emphasized the need for economic treaties with Russia in his statement in front of the Foreign Affairs Committee on January 31, 1920. Beneš, Problémy . . ., pp. 49-52.

( ) agenda of the Peace Conference. It was up to the  
Czechs and the Poles to find a tolerable modus vivendi  
in the future.

## CONCLUSION

This study of the territorial dispute over the Duchy of Teschen between Czechoslovakia and Poland during the years 1919-1920 has been partially but not exclusively concerned with the role of the British delegation during the complex negotiations. A study exclusively concerned with British policy with regard to Teschen has been impossible because the whole dispute was only a small part of the general problems of British policy with regard to East Central Europe. As a result British policy towards the Teschen dispute was really controlled by the wider problems of Eastern Europe, and this policy vacillated as these wider problems impinged upon Britain's general relations with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and others. It would be wrong, however, to assume that Great Britain had no definite policy with regard to Lower Silesia. Whenever it was possible, the British delegation, and Lloyd George himself, closely observed the directives laid down by the Foreign Office Memoranda just prior to the Peace Conference. These advocated the return to traditional British policy with regard to Europe.

In general terms these directives implied:

(1) the re-establishment of European equilibrium including Germany and Russia as future powers, and the prevention of a hegemony by "a single Power or a closely associate group of Powers" over Europe.<sup>1</sup> (2) The necessity of a reconstructed Europe capable of resuming international trade. (3) And finally, to encourage such territorial settlements which would be based on mutual compromises, and being moderate, would assure a long-lasting settlement. The Foreign Office advised that only in cases where negotiations on local level had failed, should the Peace Conference offer arbitration. However, once this was accepted, the determination by the Great Powers should be final, and "if necessary, be enforced by arms."<sup>2</sup>

When applied to Teschen the directives by the Foreign Office were less firm. Both Lloyd George and Balfour distrusted the stability of the small Succession States which the Allies were committed to uphold. Therefore, it was in Great Britain's interest to make sure that the new states were assured of

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<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, Foreign Office, Memorandum, "Europe," p. 1, Foster Papers, Vol. 45, Subject file 80.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

economic, strategic, and political independence as far as possible. This implied that, whenever it was possible, the new states should not be economically, or otherwise, dependent on their stronger neighbours. Hence both Great Britain and France favoured such a settlement that would balance the principle of self-determination with other important factors which were often diametrically opposed to the ethically correct ethnic principle. By balancing the principle of national self-determination against political and strategic requirements of Czechoslovakia and Poland, the Foreign Office recommended division of Teschen between the two contending states, rather than assigning the former Duchy in its entirety to Czechoslovakia. Yet, motivated by the same factors, the Foreign Office advised that the industrial region with the strategic Oderberg-Jablunkau railroad be annexed to Czechoslovakia in complete disregard of the ethnic figures.

The principal considerations of the Foreign Office were: (1) the dependence of Czechoslovakia on Karvin coal, and the fact that Czech industry and Teschen mining and industrial production formed an integral whole. (2) The mineral resources and industrial development of Poland and Czechoslovakia also

had to be considered. It should be noted that Poland's undeveloped industry had more coal and oil than it needed. (3) Political determinants figured prominently in the final analysis of the Teschen affair. European economic and political equilibrium required a stable Austrian economy. Austrian industrial reconstruction depended on a regular supply of Lower Silesian coal and coke. Yet Czechoslovakia stood between the source of supply and Austrian markets. Outweighing the eventuality of Czech political pressure through obstruction in transit, was the potential friendly co-existence between the two republics based on mutual economic needs. The Foreign Office hoped that a similar détente in Czech-Hungarian relations could be envisaged if the former controlled Teschen coal. Were the situation reversed and Poland in control of Silesian coal, then the Polish-Hungarian bloc, hostile to Prague, would have been strengthened.

However, while Great Britain was fundamentally ready to support the Czech claims to the greater part of Teschen, its support had to be based on political contingencies. Since the Teschen issue did not impinge directly on Britain's economic, political, or strategic interests, Britain would not force a settlement or guarantee territorial status quo at



infinitem to a territory prone to future border disputes between Poland and Czechoslovakia. Throughout the negotiations the British representatives revealed preference for a moderate settlement based on mutual compromise. Were such a settlement possible, it would have been actively endorsed by them. This policy was particularly evident during the January crisis when the Great Powers were in the position to enforce peace in accordance with their plans through a military intervention. Despite the fact that the Teschen conflict had disclosed that the Czech-Polish friction was not amenable to diplomatic intervention unsupported by Allied military force, both Great Britain and France shrank from using their power. The British supported the direct conversations between the Czechs and Poles at Cracow, and, later, the adoption of a plebiscite for similar reasons. However, the Allied stipulation that the plebiscite was to be of an informing nature and not a decisive factor in the final territorial delimitation, indicated that Great Britain and France had reserved their final judgment depending the exigencies of higher politics.

There is no doubt that the point of view of the Foreign Office experts was shared by Lloyd George, Balfour, and Curzon. If they differed, they

did so in details rather than in principle. The position of the Foreign Office was especially firmly established on territorial questions, because its personnel was generally employed in the territorial commissions. Because the Japanese delegation did not take active part in deliberations concerning Europe, but, generally, voted with the majority, the British held the decisive vote. Hence the recommendations by the territorial commissions reflected the attitude of the British Foreign Office. Unfortunately, because many aspects of the negotiations still remain obscure, it is difficult to determine Lloyd George's opinion on the Teschen issue in any detail. It appears that the Teschen issue was considered negligible in view of the problems of primary interest to Great Britain negotiated by him at Paris. Not until the Versailles Treaty was signed with Germany would he seriously occupy himself with the Czech-Polish dispute. However, despite his critical attitude towards the Czech claims, Lloyd George never opposed them in any decisive way, as he had done in the Polish case. His policy towards the two Succession States was motivated by personal feelings, by day-to-day political considerations, and above all by his distrust of Poland. The latter's aggressive policy was disturbing to the equilibrium in East

( ) Central Europe which Lloyd George strove to establish. Throughout the peace negotiations Lloyd George voiced his apprehensions of the day when Germany and Russia would resume their power and would turn on Poland's over-extended frontiers. Hence Poland was a weak link in the European balance of power. His distrust of Poland's aggressive foreign policy was intensified by his suspicion that France encouraged it. Almost all members of the British Delegation regarded Poland as the instrument of French expansionistic post-war policy.

Curiously, in the Teschen issue both France and Great Britain supported the Czech claims. While Great Britain was motivated by politico-economic factors, France regarded both Poland and Czechoslovakia as indispensable links in the "cordon sanitaire" against German thrust eastward and Bolshevik threat westward.<sup>1</sup> This consideration prevented France from supporting Polish claims based on clear-cut ethnic lines in the Teschen dispute. Both the British Foreign Office and the French Quai d'Orsay feared that such a policy would rouse Czech nationalism which might sway the country towards either Russia or Germany.

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<sup>1</sup>Wolfers, p. 119.

Unlike the Poles whose "diplomacy was badly outplayed in the Teschen dispute,"<sup>1</sup> much of the credit for the Czech victory must be attributed to Beneš's personal diplomacy based on emphasizing moderation and compromise. Throughout the negotiations Beneš was constantly aware that Czechoslovakia owed its favourable position at the Peace Conference to political skill rather than to its actual strength. Knowing that the Allies favoured a settlement based on compromise, such as partition, Beneš resolved to fight for the maintenance of the borderline along the Olsa river, securing the Karvin district and the Oderberg-Jablunkau railroad for Czechoslovakia. He consistently followed up this policy of bargaining, offering compromises but never more than what he had considered essential for the Republic. While in Paris, he was trying to influence and prevail upon the various echelons of the British and French delegations, in Teschen proper he offered to the local Germans and Slonzaks numerous inducements such as currency and labour reforms, administrative stability, and better markets.

He secured German support for Czechoslovakia, but later on Beneš was ready to desert his German

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<sup>1</sup>Gasiorowski, Slavonic and East European Review, XXXV, p. 185.

supporters by proposing the division of the town of Teschen. Obviously Beneš fought for the Silesian coal, railroad, and industry, and was willing to sacrifice all other principles. It is beyond doubt that Beneš was aware that the for Poland unfavourable partition of Teschen along the Olsa river would become the chief obstacle to future closer Czech-Polish relations. He accepted the risk because Poland's anti-Russian policy already precluded closer ties between Prague and Warsaw. Threatened by Hungary and surrounded by German lands, Czechoslovakia was compelled to look towards Russia as its potential ally. This policy was well understood by Great Britain, but clashed with French plans for Eastern Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Following the fall of 1919, France, fearing that the tripartite treaty was not to be satisfied by the United States Senate, embarked on an intensive foreign policy of making allies in East Central and South Eastern Europe. In the political field a bloc of states consisting of Poland, Hungary, and Rumania appeared strategically more important to France than an exclusive alliance with Czechoslovakia. In the economic

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<sup>1</sup>"Russia has always been, and must remain, the pivot of Czech policy." Great Britain, Foreign Office Memorandum, "South-eastern Europe and the Balkans", p. 34, Foster Papers, Vol. 45, Subject file 80.

sphere France aimed at controlling most of European sources of iron ore and coal production. The British Foreign Office, always concerned about activities by a single strong power on the Continent, interpreted the French foreign policy as an attempt to control Eastern and South-eastern Europe. It was the French activity in the Danubian region which triggered British and Czech counteraction.

To Beneš<sup>✓</sup>, the Franco-Hungarian talks signalled danger, yet he could not afford a breach with France while the Teschen conflict remained unresolved. This motivation underlay his dualistic policy of negotiating with Russia and laying foundations to the Little Entente, while at the same time continuing (even if irregularly) to supply Poland with needed military equipment. Meanwhile he waited for a propitious moment when it would be advantageous to approach Great Britain for active support in connection with Teschen. Hence his policy of temporizing and his offer of submitting the conflict to a neutral arbitrator. It was not until the Polish invasion of Ukraine that Beneš<sup>✓</sup> succeeded in persuading the Allies and his Government of the advantages of his policy.

Similarly British interests in East Central and South-eastern Europe were stimulated by the

tentative Franco-Hungarian negotiations. Great Britain hoped to prevent Poland from dominating the East European coal supply and to weaken the Polish-Hungarian-French bloc. It was in British interest to curb French political and economic expansion over that part of Europe. These considerations directly influenced British attitude in regard to Teschen. Thus paradoxically Great Britain became the champion of the Czech claims which France, for different reasons, had persistently advocated since January 1919. By the summer 1920 both Great Britain and France were united in their effort to terminate the conflict between Poland and Czechoslovakia. French commitments to Czechoslovakia, political considerations, and vested interests prevailed over Paléologue's Hungarian policy.

On the international scene, the atmosphere was also favourable to the Czechs. Due to the Franco-Italian rivalry in South-eastern Europe, the Italian support of the Polish claims had substantially declined. Meanwhile the retreat of the United States from European politics enabled the British Foreign Office to treat more casually American objections to the pro-Czech settlement.

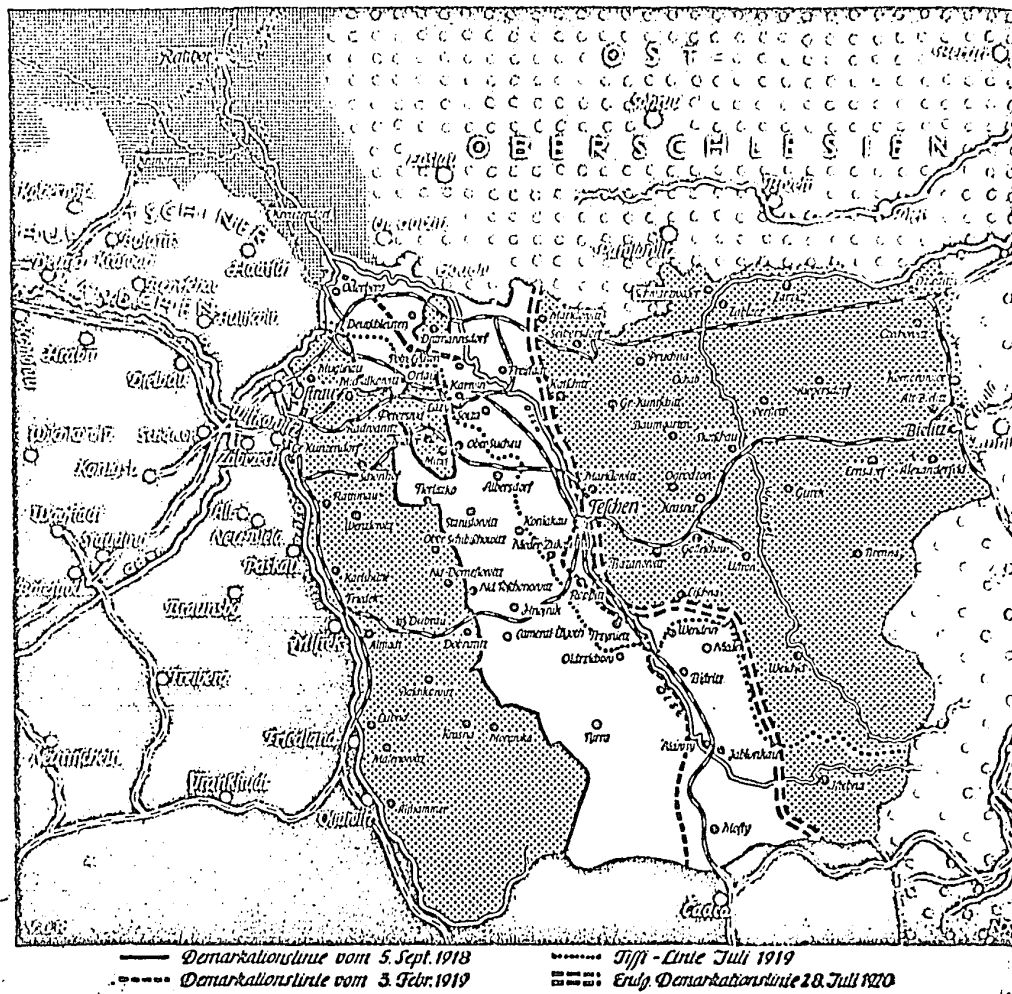
At the Spa Conference the combination of international factors motivating the Great Powers and

the political and military weakness of Poland enabled Lloyd George to impose on Grabski a settlement which would be finalized by a decision of the Supreme Council. That the Supreme Council was dominated by Great Britain and that the verdict followed a pre-arranged course agreed upon by Crowe and Beneš are conclusive proofs of British support of the Czech claims. The escape clause which authorized the Conference of Ambassadors (who were mere agents of the Supreme Council) to hand down the final judgment revealed that, to the very end, Great Britain tried to sustain the fiction of disinterest in East European affairs.

The Franco-British hopes that the Czechs and Poles would ultimately develop a tolerable modus vivendi failed. The prolonged Teschen conflict overshadowed those factors, e.g. fear of Germany and/or Russia which might have created an atmosphere of co-operation, and remained throughout the inter-war period the chief obstacle to the creation of friendly relations between the two powers.



Wie es zur Teilung des Teschener Schlesiens kam



<sup>1</sup>Witt, p. 174.

## APPENDIX A

### PROTOKOLL DES POLNISCH-TSCHECHISCHEN PROVISORIUMS VOM 5. NOVEMBER 1918.<sup>1</sup>

Ueber die Vertreterversammlung des Narodni vybor fuer  
Schlesien in Pln.-Ostrau und der Rada narodowa in  
Teschen bezueglich aenderung der jetzigen Verhaeltnisse  
im Herzogtum Teschen.

Unwesende:

#### I. Fuer den Zemsky vybor vom Schlesien:

1. Dr. Siegmund Witt, Advokat in Maehr.-Ostrau
2. Dr. Ferdinand Pelc, Notar in Poln.-Ostrau
3. Peter Cingr, gewesener Reichsratsabgeordneter in  
Maeh.-Ostrau
4. Johann Nohel, Lehrer in Poln.-Ostrau.

#### II. Fuer die Rada narodowa in Teschen:

1. Tadeus Reger, frueherer Reichsratsabgeordneter  
in Teschen
2. Dr. Richard Kunicki, Arzt in Freistadt
3. Prof. Paul Bobek in Teschen
4. Ing. Josef Kiedron in Dombrau.

Obenerwaehnte Delegierte schliessen im Namen  
ihrer Waehler folgenden Vertrag ab:

Der jetzige Vertrag besitzt nur voreubergehende  
Geltung und greift in nichts der endgueltigen  
territorialen Festlegung der Grenzen vor. Diese bleibt

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<sup>1</sup>Reprinted in Witt, Appendix I, pp. 260-62.

vollstaendig der Entscheidung der berufenen Organe, das ist der Polnischen Regierung in Warschau und der tschechischen in Prag, vorbehalten. Hauptsache ist die Aufrechterhaltung der Ruhe und Ordnung waehrend der Uebergangszeit. Damit sich die Kraefte nicht in gegenseitigen Streitigkeiten oertlicher und kleinlicher Natur zersplittern, wird der Wirkungsbereich beider Nationalauschuesse in Schlesien, das ist des Narodni vybor und der Rada narodowa, auf folgende Weise begrenzt:

1. Der politische Bezirk Friedek wird dem Narodni vybor fuer Schlesien, der politische Bezirk Bielitz und Teschen der Rada narodowa in Teschen unterstellt.

2. Im politischen Bezirk Freistadt had der gegenwaertige Zustand vorlaeufig aufrecht erhalten zu bleiben. Saemtliche aemter in diesem Bezirke unterstehen, soferne es sich im tschechische Gemeinden handelt, dem Narodni vybor fuer Schlesien, die uebrigen Gemeinden dieses Bezirkes der Rada narodowa in Teschen. Die Ernennung der Beamten muss im Einvernehmen der beiden Verwaltungsbehoerden erfolgen, was auch fuer jede Veraenderung im Beamtenstande gilt. Im Freistaedter Bezirk obliegt die Sicherheitspolizei im Bereich der tschechischen Gemeinden dem Narodni vybor, fuer den Bereich der uebrigen der Rada narodowa.

Die Funktion des Polizeikommissariats in Mährisch-Ostau, das dem Narodni vybor untersteht, bezieht sich auf den ganzen jetzigen Bereich. Die Rada narodowa hat das Recht, zu diese, Amte ihren Vertrauensmann zu delegieren. Auch koennen Anordnungen, die polnische und deutsche Gemeinden betreffen, nur mit Zustimmung dieses Delegierten entschieden werden.

3. Im ganzen Herzogtum Teschen buergen die Nationalregierungen fuer den vollen Schutz der nationalen Minderheiten, bezueglich kultureller, Schul- und Nationalangelegenheiten.

Die Ungelegenheiten dieser Minderheiten, sofern sie kulturell and national sind, duerfen nur in Uebereinstimmung mit der anderen Nationalregierung erledigt werden.

4. In Gemeinden, in denen die Gemeindevertretung anderer Nationalitaet ist als die Mehrzahl der Bewohnerschaft auf Grund der letzten Volkszaehlung, wird ein Vertrauensmann dieser Nationalitaet zur Mitarbeit herangezogen.

5. Die Aufsicht ueber die Kaschau-Oderberger Bahn uebernimmt die polnische Rada narodowa unter Mitarbeit des Aufsichtsrates, in welchen sie Vertreter und Fachleute des Landesverwaltungsausschusses in Poln.-Ostau, zum Schutze des tschechischen Volkes berufen kann.

6. Von der Rada narodowa werden Militaerbesatzungen in den Bahnhöfen in Teschen, Trzynietz, Mosty und Oderberg errichtet. Der Narodni vybor hat das Recht, eine angemessene Besatzung mit einem eigenen Offizier in Oderberg zu halten. Die Mannschaftsbesatzung der tschechischen Truppe darf aber die Haelfte der polnischen nicht uebersteigen.

7. Der Oderberger Bahnhof, besonders der Personenbahnhof, Gueterbahnhof, Vorbahnhof, untersteht der Vollzugsgewalt der Rada narodowa bis zur letzten Ausweiche bei Hruschau. Das Territorium, das unter die Hoheit des Narodni vybor faellt, bleibt unangetastet. Die im Punkt 7 angefuhrten. Punkte erhalten Geltung nach ausdruecklicher Bestaetigung duerch den Narodni vybor fuer Schlesien.

8. Die anderen Verwaltungen werden den Regierungen unterstehen, in deren Hoheitsgebiet sie sich befinden. So bes. die Staedtebahn Teschen-Friedek, die einschliesslich der Station Bojkowitz-Bukowitz, und die Bahn Kuntschitz-Schau-Teschen, die einschl. der Station Schoenhof der Vollzugsgewalt des Narodni vybor zufaellt.

Die Montanbahn gehoert gaenzlich unter die Hoheit des Narodni vybor, mit Ausnahme der freien Durchfuhr vom Kohle und Grubenmaterial, die der Rada

narodowa zusteht. Die Elektrische Bahn Maehrisch-Ostrau bis einschliesslich Hruschau. Der Rest dieser Strecken, hauptsaechlich die Linie Hruschau-Oderberg, Karwin-Freistadt und Orlau-Kopaniny unterstehen der Rada narodowa.

Die der Kompetenz der Rada narodowa unterstehenden Strecken werden der Eisenbahndirektion Krakau unterstellt.

9. Die Verwaltung (Upprovisionierung) untersteht im Bezirk Friedek den Tschechen, im Bezirk Bielitz den Polen und beiden Regierungen gemeinsam im Bezirke Freistadt.

In allen Bezirken werden Bezirkswirtschaftsaemter aufgestellt, welche die Voersorgung des Bezirks mit Lebensmitteln sicherzustellen haben. In den einzelnen Gemeinden werden Gemeindewirtschaftsaemter gegruendet. Es ist dafuer Sorge zu tragen, dass in ihnen moeglichst alle Schichten der Bovoelkerung vertreten sind.

10. Zum Zwecke der Approvisionierung des ganzen Landes wird eventuell ein Direktorium errichtet, in welches Tschechen und Polen je 7, die Deutschen 5 Delegierte entsenden. Der polnische und tschechische Approvisionsausschutz unterstehen ihren Nationalregierungen and ueben ihr Recht dort aus, wo die einzelnen Regierungen Geltung haben. Auf alle Faelle ver-

pflichten sich jedoch beide Regierungen, sich um die Lebensmittel der Bergleute, Kokser und Bergarbeiter des Ostrau-Karwiner Reviers zu bekümmern.

11. Die Regierungen haben das Einhalten des Vertrages ueber Zuweisung von Lebensmitteln zu ueberwachen. In der Kohlenfrage bleiben die bisherigen Verfuegungen aufrechterhalten. Das Revier untersteht daher dem Revierbergamte in Maehr.-Ostrau, dem Hoheitsbebiet des Narodni vybor. Die Rada narodowa hat aber das Recht, in dieses Amt ihren Vertreter zu entsenden. Zu Erlaessen, welche Gruben betreffen, die nicht unter tschechischer Verwaltung stehen, ist sein Einverstaendnis notwendig. Das Gleiche gilt fuer das Kohleninspektorat in Maehrisch Ostrau, das bezueglic der Kohlenverteilung dem oben erwaehnten Direktorim untersteht.

12. Die Kohlenkaders werden aufgeloeset, doch verbleiben in saemtlichen Gemeinden Besatzungen zwecks Aufrechterhaltung der Ordnung. Die Militaerbesatzungen werden fuer Orte mit tschechischer Vertretung durch das Stationskommando in Maehrisch-Ostrau, in den uebrigen Orten des Reviers durch die Rada narodowa gestellt. Die polnischen Garnisonen unterstehen dem Militaerkommando in Teschen, die tschechischen dem in Ostrau.

13. Sollten Verguegungen notwendig sein,

die gemeinsame militaerische Angelegenheiten betreffen, so einigen sich die Militaercommandos in Maehr.-Ostrau und Teschen.

14. Das genannte gemeinsame Vorgehen der beiden Regierungen, hauptsaechlich hinsichtlich des Transportes auf den elektrischen Bahnen, kann jederzeit im gemeinsamen Einvernehmen der beiden Regierungen aufgehoben werden.

Pöln.-Ostrau, 5. November 1918.



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APPENDIX B

LETTRE DU PRÉSIDENT DE LA COMMISSION INTERALLIÉE DE TESCHEN  
AU PRÉSIDENT DE LA COMMISSION INTERALLIÉE DE VARSOVIE<sup>1</sup>

Teschen, le 23 février 1919.

C'est avec un vif sentiment de peine et de regret que je constate le malentendu que la difficulté des communications a fait naître entre nous. J'espère qu'une franche et complète explication le dissipera.

Je n'ai jamais dit ni pensé que la rôle de la Commission que j'ai l'honneur de présider fût de fixer le partage de la région de Teschen. Je sais qu'il se borne à faire une enquête qui permettre à la Conférence de la Paix de se prononcer en pleine connaissance de cause. Or, une enquête comporte généralement des conclusions sur lesquelles les différents enquêteurs déclarent être d'accord. Ces conclusions peuvent d'ailleurs être approuvées, modifiées ou rejetées par les pouvoirs compétents. Je n'ai pas voulu dire autre chose.

Notre deuxième mission était d'empêcher tout conflit entre Tchèques et Polonais et d'assurer

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<sup>1</sup>France, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères.  
Recueil des actes de la Conférence de la Paix, Vol. IV,  
Annexe I, pp. 752-53.

l'exécution de l'arrangement du 31 janvier - 3 février. En fait, nous avons maintenu la paix, et quant à l'exécution de l'accord mentionné, nous ne l'avons nullement perdue de vue. Mais, bien qu'évidemment elle ne dût par être retardée inutilement aucun délai fixe n'était imparti pour y procéder et nous étions, sans contredit, juges des modalités. Il nous apparut que la situation n'était pas telle qu'on avait semblé le concevoir à Paris, qu'une exécution immédiate et brutale était de nature à compromettre la tranquillité publique et l'équité de notre enquête. Nous avons donc soumis nos scrupules aux Gouvernements alliés et demandé un complément d'instructions. C'était notre droit et notre devoir. Il s'agissait non pas d'annuler l'accord, mais d'y surseoir pour un petit nombre de jours jusqu'à ce que l'on se fût rendu compte qu'il n'y avait pas de trop graves inconvénients. La réponse des Gouvernements tarde plus longtemps que nous ne l'avions prévu, mais nous n'en sommes pas responsables.

Mes collègues anglais et américain insistent plus particulièrement sur la nécessité d'attendre cette réponse. Ils tiennent que la Commission de Teschen, obligée à la plus grande déférence et au plus profond respect pour la Commission interalliée de Pologne, et devant rester en contact permanent et en accord étroit

avec elle, n'en dépend cependant point à proprement parler.

L'organisme plus modeste de Teschen est contraint à l'autonomie par la nécessité de garder les apparences de la neutralité et de la plus entière impartialité. Les instructions écrites de mon collègue britannique, qui sont les plus explicites, ne parlent pas d'une pareille subordination et ne lui font un devoir de correspondre qu'avec M. Balfour.

Personnellement, je suis persuadé que vos recommandations répondent aux vues du Gouvernement de Paris. Mais si je suis le Président de la Commission de Teschen, je n'en suis pas le caporal. Je vous serai donc reconnaissant le vouloir bien intervenir pour faire donner les instructions qu'ils sollicitent aux Représentants ici des États-Unis et de la Grande-Bretagne. Mon collègue italien suivra.

Au reste, c'est plutôt affaire de forme que le fond. Je crois, pour ma part, que les difficultés qui s'étaient manifestées dans le début ont beaucoup diminué d'importance et que l'on pourrait, sans tarder, procéder à l'occupation par les Polonais de la ville de Teschen et de la section sud du chemin de fer, moyennant des dispositions à prendre pour assurer la liberté du trafic de part et d'autre. Mes collègues seront sans

doute amenés d'eux-mêmes à partager très prochainement cette manière de voir. Je vous prie seulement de vouloir bien ne point vous attacher rigoureusement au délai de 48 heures. Je suis convaincu qu'il n'y aura pas beaucoup plus à attendre et qu'à la fin de la semaine courante je serai en mesure de me rendre à Varsovie à l'effet de vous faire part de l'exécution de l'accord et de vous exposer les résultats généraux de notre enquête, qui approche de son terme.

Loin que le retard, en partie involontaire, qui s'est produit porte atteinte au prestige des Gouvernements alliés, il est manifeste que le temps facilite singulièrement les choses. La turbulence polonaise se calme, les ruses tchèques sont percées à jour, les décisions de l'Entente sont attendues avec plus de tranquillité et de confiance, on s'achemine rapidement vers une exécution de bonne volonté de l'accord intervenu et vers un arrangement définitif et pacifique qui s'imposera à tous par une apparence d'évidente nécessité. Cela paraissait difficile il y a quelques jours.

L'absence de représentation diplomatique française à Prague rend malaisée la reprise des rapports pacifiques entre la Tchéco-Slovaquie et la Pologne. La situation intermédiaire et neutre de la Commission de Teschen la

porte naturellement à s'entremettre en des affaires qui dépassent sa compétence stricte. C'est ainsi que nous avons obtenu l'assurance du Gouvernement slovaque qu'il ne ferait aucun obstacle au libre passage à travers son territoire des courriers diplomatiques polonais, ainsi que des armes et munitions, marchandises et voyageurs en provenance ou à destination de Pologne. Des Commissions ont été instituées pour régler le rétablissement des relations postales et télégraphiques et des communications par voie ferrée.

Aujourd'hui s'effectue le premier repli des troupes tchèques et un Délégué de la Commission se rend sur le territoire occupé par les Polonais afin de procéder à l'échange des prisonniers civils et militaires.

Nous traitons en ce moment la question de la fourniture de charbon à la Pologne. Nous agirons, au besoin, d'autorité. Toutefois la Commission spéciale interalliée envoyée à Mihrisch-Ostrian a obligé le Gouvernement tchéco-slovaque à procurer une assez grande quantité de charbon à Vienne. La production des mines, qui se relève sensiblement depuis quelques jours, a été assez faible dans ces derniers temps et il n'existe aucun stock. Je vous prierais de vouloir bien me faire savoir par télégramme quelles sont les quantités en houille, charbon à gaz et coke dont la Pologne a le

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besoin le plus pressant et si, d'autre part, les mines de Silésie prussienne (Beuther et Königskütte) n'ont pas été abandonnées à la Pologne en exécution des clauses de l'armistice renouvelé. En ce cas, il semble que ce pays n'aurait plus besoin du charbon de Teschen, les mines en question donnant environ 43 millions de tonnes par an, soit cinq fois plus que le bassin de Mährisch-Osterau-Kervin.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, les assurances de mes sentiments très respectueusement dévoués.

GRENARD.

P.S. - Il est bien entendu qu'il n'y a jamais eu la moindre objection de la part des autorités tchéco-slovaques contre l'exécution de l'accord du 31-1 - 31-2.

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## APPENDIX C

### RAPPORT COMPLÉMENTAIRE DE LA COMMISSION DE TESCHEN<sup>1</sup> (28 avril 1919)

La Commission interalliée de Teschen juge nécessaire d'expliquer et de développer l'idée qui a présidé à son télégramme du 18 avril 1919, dont ci-joint la confirmation en français.

Quand, il y a un mois, la Commission dut envoyer à Paris ses propositions sur la solution de la question de la Silésie orientale, ses quatre membres ne purent se mettre d'accord à ce sujet: M. Grenard, Délégué français et Président de la Commission, envoya un rapport préconisant une frontière très favorable aux Tchèques (ligne intermédiaire entre les vallées de l'Olsa et de la Vistule); les trois autres membres: Lieut. Colonel Coulson, Délégué anglais, Lieut. Colonel Tissi, Délégué italien, M. du Bois, Délégué américain, rédigèrent un autre rapport qui concluait à la constitution d'une Silésie Orientale, neutre et indépendante sous la garantie des Grandes Puissances de l'Entente.

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<sup>1</sup>France, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères.  
Recueil des actes de la Conférence de la Paix, Vol. IV,  
C (3), pp. 264-65.

Depuis un mois, il s'est produit un certain nombre de faits nouveaux et la Commission a réuni des renseignements complémentaires qui sont susceptibles de modifier son opinion première.

En premier lieu la Commission a su qu'à Paris la solution d'un État neutre et indépendant n'avait pas été radicalement écartée. Elle a donc été amenée à présenter une autre solution: celle indiquée par le télégramme du 18 avril 1919; celle-ci laisse aux Polonais le noeud ferré important d'Oderberg-Karwin avec dix puits de mines, Teschen et Trzynietz; elle laisse aux Tchèques la plus grande partie du bassin minier (26 puits de mines) et la possibilité d'établir rapidement une communication par voie ferrée entre la Moravie et la Slovaquie, par Morawska-Ostrava-Frydek - ligne Frydek-Tescheni-Jablunkau; Teschen étant donné aux Polonais, un raccordement sur territoire tchèque devra être fait entre Hnoynick et Wendrin.

La Commission qui a signé ce télégramme à l'unanimité comprenait: le Lieut. Colonel Coulson, Délégué anglais, Président; le Commandant Marchal, Délégué français; M. Howe, Délégué américain. Par une coïncidence typique, le Lieut. Colonel Tissi, Délégué italien, alors à Paris, présentait presque au même moment, et d'accord avec les Délégués italiens aux



Commissions des Affaires tchéco-slovaques et polonaises à Paris, une solution qui, à quelques mots près, reproduit exactement le télégramme de la Commission de Teschen, - sans qu'il y ait eu la moindre entente préalable entre les deux partis.

Cette coïncidence, cette unanimité - établie après trois mois de présence à Teschen - semblent de nature à montrer que cette solution répond à la logique des choses et aux nécessités politiques de la situation.

En effet, ce qu'il faut avant tout, c'est trouver une solution acceptable à la fois aux Tchéco-Slovaques et aux Polonais, qui ont un droit égal à la bienveillance de l'Entente.

Au fond, les Tchèques, à part la partie occidentale du pays, foncièrement tchèque, ne revendiquent pas le restant du pays pour les raisons d'ordre moral (historique ou national), mais uniquement pour des raisons économiques: nécessité pour eux d'avoir du charbon et une communication avec la Slovaquie. Les Polonais, au contraire, revendiquent les arrondissements de Frystadt, Teschen, Biélice pour des raisons d'ordre moral et prouvent que ce pays est habité par une population réellement polonaise.

Il faut reconnaître qu'au début du séjour de la Commission à Teschen les Tchèques, mieux préparés

que les Polonais, avaient présenté à l'appui de leur thèse un grand nombre de documents très bien rédigés. Les Polonais ne se sont mis à l'oeuvre que trois semaines plus tard, ce qui les a, dans cette lutte d'influences, placés dans une situation défavorable.

Aujourd'hui la Commission est en mesure de mieux apprécier le résultat des choses: évidemment la Silésie orientale (moins l'arrondissement de Frydek, complètement tchèque, ainsi que quelques communes limitrophes des arrondissements de Frystatd et de Teschen) est habitée par des Silésiens qui, pendant des siècles, n'ont pas eu de tendances nationales marquées: parce que, du fait du régime politique auquel il était soumis, ce peuple était comme dans un état de léthargie - le même fait s'est produit dans bien des régions de l'Europe. Les Tchèques ont, dans leurs documents, insisté sur ce fait que ce pays avait été polonisé à outrance et d'une façon artificielle, depuis trente ans, avec l'appui du germanisme officiel. Les Polonais se défendent contre cette assertion et montrent que, s'il y a eu propagande polonaise, il y a eu aussi, et au même degré, propagande tchèque et propagande allemande, les trois partis luttant séparément avec une énergie égale; chacun a voulu attirer la Silésie à soi. Aujourd'hui il semble bien que la grande majorité

de ces Silésiens, après avoir ignoré pendant des siècles ce qu'ils étaient réellement, se sentent aujourd'hui Polonais par le coeur, la civilisation et la langue. Il ne convient pas d'attacher une trop grande importance à ce parti Silésien antipolonais (Schlesische Volkspartei) qui ne comprend que 60.000 personnes sur 240.000 Polonais; il y a là une question politique plutôt que nationale: ce groupement lutte contre les Polonais parce qu'il a partie liée avec les Allemands, mais il ne représente pas réellement une idée nationale. Ils préféreraient, comme les Allemands, rester indépendants ou Allemands; mais comme cela est impossible, et qu'au fond ils sont Polonais par la race et la langue, il est plus logique qu'ils soient rattachés à la Pologne qu'à la Tchéco-Slovaquie. Leur agitation semble temporaire et ne résistera pas au fait accompli.

Notre solution donne aux Tchèques, à l'ouest de Teschen, un certain nombre de villages habités uniquement par des Polonais-Silésiens, mais cela est nécessaire si nous voulons donner aux Tchèques satisfaction en ce qui concerne la communication par voie ferrée avec la Slovaquie. Pour la même raison nous sommes amenés à leur donner la région montagneuse à l'est et à l'ouest de Jablunka; mais celle-ci est habitée par une population silésienne qui se rapproche beaucoup du peuple slovaque,

et moins réellement polonaise que celle de la plaine.

Teschen, le 28 avril 1919.

Lieut. Colonel Tissi, Délégué italien.

George Howe, Délégué américain.

Basil J. B. Coulson, Lieut. Colonel,  
Délégué britannique.

Commandant Marchal, Délégué français.

## APPENDIX D

### RAPPORT PRÉSENTÉ AU CONSEIL SUPRÊME PAR LA COMMISSION DES AFFAIRES POLONAISES ET LA COMMISSION DES AFFAIRES TCHÉCO-SLOVAQUES RÉUNIES SUR LA QUESTION DE TESCHEN<sup>1</sup>

En exécution de la résolution prise le 10 septembre par le Conseil Suprême, la Commission des Affaires Polonaises et la Commission des Affaires Tchéco-Slovaques se sont réunies dans l'après-midi du 10 septembre pour soumettre à un nouvel examen la question de Teschen. Elles ont dû constater l'impossibilité où elles se trouvaient de fixer un tracé de la frontière entre la Tchéco-Slovaquie et la Pologne auquel toutes des Délégations pussent se rallier.

Tandis que la majorité de la Commission (Délégations américaine, britannique, italienne et japonaise) déclarait en effet s'en tenir aux conclusions du rapport du 22 août,<sup>8</sup> la Délégation française a proposé un nouveau tracé, que la majorité n'a pas cru pouvoir accepter.

#### I. Opinion de la Majorité. (Délégation[s] américaine, britannique, italienne, japonaise.)

Le Conseil Suprême a critiqué sur deux points le rapport du 22 août:

<sup>8</sup>See No. 50, Appendix C.

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<sup>1</sup>DBFP, Vol. I, pp. 682-85.

- a) il divise entre la Pologne [et] la Tchéco-Slovaquie le bassin houiller de Karwin;
- b) il est moins favorable à la Tchéco-Slovaquie que le rapport du 14 avril.

Concernant le premier point la majorité de la Commission fait remarquer respectueusement que l'objection peut s'appliquer à plusieurs autres frontières qui suivent des lignes de séparations ethniques. L'objection d'ailleurs n'est pas capitale, à condition que les deux nations fassent preuve mutuellement de bonne volonté pour le règlement des intérêts économiques engagés. On peut citer comme exemple le cas du bassin houiller suivant:

1°. le bassin franco-belge qui coupe la frontière entre Valenciennes et Saint-Ghislain;

2°. le bassin houiller situé au nord d'Aix-la-Chapelle et dont les puits principaux sont répartis de part et d'autre de la frontière hollando-allemande. Quant à l'objection, tirée du fait que le rapport du 22 août est moins favorable aux Tchèques que le rapport du 14 avril, l'attention du Conseil Suprême est respectueusement attirée sur les points suivants:

- a) Le rapport du 14 avril n'a pas été adopté à l'unanimité;

b) La solution proposée dans le rapport du 14 avril n'a pas été appuyée par la Commission Interalliée de Teschen.

c) Du point de vue ethnographique le rapport du 22 août est plus favorable à la Tchéco-Slovaquie qu'à la Pologne: la totalité de la population tchèque du Duché, à l'exception de 10,400 habitants, est annexée à la Tchéco-Slovaquie, tandis que 62,000 Polonais sont perdus par la Pologne.

d) Depuis le 14 avril, date du premier rapport, le traité de paix conclu avec l'Allemagne a été ratifié par la Pologne. La majorité de la Commission estime que les Polonais du Duché de Teschen, vivant sur les confins d'un territoire sur lequel la Pologne exerce d'ores et déjà des droits de souveraineté, ne sont pas disposés à accepter une solution qu'on aurait pu leur imposer en avril dernier;

e) En dehors de ses conséquences ethnographiques indiquées ci-dessus, le règlement proposé attribue à la Tchéco-Slovaquie le chemin de fer du défilé de Jablunkau rendant ainsi possibles des relations faciles par chemin de fer entre le bassin minier de Maehrisch Ostrau et la Slovaquie.

f) En ce qui concerne le charbon, le rapport attribue à la Tchéco-Slovaquie 60% de la production du

bassin de Teschen et 69% de la production de la partie du bassin d'où on extrait le charbon à coke.

La majorité de la Commission n'estime pas pouvoir proposer un tracé plus favorable à la Tchéco-Slovaquie que celui qu'elle a proposé par son rapport du 22 août; à son avis, toute proposition dans ce sens comporterait une grave injustice au détriment de la Pologne et entraînerait une hostilité durable entre les deux pays. Dans le rapport du 22 août d'ailleurs, les deux Commissions réunies ont demandé à l'unanimité que, si la frontière proposée par elles était acceptée, on leur confiât le soin de déterminer les concessions, d'ordre économique et ferroviaire, que la Pologne, en toute justice, devrait faire à l'État Tchéco-Slovaque; ces concessions seraient garanties par un traité dont les Commissions auraient à préparer le projet.

Au cas où, en dépit des précisions qui précèdent, le Conseil Suprême n'estimerait pas pouvoir accepter la solution proposée par la majorité, celle-ci est d'avis que la seule manière de résoudre la question est de recourir à un plébiscite.

Les lignes générales de ce plébiscite, qu'accepte[nt] en principe les deux partis, sont indiquées plus loin.



II. Opinion de la Minorité. (Délégation Française.)

La Délégation Française estime que la frontière tracée par la majorité de la Commission ne tient pas un compte [sic] des considérations d'ordre moral, qu'elle est susceptible de laisser des germes durables de discorde entre Tchéco-Slovaques et Polonais, et qu'elle ne présente pas en conséquence, les caractères que doit revêtir une délimitation définitive entre deux pays alliés; son adoption ne donnerait pas les garanties désirables au point de vue du maintien de la paix générale.

La Délégation Française estime qu'on éviterait dans une large mesure ces graves inconvénients, si l'on modifiait de la manière suivante le tracé de la frontière proposée dans le précédent rapport de la Commission.

1°. Au sud de Teschen dans la région de Jablunkau, la frontière serait reportée plus à l'Ouest de manière à rendre à la Pologne un territoire assez étendu où l'élément polonais domine; mais tout en laissant en territoire tchéco-slovaque le chemin de fer Oderberg-Kaschau. La ville de Teschen serait laissée à la Pologne.

2°. Au nord de Teschen la frontière rejoindrait l'Olsa; elle suivrait cette rivière jusqu'à

proximité de la ligne Oderberg-Cracovie; elle se dirigerait ensuite vers l'ouest, la ligne Oderberg-Cracovie demeurant en territoire polonais et la ville de Deutschleuten étant attribuée à la Tchéco-Slovaquie, suivant au plus près la ligne de chemin de fer, la frontière rejoindrait au sud d'Oderberg la ligne proposée dans le précédent rapport de la Commission.

Le bassin houiller de Karvin serait ainsi tout entier attribué à Tchéco-Slovaquie.

Il y a lieu de remarquer que le nombre des Polonais qui habitent le territoire compris entre la ligne bleue<sup>8</sup> (frontière proposée dans le dernier rapport) et la ligne rouge<sup>8</sup> (frontière proposée le 14 avril) dans la région au nord de Teschen n'excède pas 70,000; le nombre des Polonais qui serait attribué à Tchéco-Slovaquie, si le tracé français était adopté, serait évidemment très inférieur à ce total. La brièveté du délai laissé à la Commission pour présenter son rapport n'a pas permis d'en établir le chiffre exact, dont il faudrait d'ailleurs déduire pour avoir une vue précise de la situation faite à l'élément polonais, le chiffre des Polonais qui, au sud, seront rendus à la Pologne.

Faute de voir accepter cette solution, et eu égard à la gravité des conséquences politiques que lui

paraît devoir entraîner l'adoption de la ligne proposée dans le rapport du 22 août (ligne bleue), la Délégation française estime que la seule solution de nature à ramener l'apaisement serait la consultation des populations par voie de plébiscite; devant le résultat du vote tout le monde devrait s'incliner.

### III. PROPOSITIONS DE LA COMMISSION.

Constatant l'impossibilité où elle se trouvait de recommander à l'approbation du Conseil Suprême un tracé de la frontière qui fût accepté par les cinq Délégations et désireuse cependant pour se conformer aux instructions qu'elle a reçues de soumettre au Conseil Suprême des propositions adoptées par l'unanimité de ses membres, la Commission toute entière et bien qu'elle ne se dissimulât aucun des inconvénients d'une solution de cette nature, et au cas où le Conseil Suprême ne croirait pouvoir accepter aucun des deux tracés qui lui sont proposés, a résolu de lui recommander de régler la question par un recours au plébiscite. Interrogés par elle, MM. Benès et Dmowski se sont déclarés prêts à s'incliner devant une décision de ce genre. M. Benès, à qui un membre de la Commission faisait remarquer que le plébiscite pourrait avoir pour conséquence la fixation d'une frontière plus désavantageuse pour la Tchéco-Slovaquie que la frontière

proposée par la Commission, a même répondu que si on lui imposait le tracé du rapport du 22 août, il demandait le plébiscite.

Le principe d'un plébiscite étant admis par les Tchéco-Slovaques comme par les Polonais et les résultats en étant acceptés d'avance, il convient de s'y rallier.

Le plébiscite aurait lieu dans les conditions suivantes:

a) Il porterait sur la totalité du Duché de Teschen;

b) Le vote aurait lieu par commune, dans le plus bref délai possible;

c) Le pays serait occupé par les forces alliées (il semble qu'un régiment à trois bataillons serait suffisant);

d) Le Duché de Teschen serait provisoirement administré par une Commission interalliée.

Cette Commission d'après les résultats du vote fixerait la frontière qu'elle soumettrait à l'approbation de la Conférence.

e) La Commission Interalliée aurait mandat de proposer à la Conférence tel projet d'accord économique entre la Tchéco-Slovaquie et la Pologne que le résultat

du vote rendrait nécessaire.

Il y a lieu de remarquer, à ce propos, que M. Dmowski a renouvelé aujourd'hui, devant la Commission, la déclaration qu'il avait faite dans une séance antérieure: la Pologne est prête, si la Haute-Silésie lui est attribuée, à conclure avec la Tchéco-Slovaquie tous les accords que celle-ci peut désirer pour la fourniture du charbon dont elle a besoin.

f) Enfin, il semble opportun pour donner satisfaction aux demandes tchèques d'étendre la zone du plébiscite aux territoires de Spis et d'Orava.

Si le Conseil Suprême approuve la proposition que la Commission a l'honneur de lui soumettre, il y aura lieu:

1°) de charger la Commission d'étudier les modalités du plébiscite et d'établir, à cet effet, un projet de règlement;

2°) de l'inviter à délimiter la région dite 'Territoires de Spis et d'Orava', que ne correspond à aucune division administrative définie.

Le Président de la Commission:

J. Cambon.

Paris, le 10 septembre, 1919.

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