

JOSEPH PILSUDSKI IN AMERICAN OPINION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
INTRODUCTION	v
I.- EMERGENCE OF THE POLISH LEADERS IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY	1
II.- PILSUDSKI INTRODUCED TO THE HISTORICAL POLISH BACKGROUND	12
III.- THE ROLE OF THE EARLY P.P.S. IN DEVELOPING THE MODERN POLISH STATE	24
IV.- PILSUDSKI'S MILITARY AND POLITICAL MOVES INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I	42
V.- PILSUDSKI RESURRECTS THE RZECZPOSPOLITA POLISH REPUBLIC	55
VI.- PILSUDSKI'S CONFLICTS IN ESTABLISHING A STABLE GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION	77
CONCLUSION	108
ABSTRACT	117
BIBLIOGRAPHY	120

INTRODUCTION

So many conflicting opinions about Joseph Pilsudski of Poland have been expressed by Americans that the writer became interested in learning the basis of these opinions, the more so since the history of Poland was so frequently misinterpreted by these same people.

Because Pilsudski foresaw the conflict of World War II and expressed this warning many years in advance of the actual War, the writer was interested in finding the reaction of Americans to this prophecy and the evaluation ascribed to it.

Since this dissertation has been prepared on the Master's level, the thesis had to be limited to the requirements and regulations which would not permit the inclusion of evidences found in the research work done in old newspapers, articles, etc. Further, these materials might not be readily available to the average American reader, and therefore would not greatly alter his opinion.

Undoubtedly, the average American must obtain his knowledge of Joseph Pilsudski of Poland from books which are readily and easily available in his community library, and

thus he forms his opinions on the basis of these reading materials.

To learn which books are most commonly available, and therefore, most commonly read, the writer sent more than a hundred questionnaires to libraries in cities of 50,000 people or less, requesting the librarians to indicate which books on Pilsudski and his era were currently available to the average reader in that particular community.

For a clearer understanding of the problem of the thesis, a copy of the letter sent to the librarians follows:

INTRODUCTION

vii

103 East Street,
Woonsocket, R.I.,
January 12, 1950.

To the Librarian:

The writer is attempting to make a list of the reading materials available to the average American on the subject Joseph Pilsudski of Poland.

One city, in each state, having a population of 50,000 or less, has been chosen at random, from Hammond's Atlas of the World. Your library has been chosen as a possible representative of the libraries in your state.

Attached you will find a list of various publications in the English language reflecting a variety of opinions about Pilsudski, his character, his influence, and his government policy. You are kindly requested to check the books now in your library and available to the general reader in your community.

Upon tabulation of the material, the writer feels the results will probably show what the average American is likely to know about Pilsudski of Poland.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

(Miss) Constance Krasowska.

Check List for Librarian

- 1.--- 1948 Rose, William J., Poland, Old and New
- 2.--- 1944 Lednicki, Wacław, Life and Culture of Poland
- 3.--- Ligocki, Edward-Elgoth, Poland
- 4.--- 1943 Halecki, Oscar, A History of Poland
- 5.--- 1942 Brandes, George, Poland, a Study of the Land,
People and Literature.
- 6.--- Gorka, Olgierd, Outline of Polish History
- 7.--- Mizwa, Stephen, Great Men and Women of Poland
- 8.--- 1941 Pilsudska, Alexandra, Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski
- 9.--- Retinger, J.H., All About Poland
- 10.--- Segal, Simon, New Order in Poland
- 11.--- 1940 Newman, Bernard, The Story of Poland
- 12.--- 1939 Buell, Raymond Leslie, Poland, Key to Europe
- 13.--- Rose, William J., Poland--the First Twenty Years
- 14.--- Reddaway, William F., Marshal Pilsudski
- 15.--- 1938 Dyboski, Roman, Ten Centuries of Poland's History
- 16.--- Statkowski, Joseph, Poland, Old and New
- 17.--- 1937 Machray, Poland of Pilsudski, 1914-1931

INTRODUCTION

ix

- 18.--- 1936 Humphrey, Grace, Pilsudski, Builder of Poland
- 19.--- 1935 Humphrey, Grace, Poland Today
- 20.--- 1935 Patterson, Eric James, Pilsudski, Marshal of
Poland
- 21.--- 1934 Buell, Raymond Leslie, New Governments in Eu-
rope
- 22.--- 1933 Dyboski, Roman, Poland
- 23.--- 1931 Dyboski, Roman, Outline of Polish History
- 24.--- Pilsudski, J., Memories of a Polish Revolution-
ary and Soldier (translation by
D. R. Gillie)
- 25.--- 1929 Landau, Rom, Pilsudski, Hero of Poland
- 26.--- 1928 Fischer, H.H., America and the New Poland

Encyclopedias

- Encyclopedia Brittanica
- Cambridge History of Poland

Name of Library: _____

Signature of Librarian: _____

Upon receiving the replies, the writer admitted only one representative answer from each state, thus tabulating the results of forty-eight libraries located in towns of 50,000 people or less throughout the United States from Maine to California. The leading industries of the towns were also taken into consideration so as to reflect the opinions of people who, according to their occupation, probably represent different economic and intellectual classes. Some of these cities are shown here for confirmation:

Yakima, Washington; Bend, Oregon; Tonopah, Nevada; Lander, Wyoming; Globe, Arizona; Sanford, Florida; Moosup, Connecticut; Millbury, Massachusetts; Greenville, Rhode Island; Appleton, Wisconsin; Meadville, Pennsylvania; Lake Charles, Louisiana; Berlin, New Hampshire; Thomasville, Georgia, etc.

Of the bibliographic materials collected during 1949-50, the writer has been able to work out this list of books which is most commonly possessed by libraries in towns of 50,000 people or less. The book most commonly available in the libraries solicited heads the following list, and the rest of the books on this list appear in the order of frequency.

1. Pilsudski, Alexandra, Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski
2. Landau, Rom, Pilsudski, Hero of Poland
3. Reddaway, William F., Marshal Pilsudski
4. Machray, Robert, Poland of Pilsudski
5. Patterson, Eric James, Pilsudski, Marshal of Poland
6. Buell, Raymond Leslie, Poland, Key to Europe
7. Pilsudski, Joseph, Memories of a Revolutionary and
Soldier
8. Statkowski, Joseph, Poland, Old and New
9. Ligoeki, Edward-Elgoth, Poland
10. Humphrey, Grace, Pilsudski, Builder of Poland
11. Humphrey, Grace, Poland Today
12. Mizwa, Stephen, Great Men and Women of Poland
13. Halecki, Oscar, A History of Poland

The rest of the books listed in the Check List for Librarian appeared so infrequently that any opinions drawn from them would be negligible by comparison with the opinions that would probably be made after reading books on the above list.

By using the books which the tabulation showed to be most commonly possessed, the writer has set forth in exposition form the general idea and knowledge about Pilsudski and his era as probably formed by the average American reader.

It was, of course, outside of normal possibilities to prepare statistics of the individual readers as it would require years of research and it most probably would not be too essential from the point of view as a contribution to the study of Pilsudski in general.

The attitude of the writer to Joseph Pilsudski has been one of complete neutrality, far removed from any sympathy or antipathy, and the writer has tried to treat the subject as a student of the history of modern Poland as reflected in the opinion of American readers.

It is also advisable to observe that the arrangement of topics in the dissertation seems to be a treatment of known historical subjects, but these are presented as they are known by the American public.

This thesis is a contribution to the extension of knowledge showing that American libraries are sadly lacking in upto-date materials and recent publications on Pilsudski.

CHAPTER I

EMERGENCE OF THE POLISH LEADERS IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

If the reader chooses to learn something of the life of Pilsudski, then by that same token he will learn something of Poland's past, for the life of Pilsudski must be read against the background of the history of his country, a history which takes account of its greatness and its decline, its disappearance as a state, its martyrdom and the miracle of rebirth in our own day.

Of all the large countries in Europe, Poland is probably the least known to the outside world. If it may be assumed that the average American adult is about thirty-five years of age, then it will not be surprising to hear him tell that he has never learned anything about Poland in school for the simple reason that up until the first World War, Poland had been obliterated from the map of Europe, and only a few atlases of the world showed the existence of Poland over a period of one hundred twenty three years.¹

¹ Eric James Patterson, Pilsudski Marshal of Poland, Bristol, Arrowsmith Ltd., 1935, p. 14.
cf. Joseph Statkowski, Poland, Old and New, Warsaw, Arct Publishers, 1938, p. 5.

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

Historic Poland, undermined in the seventeenth century, partitioned in the eighteenth, and denied reconstruction after the Napoleonic wars, had sunk into a large tract ruled by Russia and lesser tracts ruled by Germany and Austria.²

Like the man who stepped into the sunlight after years of total darkness, Poland was blinded by the light of democracy as she emerged a separate free state in 1918--and this regeneration was in a great measure the work of one rare man, Marshal Joseph Pilsudski.³

The reader in Sedalia, Missouri will no doubt raise his eyebrows in surprise as he reads that after a few years of new-found freedom, Poland seemed on the brink of the same abyss. What the extreme democracy, practiced in Poland

² Roman Dyboski, Poland, Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 18, p. 142.

cf. J. H. Retinger, All About Poland, Facts, Figures, and Documents, London, Minerva, 1941, p. 80.

³ William Reddaway, Marshal Pilsudski, London, Routledge Ltd., 1939, p. 3.

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

through the liberum veto,⁴ had done to Poland in the eighteenth century, the newly found Polish Government seemed to be repeating in the twentieth century. Poland had not profited by the experiences and lessons of the past. However, the entire situation does not rest solely upon the Polish people. A number of circumstances, unique and peculiar to Poland alone were all responsible for the role that Poland played in Europe.

It is now a common-place thing to stress the influence in European history of natural boundaries or the lack of them, of rivers as the bearers of commerce, of ports as the gateways of trade and mountains as barriers of defense. Polish history provides a particularly good example of the effects of this geographical influence.

4 Liberum veto was a law unique in the world, giving to every member of Parliament the right to abolish the decision of any majority. This principle of not forcing the individual to agree to a decision against his conscience was magnificent, but implied the highly idealistic belief that nobody's conscience would admit an enactment against the common good. It must be emphasised that for two centuries this dangerous law was never abused, and only under the demoralising rule of the Saxon Kings did it become a sword of Damocles over the parliamentary... (See p. 4).

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

The political consequences of their geographical situation have been brought home to the Poles to their heavy cost since the beginning of their history. "From all sides", wrote Peter Grabowski in the middle of the sixteenth century, "the plains and ways to Poland are open and broad to the evening. In our hands only, in our breasts and throats only, is our armory--these are our mountains, these our castles, walls and ramparts of Polands".⁵

Except the Carpathians, which in general mark the boundaries in the south, there are no mountains to stand between the Poles and their neighbors who so frequently are so un-neighborly. Instead of natural boundaries, the Slav tribes which constituted the basis of the later Polish nation were surrounded by other tribes, largely Slavonic and Teuto-

4 ... bodies, and was exploited by foreign intrigues. The Constitution of 3rd May, 1791, abolished the liberum veto and introduced many salutary reforms, but it was too late to strengthen the tottering State.

5 H. H. Fischer, America and the New Poland, New York, MacMillan, 1928, p. 7.

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

nic. This lack of a definite geographical frontier and the presence of these other tribes led inevitably to a continual shifting of the frontiers of the emerging state with a consequent mingling of races, and produced those twilight zones of nationality which provide in our day one of the most serious problems of European politics.⁶

The reader in Clarksdale, Mississippi, would do well to consult a recent publication of Hammond's Atlas of the World⁷ to see that Poland by her very location has been doomed to play a leading role in European history. Napoleon was quick to recognize this fact and exclaimed on numerous occasions, "La Pologne est la clef de l'édifice européen".⁸

Centuries of warfare in which Poland has been the battleground of Europe⁹ has made the Poles a constructive

6 Poland is at the crossroads of Eastern and Western civilization.

7 G. Hammond, Atlas of the World, New York, Hammond, 1949, p. 30.

8 James D. Whelpley, Pilsudski, Man of the Hour in Poland, article in Current History, December, 1926, p. 351.

9 Alexandra Pilsudski, Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski, London, Hurst-Blackett, 1940, p. 35.

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

people, given them a heritage of tenacity, and an instinct for repairing that which is broken. They have had so much practice. Polish towns have been destroyed again and again in successive wars and patiently rebuilt as many times, only to withstand the onslaught of another foe in another generation.

The culture of Poland has been extremely rich and it has given to the world a good share of experts and thinkers in every field of endeavor.¹⁰ Its military force had once given Poland the distinction of being the greatest power in Europe, with its borders stretching north and south from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, during the reign of the Jagiellonian dynasty, (1386-1572).¹¹ In 1683, Polish forces, numbering 40,000 men and led by King John Sobieski III, himself, had successfully held back Kara Mustapha's 300,000 Turkish infidels from over-running Europe, thus sa-

10 Stephen Mizwa, Great Men and Women of Poland, New York, Macmillan, 1942, p. 386.

11 J. H. Retinger, op. cit., p. 273.

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

ving not only Poland from the Moslems, but Christendom itself;¹²

Readers in Muscatine, Iowa, as well as all students of American history, will recall how Poland contributed unselfishly to the cause of independence and freedom both in America and in Europe.¹³

A group of Knights of the Bar led by Casimir¹⁴ Pulaski came to America and took part in the War of Independence in 1776 with George Washington, Lafayette, and Kosciuszko. It is no small wonder that Poland continually demanded her freedom during her occupation.

The Russians had tried persuasion and they had tried force against Poland. They attempted conciliation, and they had followed with suppression. Now they were to be ruthless

¹² Joseph Statkowski, op. cit., p. 23.
cf. Violet Mason, The Land of the Rainbow, London, Hodder, 1933, p. 137.

¹³ H. G. Wells, Outline of History, New York, Macmillan, 1901, p. 376.
cf. Muzzey, American History, New York, Macmillan, 1941, p. 61.

¹⁴ Edward-Elgoth Ligoeki, Poland, London, MacDonald Ltd., 1944, p. 51-52. ... (See p. 8).

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

in an effort to conquer Poland by a policy of unrelenting Russification.¹⁵ But these attempts on the part of the Russians to crush the nationalism and spirit of the Polish people were wholly unsuccessful, while the German and the Austrians were equally defeated in attempting to follow the same program of breaking the Polish spirit. Revolutions, sabotage, and disorder were Poland's reply to this method.

All the semblance of freedom was swept away. The Polish Army was abolished and its forces were incorporated with the Russian Imperial Army. The national flag was no longer permitted to be displayed. Russian was made the compulsory language. Russians filled all the posts in the government, swaggered about the cities, and forced the shopkeepers to sell to them at their own price.

14 ... A group of patriots formed the Confederation of Bar, a religious order of defenders of the fatherland. The members of the Confederation swore before the Almighty their fidelity to the sacred cause, and it was clearly formulated in the text of the oath, that no priest, and not even the Holy Father, of Rome, could liberate the Knights from their vows.

15 Eric James Patterson, Pilsudski, Marshal of Poland, Bristol, Arrowsmith Ltd., 1935, p. 20.

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

Polish men were flung into prison cages like wild beasts, manacled and chained together, and herded into columns to be marched into Siberian mines.¹⁶ The women wept at the wayside shrines on their way to toil in the fields for the Russians who had taken over possession of their land. The children grew up to manhood long before they had ever been young.

The wrongs inflicted on an innocent people soon caused a revolt (November, 1863)¹⁷ that came from the very soul of Poland. The rich almost beggared themselves to buy ammunition; the peasants gave the produce of their farms down to the last bushel of grain, the owners of country houses turned them into hospitals and nursed the wounded. For two years, the unskilled troops of young men and women waged a desperate fight against all the resources of the Russian

¹⁶ Personal story as told to the writer by her father, who was one of the early exiles to Siberia.

¹⁷ Powstanie Listopadowe.

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

government, only to meet with a dismal failure.¹⁸

Mothers in Yakima, Washington for example, who will read the Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski¹⁹ will have a most unusual story to tell their little ones when they describe the bitter disappointment of the oppressed Poles in their failure of this November, 1863 Insurrection.

For long years after this fateful struggle, Polish women dressed in deepest black, relieved only by a narrow edging of lace at the neck and wrists. They very often wore a mourning ring which was a tablet of onyx in which was set a cross of pearls. It was a ring worn in memory of those who died in the Insurrection--a memory vividly portrayed by the inscription engraved inside, the ominous date "1863".²⁰

But fetters cannot kill the spirit of freedom in a people although they may cripple it, and out of the gloom and

18 Waclaw Lednicki, Life and Culture of Poland, New York, Roy, 1944, p. 24.

cf. Raymond Leslie Buell, Poland, Key to Europe, New York, Knopp, 1939, p. 63.

19 Alexandra Pilsudski, Pilsudski, New York, Dodd Mead, 1941, p. 65.

20 Id. ibidem, p. 65-66.

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

despair that settled over Poland, there emerged time and time again leaders and patriots who blazoned their names in chapters as glorious as they were tragic.

After more than a century of occupation and servitude, Poland gained her independence in 1918, but her future was still insecure. Problems and internal struggles immediately beset her and almost cast her back again a hundred years.

But in her most crucial hours, the man who had done so much for the new Poland, stepped in again, and made Poland a power in Europe to be reckoned with. Although his methods have been criticized by some statesmen, the Americans reading about Pilsudski in the books most commonly available will come to regard Pilsudski as the guardian of Poland because of the timeliness of his actions.²¹

²¹ Grace Humphrey, Poland Today, Warsaw, Arct Publishers, 1935, p. 16.

CHAPTER II

PILSUDSKI INTRODUCED TO THE HISTORICAL POLISH BACKGROUND

With the panorama of the 1863 Insurrection for a background and reaching far into the foreground, the readers in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, must have found it easier to explain many of Pilsudski's acts. But to better understand his methods and ways of thinking, it was necessary to delve into Pilsudski's early life and the environment he came to know as a youth in Russian-occupied Poland.

Joseph Klemens Ginetá-Pilsudski was born December 5, 1867 at Zulow in Lithuania, the son of Maria Billewicz and Joseph Pilsudski.¹ Rom Landau² traces the Pilsudski lineage back to a descent from a Polish-Lithuanian family whose seal is discoverable in the proclamation of Horodlo³

1 William J. Rose, Poland Old and New, London, G. Bell, 1948. p. 6. cf. W.F. Reddaway, Marshal Pilsudski, London, Routledge, 1939. p. 5. cf. Alexandra Pilsudski in Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski writes the second name as Kiemens.

2. Rom Landau, Pilsudski, Hero of Poland, London, Jarrolds, 1929, p. 16. cf. Violet Mason, Land of the Rainbow, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1933, p. 135.

3. Edward-Elgoth Ligoeki, Poland, ... (See p. 13).

POLISH BACKGROUND

as early as 1413, but his second wife, Alexandra Szczerbinska Pilsudski, in the biography of her husband⁴ adds that the Pilsudski line has a strain of Scottish blood from an ancestor who belonged to the ancient house of Butler and had come out to Poland as a fugitive after the Jacobine rebellion of 1745.

The elder Pilsudski was a university graduate and a man of considerable mental gifts; cultured, extremely well-read, a brilliant pianist, and a talented composer, but he had the irresponsibility that so often accompanied the artistic temperament.

His mother was delicate, intellectual and witty; she was lame in one foot as the result of a lingering and pain-

3 ... London, MacDonald, 1944, p. 34-35.

"The Act of 1410 (Horoldio Union) carried by Jagiello himself was most important from an international point of view, as it confirmed the voluntary federation on the basis of Christian love, and formulated the fundamental idea of the self-determination of peoples, more than 500 years before the establishment of the same principle by the League of Nations".

4 Alexandra Pilsudski, Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski, London, Hurstand Blackett, 1940, p. 152.

PILSUDSKI INTRODUCED TO THE HISTORICAL
POLISH BACKGROUND

14

ful form of tuberculosis from which she suffered all her life. This tender motherly woman, who strove to be a mother of patriots in a land where people were enslaved, felt it her duty to make her children love their country. It was from the lips of this "irreconcilable patriot"⁵ that Joseph first heard the story of Poland at a time when the hatred which nourished the children's earliest years was directed against one enemy--Russia. She refused to let a Russian cross her threshold; she taught her children the forbidden literature of their country,⁶ and so impressed her personality upon her son that, in after years, he solved his hardest problems by trying to imagine what she would have wished him to do and then he would do it. "Only he deserved to be called a man who has strong convictions and acts on them,

5 Joseph Pilsudski (translated by D.R. Gillie) The Memories of a Polish Revolutionary and Soldier, London, Faber and Faber, 1931, p. 11. cf. W.F. Reddaway, Marshal Pilsudski, London, Routledge, 1939, p. 8-9.

6 Pilsudski was so inspired by the patriotic poems of Slowacki that he had caused the body of Julius Slowacki to be brought back from France to lie in ... (See p. 15).

POLISH BACKGROUND

heedless of consequences"⁷ was his mother's doctrine, and through him, it changed the history of Europe.

Although he was only sixteen when she died, his mother's influence lasted throughout Pilsudski's life. And certainly the products of this man must have inspired more than one American mother, when reading about Pilsudski, not only to hopefully wish that her son might follow in Pilsudski's footsteps, but even to repeat to her son Father Keller's missionary motto, You Can Change the World.⁸

In 1875⁹ when Joseph was seven years old, a destructive fire at Zulow caused the family to migrate to Wilno.

6 ... Polish soil, and on his own tomb, Pilsudski ordered the inscription containing the following words of Slowacki.... "He who has chosen the nest on the heights of the eagle rather than the hearthstone will know how to sleep when the horizon is red with the storm, and the mutterings of demond are heard in the wind among the pines. Thus have I lived....". Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 344.

7 W.F. Reddaway, Marshal Pilsudski, London, Routledge, 1939, p. 9.

8 James Keller, You Can Change the World, Christophers, 1949, title.

9 Robert Machray, Poland of Pilsudski, New York, Dutton, 1937, p. 37.

POLISH BACKGROUND

This city of mixed races and faiths taught the young Joseph the tolerance which adorned his whole career. Daily he beheld crowds of pious Latins chanting in the highway before that picture of the Virgin whose medallion he carried¹⁰ until his death. A short distance away there could be heard the liturgies of the Greeks who were worshipping on the edge of a great Hebrew warren where the Pilsudski family lived. Jews could never afterward appear to him as mere intruders without human rights, and thus Pilsudski was a heralded figure to American Jewry,¹¹ especially when the P.P.S.¹² prevented the Jewish pogrom in Siedlce in September, 1906 which had been inspired and patronized by Russian military authorities.

It was there in Wilno that Joseph spent the happiest days of his childhood; there it was that he heard the

10 W.F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 11.

11 H.H. Fischer, America and the New Poland, New York, Macmillan, 1928, p. 63.

12 Robert Medill McBride, Towns and Peoples of Modern Poland, New York, McBride, 1938, p. 137.

P.P.S.--Polska Partja Socialystyczna.

POLISH BACKGROUND

first words of love, and the first words of wisdom. He loved every stone in Wilno for the charm and beauty of the medieval city. When he restored the Polish University at Wilno,¹³ which had been founded by King Stefan Batory in 1582 and was now suppressed by the Russians, he realized the dream of his lifetime. His entire income as Marshal of Poland was devoted to its endowment¹⁴ and he used to deny himself many small luxuries to augment it.

When the Pilsudski's came to Wilno, Russification was the order of the day, and nowhere was that policy more expressed than in school. Never a day passed in which the Polish students did not have to hear scorn being heaped upon their nation,¹⁵ while they sat there helplessly, seething with rage, listening to the Russian teacher's taunts and false propaganda. The atmosphere was tense with hatred and

13 W.J. Rose, Poland, Old and New, London, G. Bell, 1948, p. 84.

14 W.F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 45.

Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 317.

15 Joseph Pilsudski, (translated by D.R. Gillie), op. cit., p. 12.

POLISH BACKGROUND

the seed thus sown bore the bitter fruit in after years.

American "misunderstood" children can find sympathy in reading Grace Humphrey's book on Pilsudski¹⁶ in which it is emphasized that the boy Joseph also had traits that distinguished him from other children. While his friends were content to play games, "Ziuk",¹⁷ as he was called, buried himself in forbidden history and literature books. He read the plays of Shakespeare so often that he could repeat whole acts from memory. Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, and Alfred de Musset interested him then much the same as they still thrill readers in America and other parts of the world who look for inspiration and consolation in these works.

But the figure of Napoleon dominating that colossal background of strife and struggle became his inspiration. He read everything he could find on the French Revolution of

16 Grace Humphrey, Pilsudski, Builder of Poland, Washington, D.C., Polish Information Service, 1936, p. 32.

17 W.F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 12. "In Polish, Ziuk is a northeastern borderland abbreviation for Joziuk, the local vernacular for the form, JozeK (Joseph)."

POLISH BACKGROUND

1789. So it was not startling that he should dream of freeing Poland from the hands of its oppressors much the same as the French "Jacques" deposed their tyrants.¹⁸

Meanwhile, after eight years, Pilsudski's schooldays were drawing to a close, and after his seventeenth birthday, he entered the University of Kharkov in the Ukraine (August 1885) to study medicine in accordance with the wishes of his father. He found life at the University very dull, and the death of his mother had left a void in his heart that no one could fill.

This feeling of boredom, listlessness, and loneliness was fertile ground for the espousing of a "cause". And so it was at this time that he turned to the study of Socialism under the influence of other students at the University. He started by reading Mlot's Who Lives From What, then Liebknecht's In Defence of Truth, and Karl Marx's Das Kapital.¹⁹

¹⁸ Charles Dickens, Tale of Two Cities, New York, Macmillan, 1901, p. 38.

¹⁹ Rom Landau, Pilsudski and Poland, New York, Dial Press, 1929, p. 26-30. cf. D.R. Gillie, op. cit., p. 16.

POLISH BACKGROUND

Although he studied this last book carefully, he rejected Marx's abstract logic and the dominion of goods over men.

There was little time, however, to consider theories, good or bad. Returning to Wilno at the end of his first year of studies, Pilsudski formed a secret society of young men of the middle class. The plight of the laborers in Wilno²⁰ was the spearhead for their publication which consisted of two typewritten sheets. No doubt American readers of Pilsudski's biography are ready to make comparisons at this point with the similarity of many American reactionaries of the current period.

At the beginning of 1887, Russian socialists planned an attempt on the life of Czar Alexander III²¹ in which Joseph Pilsudski and his brother Bronislaw were accidentally

20 Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 160.

"Boys and girls from twelve to fifteen years old worked in shops from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. The plight of those inarticulate thousands, too crushed to take the initiative in fighting for themselves, roused him to fierce rebellion".

21 Eric James Patterson, Pilsudski, Marshal of Poland, Bristol, Arrowsmith, 1935, p. 31.

POLISH BACKGROUND

and innocently involved, with the result that Bronislaw was condemned to exile for life and Joseph was sentenced to five years exile in Eastern Siberia.²²

Till now he had never come in open conflict with the enemy: his past fights had been fought out in the mind, at best in words. Sheer battle, till this time, had never been, and raw physical discipline was unknown to him.

Five years can seem like a lifetime at twenty, and Pilsudski rebelled fiercely at the injustice of his sentence as he set out with some twenty other Polish convicts on the long march across the frozen plains of Siberia.

At Irkutsk, in September 1887, at one stage of the march, he took part in a mutiny among the prisoners and received a blow on the mouth from the butt of a guard's rifle which knocked out most of his teeth and permanently injured the jaw bone.²³ When the battered Pilsudski regained consciousness, he left himself choked by his helplessness and

22 W.F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 17.

23 D.R. Gillie, op. cit., p. 17-26.

POLISH BACKGROUND

passion. American readers of historiography will note how Pilsudski still remembered, after a quarter of a century, this indignation. The outrage on his dignity would hardly let him breathe. The chief fruit of this Irkutsk mutiny was its effect upon Pilsudski. "For some time", he declared,²⁴ "I could not look calmly at a soldier, at a uniform even; I felt my fists clench, and often if I closed my eyes, I saw that savage onslaught of an armed crowd of soldiers widely attacking an unarmed handful of men huddled in a prison cell."

Transferred in 1890 to Tunka in Siberia on grounds of health, Pilsudski was allowed more privileges, including permission to hire a room of his own and association with the many other Polish exiles who were also in Tunka.

During the long days of isolation, Pilsudski's ideas of socialism deepened, for he could see no other panacea for the laboring masses. At the same time, he became convinced that Polish independence and Polish Socialism

²⁴ Joseph Pilsudski, Pisma Zbiorowe, translated "The Memories of a Polish Revolutionary and Soldier", London, Faber and Faber, 1931, p. 25.

POLISH BACKGROUND

were inseparable, so that early in 1892, in his twenty-fifth year, when his term of exile was fulfilled, Pilsudski returned to Wilno²⁵ intent on changing Polish Socialism from an international basis to a national one.²⁶

Pilsudski was inwardly convinced that his place, purpose, and mission on earth was to serve Poland and to lead its battered remnants onward to independent Statehood. The Polish nation at this period yearned for a leader to assist in her rightful role as a free nation. Pilsudski was the fated leader to appear.

25 W. F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 22. cf. Raymond Leslie Buell, Poland, Key to Europe, New York, Knopf, 1939, p. 66.

26 "The Romance of Pilsudski, the Story of Poland," article in Literary Digest, Issue of June 5, 1920, p. 68.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF THE EARLY P.P.S. IN DEVELOPING THE MODERN POLISH STATE

For some sixteen years (1892-1908) until he became forty years old, Pilsudski's biography is largely the history of the Polish Socialist Party, often referred to as the P.P.S., (the abbreviation for Polska Partja Socjalistyczna), which established itself in Warsaw in March, 1893.¹

American readers find this phase of Pilsudski most perplexing because they find it difficult to divorce their idea of socialism in its popular meaning from the Polish Socialism as exemplified by Pilsudski and the P.P.S. whose singular aim was an Independent Polish Republic.²

Polish socialism did not confine itself to Europe; it soon spread to the United States.³ Readers of local history in Newark, New Jersey, can look up the founding by some immigrant Poles of a Socialist Party in 1894 which de-

1 Rom Landau, Pilsudski, Hero of Poland, London, Jarrolds, 1929, p. 42.

2 Max Nomad, Rebels and Renegades in Europe, New York, Macmillan, 1932, p. 317.

3 H.H. Fischer, America and the New Poland, New York, Macmillan, 1928, p. 97.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

clared itself fully in sympathy with the party aims of American socialism and the program of the P.P.S.

With a copy of D.R. Gillie's⁴ translation of Pilsudski's Pisma Zbiorowe, the American reader in Grass Valley, California, sighs with exhaustion as he reads that Pilsudski takes on the superhuman task of writing, editing, compiling, and printing of the Robotnik. This was the official organ of the party, and was referred to as bibula which means, in revolutionary jargon, any illegal printed matter.

This Robotnik had a chequered career. Two consecutive numbers were rarely edited in the same place and quite often it was issued in London where most political exiles spent at least a part of their life. It was printed in secret in a variety of dingy houses and damp cellars, smuggled over frontiers⁵ and circulated among laborers who hid

4 D.R. Gillie (translator) Memories of a Polish Revolutionary and Soldier, London, Faber and Faber, 1931.

5 Violet Mason, Land of the Rainbow, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1933, p. 257. "The most successful smuggler of forbidden papers was an old peasant. He had a little grand-daughter and a pig. He used to send the child out to feed the pig in the frontier meadow. ... (See p.26).

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

it under their overalls, and students who pasted cuttings from it between the pages of their exercise books. But the demand for it steadily increased since the printed word was the life-line of the Party. When affairs began to improve, Pilsudski received the assistance of Stanislaw Wojciechowski⁶ and the two men led a furtive life while moving the press from place to place in an effort to keep it from falling into the hands of the Russian police.

As the success of the paper became established among the working classes, it was decided to publish on a more extensive scale and to make the busy industrial city of Lodz its headquarters. Pilsudski now wanted to reach the thousands of mill hands and textile workers who slaved amid the noise and the heat of the looms for twelve or fourteen hours a day. They were the fertile soil in which could

5 ... She teased the animal till it squealed, and the bored Cossack gentries gathered to see what was happening. Meanwhile, the old man crossed the frontier quietly and unobserved."

6 Stanislaw Wojciechowski was president of Poland from 12/20/22 to 5/14/26.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

be sown the seeds of armed rebellion that would free not only themselves but the whole nation.

The Robotnik had radical tendencies but it successfully eluded the attempts of the Russian secret police to locate the presses for six years. It is worthwhile to note that the Russians must have been driven in a frenzied circle, since the Polish reading public under Russian rule consumed about 300,000 copies of illegal publications in 1899.⁷

The year 1899⁸ brought many changes in its wake. First, Stanislaw Wojciechowski married, so he quitted Poland. Then Pilsudski himself espoused the beautiful Maria Juszkiewicz in a Protestant Church in a Lithuanian village.⁹ Maria devoted her life, as he did, to the work of organized

⁷ Joseph Pilsudski, Memories of a Polish Revolutionary and Soldier, London, Faber and Faber, 1931, p. 42.

⁸ William F. Reddaway, Marshal Pilsudski, London, Routledge, 1939, p. 34.

⁹ William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 34 ... "Pilsudski married the daughter of a Wilno doctor and the divorced wife of a Polish engineer in Russian service. cf. Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 49 ... "Pilsudski married Maria Juszkiewicz, a widow."

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

conspiracy, to meetings, and Socialist debates. Together, they continued to print the Robotnik until February 20, 1900 when the press and the Pilsudskis were seized by the Russian police.¹⁰

After a couple of months in the local prison at Lodz, he was transferred to the Warsaw Citadel which, for the benefit of the American readers, may be compared to the horrible Bastille of the days of the French Revolution.

In the case of a political offence of such magnitude as publishing a revolutionary newspaper in the eyes of the Russian Government, no leniency could be expected. After a few years of solitary confinement while awaiting trial, the minimum sentence would be ten years in northeastern Siberia where the worst prisoners were sent since they were not likely to survive the climate long enough to give much trouble.

The loss of such a leader was too grave for the P.P.S. not to make any effort to free him. Accordingly,

¹⁰ Alexandra Pilsudski, Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski, London, Hurst and Blackett, 1940, p. 171.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

they outlined plans for Pilsudski to act the part of a maniac which eventually got him a transfer to the lunatic asylum of St. Nicholas in Petersburg. Here, in spite of the strain of assumed madness and almost a year's imprisonment, Pilsudski's habit of leadership remained and he directed the action for his own escape.

Among the junior members of the Polish Socialist Party, there was a young student, Wladyslaw Mazurkiewicz,¹¹ who was about to sit for his degree at the Academy of Science. He had intended to specialize in dermatology, and was going to set up practice in Lodz, where as a doctor he would have every chance for propaganda among the workers. Suddenly, the party's decision meant a change in his whole career. Mazurkiewicz abandoned dermatology and told his parents that he would like to become a psychiatrist. He begged his father

¹¹ Eric James Patterson, Pilsudski, Marshal of Poland, Bristol, Arrowsmith, 1935, p. 44-47....."Mazurkiewicz in 1935 was a professor on the medical faculty of the University of Warsaw, an expert in mental diseases."

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

to use his influence and obtain for him a post of house-surgeon at the Asylum of St. Nicholas. Thanks to his father's many connections, the young doctor soon managed to enter the Asylum, first as an assistant, and later as a house doctor. These duties would give him the right to have any patient brought down for examination to the consulting ward.

In order to avoid suspicion, Mazurkiewicz never went near the patient, Pilsudski. But day by day, and piece by piece, the doctor managed to bring in a suit of clothes for Pilsudski in which he would make his escape.¹²

Mazurkiewicz was made house-physician on May 13, 1901, which by the Russian calendar was May 1, and a great fair was held that day each year on the Champ de Mars. It was the hospital custom to grant leave of absence to the Asylum staff to attend this fair, and so when the attendants, nurses, and warders besieged the inexperienced young doctor

¹² Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 62-69.
cf. William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 42.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

with requests for leaves, he signed every application. Circumstances played into their hands and both Mazurkiewicz and Pilsudski were able to make their escape undetected.

This time, Pilsudski made his way to Cracow, a city of memories and hope, and sufficiently near the Russian frontier to keep in touch with all the activities of the P. P.S. in Russian Poland.

The year 1904¹³ was full of excitement and confusion, hope and fear. It was in February of that year that the Russo-Japanese war broke out, and this presented Russian's internal enemies with the opportunity they had been looking for for so long. At this point the American readers will probably think of the Russo-Korean situation of the present day and be reminded that there is an old saying that "history repeats itself". It will be necessary to wait for the future to learn of the results of this latest conflict in the Far East, but when the Russo-Japanese affair of 1904 was

13 Robert Machray, Poland of Pilsudski, New York, Dutton, 1937, p. 71.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

taking place, Pilsudski seized the opportunity to prevent the Russian mobilization of Poles for the conflict of Manchuria. Polish soldiers must not fight in a war, in which they had no interest, on behalf of an enemy from whom they could expect only oppression. Up to this time Pilsudski had been opposed to useless action which could not produce any practical result, but now the time to strike had come.

On Sunday, November 13, 1904, crowds of workmen and students assembled on the Plac Grzybowski in Warsaw, As the congregation of worshippers poured out of the churches after high Mass, they were met by the unfurled banners of the students who were singing revolutionary songs. Some shots were fired by the police, but cavalry dispersed the demonstrators. This open warfare, in which eleven persons were killed and forty were wounded,¹⁴ was not to Pilsudski's

14 D.R. Gillie, op. cit., p. 158-159. "As the first public manifestation of a revolutionary party in Russian Poland since 1863, the incident attracted very widespread attention, but especially violent criticism from Dmowski and the National Democrats which later became a party of law and order with a program of cooperation with the Russian Government."

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

taste, but the demonstration did limit the mobilization of Polish soldiers for Russian service in Manchuria. It also proved that Poles were still ready to die for their country. On the other hand, it forced a closer collaboration with Russia by the National Democrats.

Throughout Russia itself, there was an outbreak of strikes, disorder, and organized confusion¹⁵ which spread into Russian Poland where even 100,000 school children went on strike as a protest against the prohibition of the Polish language.

Pilsudski set himself to exploit the situation for the formation of a Polish force to fight against Russia. Together with Tytus Filipowicz¹⁶ he travelled via the Ame-

15 This confused movement is known as the Russian Revolution of 1905-06 which began in Petersburg, January 22, 1905, when a procession of workmen and peasants led by the Orthodox, Father Gapon, were fired upon and dispersed when it was on the way to present its grievance to the Tsar at the Winter Palace. D.R. Gillie, op. cit., p. 159.

16 J.H. Retinger, All About Poland, London, Minerva Publishers, 1941, 126. Pilsudski travelled to Tokio with Tytus Filipowicz who later became ambassador to the United States (1929-1932) and who is now living in London.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

rican continent (1904) to Tokio to get the Japanese government to finance a Polish army in the West but this idea met with little success,¹⁷ for another Pole had informed the Japanese of the danger of supporting this venture. This was the clash of two personalities, of Pilsudski and of Roman Dmowski, both of whom were seeking the establishment of a new Polish state, but differing as to the means to achieve this end. Thereafter they were often to find themselves opponents and more than once the fate of Poland was to hang in the balance while they struggled.¹⁸

The American reader will agree that these circumstances were the silhouettes of a greater foreboding evil,

17 The idea of the formation of a Polish Legion failed, but Pilsudski achieved a measure of success in that he was able to persuade the Japanese Government to release Polish prisoners. (Polish soldiers in Russian service and captured by Japanese). These soldiers, upon release, formed the first Polish settlement in Alaska.

18 Roman Dmowski was a principal leader in the national movement. He was a member of the Russian Duma and worked hard for concessions and autonomy within the Russian Empire. cf. Violet Mason, op. cit., p. 257. cf. Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 73.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

for which Pilsudski with his uncanny foresight began to prepare. The poorly executed outbreak at Plac Grzybowski showed the need for a trained and disciplined armed force, so he immediately set out to found the Organizacja Bojowa,¹⁹ the militant organization of the Party, which would be capable of offering effective resistance to Russian troops. Strangely enough, this militant organization was sanctioned by the more tolerant rule of Austria who herself was an oppressor of Poland.²⁰

After many upsurges and upheavals, it appeared that nothing more could be done by the P.P.S. to further the cause of Polish Independence. The administration had recovered its power; the militants were mostly in jail, in exile in Austrial Poland, or dead. Disillusion settled over the country after the wild incoherent hopes of 1905. Never had the policy of an understanding with Russia been so generally accepted in Russian Poland as in the years just before the

19 Stephen Mizwa, Great Men and Women of Poland, New York, Macmillan, 1942, p. 217.

20 Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 115.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

Great War.²¹ The idea of a new constitutional Russia which would reunite Austria and Prussia was in the air, an idea which Pilsudski considered entirely delusive.

Meanwhile in the Prussian-ruled provinces of Poland, the iron hand of General Von Bulow authorized²² the forcible dispossession of estates owned by the Poles and their transfer to German settlers. Thousands of Poles were turned out of their farms and holdings, left to tramp the roads, homeless, and penniless, or seek work at starvation wages from German masters in the industrial cities. There were shocked protests in the Press²³ of many countries, but trouble was

21 D.R. Gillie, op. cit., p. 179-180.

22 Expropriation Bill of 1908 was passed as a counter measure to the rapidly increasing Polish population over the German nationality in Prussian-occupied Poland.

However, Violet Mason views this differently in her book, The Land of the Rainbow, by saying, "An attempt was made to oust the Poles from the province by a systematic purchase of land for German colonists, but it was frustrated by well-organized cooperative Polish societies that bought up a larger acreage than the Germans." p. 254.

23 New York "Times", issue of April 10, 1908, p. 5.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

seething in the Balkans and Europe had other things to think of, so the plight of the Kaiser's Polish subjects were soon forgotten by the world at large.

The party of National Democrats under Roman Dmowski in Russian Poland was pursuing its policy of conciliation with Russia, sending its representatives to the Duma to advocate a united Slav front against the ever-increasing menace of Germany. A dreary fatalism spread over the country which tended to make the masses drift uncertainly to Dmowski's program whose main points were as follows:²⁴

- "1. The principal enemy of Poland was, and always had been, Germany.
2. Poland's place in the world conflict was on the side of the Western democracies.
3. Using the influence of the three friendly countries, Great Britain, France, and Italy, a compromise could be reached with their Ally, the Russian Empire.
4. The first step toward the full independence of Poland should be the unification of all Polish soil as an autonomous Kingdom in personal union with the Russian Crown.

²⁴ Edward-Elgoth Ligocki, Poland, London, MacDonald, 1944, p. 68.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

5. In all the capitals of the world the principle of the international character of the Polish problem should be established.
6. Poles everywhere should organise their national life and try to obtain the maximum of advantages and influence in order to protect their fellow countrymen."

Only Pilsudski's voice was raised, urging resistance, pleading the need for an armed force. "We cannot make risings," he wrote in 1908,²⁵ "they depend on circumstances which we cannot produce, but the proletariat and the whole working population in general must be in a position to take advantage of these circumstances."²⁶ War was only a question of time, Pilsudski foresaw, and that given the necessary incident, it would break out. He was determined to use that occasion, when it came, for the benefit of unhappy Poland.

To prepare for this coming war, Pilsudski threw his energies into the new-born Association for Active Struggle which had been established by Sosknowski at Lwow. The year

25 Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 56.

26 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 87.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

1909 saw the beginnings of an "army fund" destined to form the nucleus of Polish military finance. So the rich sold their shares, university students went without cigarettes, and the young farm laborers gave up their pocket money to buy books on military tactics. But at this early stage, the Poles in America were most generous in their offerings,²⁷ proving that a free Poland was always in the minds of even those who left Poland as political emigrés.

Hundreds of volunteers joined the movement within the first eighteen months, and Pilsudski put into practice the military science which he had studied for years. He drilled them in backyards and in orchards, and when he could do so without interruption, he instructed them in maneuvers and in the use of the few out-dated rifles and revolvers which were their only arms.

At the end of two years the number of the organization had swelled from hundreds to thousands, and the isolated

27 H.H. Fischer, op. cit., p. 91.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

groups of raw recruits had given place to well-drilled and efficient companies. With the legalization of the organization by the Austrian Government, its name was changed to the Strzelcy²⁸ (Union of Riflemen) and branches were formed not only in Poland but even outside the country, in Paris, Geneva, Liege, Brussels and other European cities wherever there were Polish colonies, and later Poles from America joined Joseph Haller's army on French soil.²⁹ Even the militant organization of the National Democrats (Druzyny Strzeleckie) dropped their political differences and merged with Pilsudski's forces to increase the numbers to 15,000.³⁰

Pilsudski had always promised that when he succeeded in creating his military force he would include a companion

28 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 66.

29 Andrew Norek of the writer's hometown was a former member of Haller's army in France.

30 Roman Dyboski, "Pilsudski" in the Encyclopedia Brittanica, Vol. 17, p. 73.

THE MODERN POLISH STATE

organization for women, which came into existence in 1912 and carried on most of the Intelligence Service of the Legions during the war. It is believed that the American WAC (Women's Army Corps) of the United States Army probably had its ideological and basic origin in the women's auxiliary to Pilsudski's Legions.³¹

The next two years were spent in feverishly trying to increase the military groups, to arm them, and to train them. Out of the secret military groups came the Riflemen and the Legion, and from that in course of time the Polish army.³²

31 Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 205.

32 Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 58.

CHAPTER IV

PILSUDSKI'S MILITARY AND POLITICAL MOVES

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

The year 1914 brought more than its usual number of immigrants to the United States from Poland.¹ Did these immigrants see the gathering clouds of war as clearly as did Pilsudski when he stated in a lecture to the Geographical Society in Paris in the spring of 1914.....²

"The problem of the independence of Poland will be solved when Russia is beaten by Germany and Germany by France. It is our duty to lend our help for that aim; otherwise we shall have to pursue a very long, very hard and almost desperate struggle..."

Months before the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo³ had set a match to the conflagration which was to spread throughout Europe, Pilsudski had foreseen the outcome of the inevitable war and was coolly and dispassionately weighing up the chances of Poland's

1 H.H. Fischer, America and the New Poland, New York, Macmillan, 1928, p. 191.

2 Alexandra Pilsudski, Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski London, Hurst and Blackett, 1940, p. 211.

3 Oscar Halecki, History of Poland, New York, Roy Publishers, 1943, p. 276.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

partitioning powers and laying his plans for a break. He clung to the principle that Polish blood should only be shed for Poland.⁴ When war seemed certain, Pilsudski brushed aside the opponents of immediate action. His view was always that Polish independence must first be asserted by a national army and then accepted by foreign powers. Accordingly, he ordered his Riflemen to mobilize on August second, 1914.⁵

They answered the call from their fields, from their factory benches, and from their school desks. The Riflemen's Union and the rival Druzyny Strzeleckie assembled at Oleandry, outside Cracow, and drew up in lines facing one another. Then Pilsudski and Burkhardt-Bukaeki,⁶ leader of the Druzyny,

4 William F. Reddaway, Marshal Pilsudski, London, Routledge, 1939, p. 71.

5 William J. Rose, Poland, Old and New, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1948, p. 32.
cf. Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 51.

6 Rom Landau, Pilsudski of Poland, New York, Dial Press, 1929, p.95.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

advanced and exchanged their respective badges. Pilsudski stripped the leaden eagle from his képi⁷ and handed it to the leader of the Druzyny whose badge he took in exchange. The men followed their Commandant's example. Henceforth there would no longer be two organizations but only one, the Polish Army. (It is the writer's conviction that the above scene made into a movie would be well received by a sympathetic American audience).

It was indeed irregular, this Polish Army born of sorrow and oppression and the longings of an enslaved people. An army miserably armed and horribly equipped, without machine-guns or artillery, shouldering the antiquated Werndel rifles which were the only weapons Austria would issue them. They carried all their ammunition in their pockets. Eight cavalrymen led them; five rode Cossack ponies, which they had looted

7 képi refers to the Maciejowka, the first cap of the Polish legions of 1914. Pilsudski attached so much sentiment to this particular headgear that he never changed it for any other even when the uniforms were improved in appearance. cf. Joseph Statkowski, Old Poland and New, Warsaw, Arct, 1938, p. 62.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

the previous day from a Russian border patrol in a daring raid across the frontier; the others advanced on foot, carrying their saddles with them,⁸ as their horses still had to be won or stolen.

American veterans of World War I, and more so, the veterans of World War II, will inevitably make comparisons between the model U.S. Army and Pilsudski's heterogeneous volunteers!

This Pilsudski epic began with 172 men by favor of a pass from Captain Rybak of the Austrian Imperial Army.⁹ Though ill-equipped, the troops were gay and bold, singing the old insurrectionary songs--the songs that the army of Kosciuszko had sung--as they swept into the Russian territory that had once been Poland's. On August 6th, the small detachment arrived at the goal of the first advance on foot, even before the Austrians could arrive, on horse back.

8 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 70.
cf. Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 215.

9 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 96.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

When there appeared no sign of the Austrian cavalry, Pilsudski decided on his own responsibility to march on Kielce. In the meantime, more volunteers had joined his army, and on August 12th he entered the Russian-held Kielce in advance of the German and Austrian troops.¹⁰

In the meantime there was considerable agitation in the Polish political circles of both Austrian and Russian Poland. Some central point must be built up round which, in the general excitement and lack of direction of the war, the whole of Poland could rally.

On the 3rd of August, in Cracow, which was the center of the movement for independence, a manifesto had already appeared:

"Poles! A people's government has been established in Warsaw. It is the duty of every Polish citizen to submit to its authority. Citizen Joseph Pilsudski, whose orders must be obeyed by all, is appointed leader of the military forces of Poland. August 3rd, 1914".

10 Joseph Statkowski, op. cit., p. 56.
cf. William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 70.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

In this fashion Pilsudski freed himself from all outside interference. The Warsaw "People's Government"¹¹ was the sole authority he acknowledged, and this "People's Government" was Joseph Pilsudski himself. The Warsaw Government only existed in his mind; he himself had composed its manifesto, had cut himself free with one stroke. Very few people believed in this Government's reality, but nobody dared to deny it.

The war between the Partitioning Powers had forced upon the Poles the alternative of either defying their respective rulers or else fighting in opposing armies. The unhappy nation was pulled this way and that way threatened and cajoled in turn by the belligerent governments. There was strife and dissatisfaction everywhere.

In the meantime, in Cracow, a national committee had been formed, the Naczelny Komitet Narodowy (N.K.N.),¹² which took over the political representation of Austrian

11 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 98.

12 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 100.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

Poland. The N.K.N. could see as clearly as Pilsudski the necessity for cooperation with Austria. Since the N.K.N. seemed qualified to conduct recruiting and the formation of further regiments, Pilsudski declared himself in agreement with it. But the connection was anything but harmonious.

The Legionaires had taken an oath to the Austrian Imperial throne; they were dependent on Austria and formed an integral part of an Austrian army corps. The Austrians had every reason to consider these new Legionaires useful allies, yet they showed as much contempt and mistrust as though they had been fighting against the Poles. Pilsudski learned that in many invaded towns the civil population -- even the women -- had orders to leave the pavement at the approach of an Austrian officer; the men were obliged to raise their hats.¹³

These petty impositions by a self-called ally naturally enraged a man as full of national pride as Pilsudski. He approached the military authorities and complained. When it became quite obvious that neither the independence

13 id., ibidem., p. 101.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

of the legions nor a definite promise of autonomy could be expected for Poland from the Central Powers, Pilsudski decided to put an end to uncertainty by sending in his papers of resignation to the Austrian Government in September, 1916.¹⁴

The end of his military career meant only the beginning of his political career. He was invited by both Governors-General of German and Austrian Poland to sit on the newly appointed Council of State after the Russians had been driven beyond the line of the Russo-Polish border of 1772. He certainly didn't expect great powers from either Germany or Austria, but he wanted to give himself time in which to strengthen the new and secret military cadres--the P.O.W.¹⁵ Thus, while in the Austrian section of his country he commanded a legalized army, in Russian Poland a second

¹⁴ Eric James Patterson, Pilsudski, Marshal of Poland, Bristol, Arrowsmith, 1935, p. 73.

¹⁵ P.O.W. was the Polish Military Organization which was being trained in secret by Pilsudski's friends while he was at war with his Legionnaires in the Austrian part of Poland. cf. D.R. Gillie, op. cit., p. 349.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

and illegal one was in formation in accordance with his old policy of foresight and secret preparation.

Meanwhile a joint proclamation by the Emperors William II of Germany and Francis Joseph of Austria, was made on November 5th, 1916 promising Polish independence.¹⁶ Polish mistrust had increased so steadily that no one put the smallest faith in such promises. The intentions of the Powers were too obviously that of recruiting purposes. On the other hand the Germans mistrusted Pilsudski's purpose in legalizing the P.O.W. and as a result Pilsudski resigned his position in the Council of State in July, 1917. In a few days further consequences developed when Polish troops were assembled and ordered to take allegiance to Germany. But the soldiers had already agreed to refuse allegiance to anyone but Pilsudski.¹⁷ The Central Powers realized the power of Pilsudski and arrested him July 22, 1917 on the pretense of a false passport and sent

¹⁶ Edward Elgoth Ligocki, Poland, London, MacDonald, 1944, p. 72.

¹⁷ Except the Second Brigade commanded by General Joseph Haller.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

sent him to five Prussian fortresses, Posen,¹⁸ Danzig, Spandau near Berlin, Wesel on the Rhine, and finally to the prison at Magdeburg¹⁹ on the Elbe where for over a year, Pilsudski received neither visitors nor correspondence from his people. Yet his imprisonment was unusual inasmuch as he had been assigned a suite of rooms which were made as comfortable as possible. The orderlies who waited upon him saluted him punctiliously and treated with the greatest respect, never forgetting that although he was a prisoner, he was still a Brigadier.

In August, Casimir Sosnkowski,²⁰ his oldest and closest friend, was brought to the fortress to share the imprisonment with Pilsudski and the two men spent hours each day in front of maps they had nailed to the wall. German newspaper communiques enabled them to study the changing situations on the war fronts. As they walked hour by hour in the garden, Pilsudski eagerly outlined the plans he had made for

18 C.O. Lesley, Drama of Pilsudski in Current History, issue of July 1926, p. 585. cf. W.F.Reddaway, op.cit., p. 93.

19 July 22, 1917, to August, 1918.

20 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 124.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

a liberated Poland. His chief interest was, of course, the army, and he recounted to Sosnkowski the future Polish army down to its minutest details, deciding not only on its strength and numbers, its training and equipment, but arranging in advance in which parts of the country the various regiments would be stationed.

During the many months of Pilsudski's seclusion, his Legionaires had become apostles and their gospel was "Poland and Pilsudski".²¹

No human being can rouse such devotion as a fearless and resourceful soldier who loves his men and shares their dangers and misfortunes. In this no soldier has ever surpassed "the Commandant".²² His men told, and still tell,²³ of his unfailing courage. He was the first to attack, the last to retreat. He would chose an adventurous plan, and

21 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 98.

22 id., ibidem., p. 99.

23 The writer observed this at a recent convention of the Legionaires in Detroit, Michigan when A. Lewandowski presided.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

himself occupy the front lines. He was just and kind to his men, visiting the sick and lonely with a cheerful word or two, paternally kissing the brow of a crippled subaltern, or sharing an unexpected sweet with a feverish child. The Brigadier had become the subject of an idolatry ready for the hardest sacrifice.

In the great world outside, the struggle was nearing the end. The Russian Revolution of 1917, coming in the full tide of war, was a revolt of the populace against the stifling Tsarist regime that left the country in a chaos, eventually leading to a separate peace treaty with Germany.²⁴ Then Germany too found herself in the throes of a revolution.

Quite unexpectedly, on the evening of November 8, 1918, Pilsudski and Sosnkowski were told they were free to leave Magdeburg, and the very next day, November 9, Berlin was electrified by the Emperor's²⁵ abdication. The hand of Germany

24 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Germany and Austria and Russia, February 9, 1918.

25 This is Kaiser Wilhelm, see William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 100.

INDICATED IN WORLD WAR I

which had held the tortured country in a vice trembled, relaxed its grip, and gave up the struggle.

CHAPTER V

PILSUDSKI RESURRECTS THE RZECZPOSPOLITA POLISH REPUBLIC

Pilsudski arrived in Warsaw on November 10, 1918 to accept the position of Minister of War to which the Polish Government in Warsaw had named him while he was yet in Magdeburg.¹ For days there had been crowds at the station watching every train and waiting for him. Thousands of people lined the streets to cheer him when he arrived, and it was long after midnight when he retired to his room on that first night, but there were still crowds in the street, waiting under his window.

The new Minister of War, waking on that eventful morning of November 11, 1918, knew he had the hardest fight of his life before him.

At Versailles, the Armistice had been signed; the last American gun had quivered into silence, and diplomats were composing speeches for the conference table. The peace that had come to Europe so tardily was mockery to Poland. The whole country had been the battlefield of Europe with a battle front that in some places had moved back and forth no less than seven

¹ Rom Landau, Pilsudski and Poland, New York, Dial Press, 1929, p. 102.

POLISH REPUBLIC

times.² Over two million Poles conscripted³ in the Russian, German, and Austrian armies were compelled to fight each other in the ranks of the aggressor.⁴ Her people were worn out by a war which had never been their war and which left them with neither the exaltation of the victor nor the claim to pity of the conquered. Her boundaries were still indefinite and enemies surrounded her on every side.⁵ 80,000 German soldiers, far outnumbering any Polish force that could oppose them, were still in the country because of a lack of transportation.⁶ Demoralized by the desertion of their leader General von Besler, they created a most pressing problem

2 Joseph Statkowski, Poland, Old and New, Warsaw, Arct, 1938, p. 56.

3 Grace Humphrey, Poland Today, Warsaw, Arct, 1935, p. 45.

4 Joseph Statkowski, op. cit., p. 56.

5 Oskar Halecki, A History of Poland, New York, Roy Publishers, 1943, p. 290.

6 Eric James Patterson, Pilsudski, Marshal of Poland, Bristol, Arrowsmith, 1935, p. 84.

POLISH REPUBLIC

as they wandered about the city with their guns and ammunition.⁷

Poland was not able to take part in the post-war boom that followed in the wake of the war, since her struggle had not ended with the signing of the Versailles treaty,⁸ but before the end of November, 1918, Pilsudski had achieved results which by themselves, the author believes, would go far to prove him a great man. The first, and most essential, was the removal on good terms of the German garrison.⁹ This he did by means of a famous speech in which he placed the German Soldier's Council under his own protection until they left the country quietly and orderly.¹⁰ Thus, at the outset of his de facto

7 Alexandra Pilsudski, Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski, London, Hurst-Blackett, 1940, p. 274. cf. Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 80.

8 Oskar Halecki, op. cit., p. 291.

9 William F. Reddaway, Marshal Pilsudski, London, Routledge, p. 102.

10 The German soldiers left quietly in a week's time, surrendering their arms voluntarily to the Poles who needed them so badly.

cf. Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 84.

POLISH REPUBLIC

dictatorship, Pilsudski struck the keynote that resounded throughout his career: quiet, straightforward, firm administration, based on the people's will, and aiming at peaceful cooperation. This policy resulted in a reborn Poland and a new-born eastern Europe.¹¹

On the 16th of November, Pilsudski notified the various governments of Europe and America that the independent Polish Republic had come into being with himself as the Chief-of-State, replacing the German-made Regency Council.¹²

There was, however, another Polish Government, which, though cut off from Poland, deserved and possessed great influences with the Allies and with the American Poles, while it actually possessed an army under Joseph Haller in which, at one time, there were 100,000 volunteers, and tens of thousands of these were Americans of Polish extraction. This National Committee in Paris had been pro-Ally throughout, and

11 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 104.

12 Raymond Leslie Buell, Poland, Key to Europe, New York, Knopf, 1939, pl 37.

POLISH REPUBLIC

the names of Dmowski, Haller, and Paderewski weighed far more than did Pilsudski in Paris.¹³

To achieve national unity, Pilsudski was willing to sacrifice any personal considerations. He summoned representatives of all the different political parties and endeavoured to reconcile them.¹⁴ Paderewski, representing the largest political party, and at the same time the largest group of opponents (National Democrats) came at Pilsudski's invitation to Warsaw.¹⁵ The news of his arrival Dec. 27, 1917, caused an enormous spontaneous political demonstration which soon turned into a violent insurrection embracing the whole of the western region of Poland and continued for months.¹⁶

Two men, two characters, two programs, two conceptions of statesmanship and of international affairs were to face

13 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 104.

14 Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 280. cf. William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 112.

15 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 135.

16 Edward Elgoth Ligoocki, Poland, London, MacDonald, 1944, p. 86.

POLISH REPUBLIC

each other; more than this, two representatives of different worlds--Pilsudski and Paderewski.

In 1893, Paderewski had made his first tour of America as an artist where his success was instant and sensational.¹⁷ His second tour of the United States lasting two years (1915-1917) was devoted entirely to winning support, financially and morally, for his nation's cause. At this time there were 3,000,000 Americans of Polish descent living in the United States who gave generously of their funds and

¹⁷ In a small Californian town two students guaranteed the unknown Pole. They bought his first concert for a lump sum of \$2,000.

A thunderstorm broke, almost as if had cancelled the arrangements, shortly before the doors opened. Not a seat in the hall was taken.

The organizers paid \$200 and had \$1800 to make up. Paderewski learned of this and offered at once to pay half. They accepted and this began an American friendship.

More than 25 years later, Paderewski, as Prime Minister of Poland, received a consignment from America of two Cadillac cars -- a present from Mr. Herbert Hoover, one of the students who had guaranteed the concert.

This may have been the same reason that Mr. Hoover undertook the food program for Polish starving children immediately after World War I.

cf. Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 135.

POLISH REPUBLIC

of themselves, thousands of them volunteering for service in the Polish army under Joseph Haller on French soil.¹⁸

Paderewski became the personal friend of Colonel Edward Mandell House, the future American Secretary for War, and by him, was introduced to President Wilson who was so impressed by Paderewski's personality that he devoted the thirteenth of his fourteen points solely to the necessity for an independent Poland.¹⁹

The meeting of these two men, so dynamically opposed in character, was a pathetic one, but Paderewski already held in his hands that which Pilsudski wanted and lacked: the recognition of the Polish State by the Allied Powers. Finally, Pilsudski became Chief of State and dismissed the Government formed of his followers: Ignacy Jan Paderewski became Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs,²⁰

¹⁸ Charles T. Phillips, Paderewski, the Story of a Modern Immortal, New York, Macmillan, 1934, see introduction by Edward Mandell House. cf. Edward Elgoth Ligocki, op. cit., p. 93.

¹⁹ Raymond Leslie Buell, op. cit., p. 68.

²⁰ January 17, 1917.

POLISH REPUBLIC

and continued as delegate, together with Dmowski to the Versailles assembly.²¹

The next problem of grave concern was the fixation of boundaries of the new state. The Allied Nations had caused the new Republic of Poland to exist, but they failed to define the boundaries of this country which was beset by enemies on every side.²² The adoption of the Curzon line, even tentatively, based on ethnic divisions created a state with "a casket of dynamite under its only gate."²³ { Even more complicated was the question of the different foreign minorities of the frontier districts...the Jews, the Ukrainians, the White Russians, and the Lithuanians. The new Poland found herself with four codes of law--Prussian law, Austrian law, Russian, and the Napoleonic code.²⁴ Besides

21 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 147.

22 Oskar Halecki, op. cit., p. 296.

23 Edward Elgoth Ligocki, op. cit., p. 93.

24 Grace Humphrey, Pilsudski, Builder of Poland, Washington, Polish Information Service, 1936, p. 16.
cf. Oskar Halecki, op. cit., p. 296.

POLISH REPUBLIC

these four codes, there were the many regulations introduced by the Austrian and German occupations in which some acts forbidden and punishable in one regulation were perfectly legal in the other. The country's treasury was bankrupt, but there existed four kinds of currencies.²⁵

Pilsudski, in Warsaw, was concentrating his energy on the political situation. He ignored the signs of tension and the violent squabbles of the rival parties, calmly confident that the good sense of the great mass of the people would triumph in the elections for the Diet which were fixed for February 10, 1919.²⁶

25 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 194. cf. R. Umiastowski, Russia and the Polish Republic, 1918-1941. London, Aquafondata, 1947, p. 67. cf. Oskar Halecki, op. cit., p. 291.

26 This date has been given in three different books in three different ways: Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 192....Feb. 20. Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 282, gives the date as February 10.

Pilsudski himself gives this date as February 8 in D.R. Gillies's translation: Memories of a Polish Revolutionary and Soldier, London, Faber and Faber, 1931, p. 256.

POLISH REPUBLIC

It is at this point that some of the members of the P.P.S. (Polska Partja Socjalistyczna) accused Pilsudski of abandoning Socialism, but although he was the acknowledged leader of the Polish Socialists, he considered Socialism merely as a means to secure independence for his country. He made this clear in an answer he gave these diehards who reproached him for assuming dictatorial power in the days when one man's rule was indispensable for saving the country from falling into chaos. Pilsudski said then to the Socialists: "You accuse me of having betrayed Socialism. My answer is this: We have been riding together in a tram-car marked Socialism but I got off at the station "Independent Poland" while you are still going on".²⁷ He reminded them that the time had come when Poland must choose between the constructive socialism of the Western democracies and the destructive doctrine of materialistic Bolshevism of Russia which even then was engulfing that vast country in the greatest revolution it has ever known. (Russian Revo-

²⁷ Joseph Statkowski, op. cit., p. 55.

POLISH REPUBLIC

lution, 1917).

On the afternoon of February 10th, 1919,²⁸ Warsaw was en fete to celebrate the opening of their first Diet after a century and a half of fighting for a parliament of their own. Pilsudski's opening speech was a plea for constructive effort and for a sane and moderate policy at home and abroad:

"..... There has long been the closest sympathy between Poland and the democratic peoples of Europe and America, who do not seek glory in the conquest and oppression of other nations, but base their policy on the principles of right and justice....." ²⁹

At the end of his speech he tendered his resignation as temporary Chief of State, but he was immediately and unanimously re-elected,³⁰ and returned to the hall of meeting

28 Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 55.

29 id. ibidem. p. 283.

30 J.C. Gidyaski, Constitutional Development of Poland in Poland, edited by B.E. Schmitt, Berkeley, California Press, 1945, p. 91.

cf. William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 116.

POLISH REPUBLIC

amid cries of enthusiasm from the deputies.

The newly composed Diet had been assigned the task of drawing up a new constitution, while Pilsudski busied himself with pushing back the Russians from territories which Poland rightfully claimed should be hers according to the ethnographic boundary tentatively set down by the ill-defined Curzon line.

The city of Lwow was wrested from the Ukrainians in 1920, but it left many corpses of men, women, and especially children on the plains.³¹ The Kosciuszko Squadron, composed of American volunteers and led by Major Fauntleroy,³² was

³¹ During the Polish-Bolshevik war in 1920, several American aviators served as volunteers in the Polish air force in the "Kosciuszko Squadron". Three of the American fliers were killed and were buried in Lwow, where a beautiful monument has been built on their grave.

This is the subject of the book written about these fliers in Wings Over Poland by First Lieutenant Kenneth Malcolm Murray.

³² Edward Elgoth Ligoeki, Poland, London, MacDonald, 1944, p. 96.

POLISH REPUBLIC

largely responsible for cutting short the massacre of the civilian population which had entered the fray with the weapons they had obtained from the German soldiers who had been left stranded in Poland after Germany fell. [The battle for Lwow is vividly described in "Wings Over Poland"³³ which the writer recommends as an unusually interesting and informative book especially appealing to young boys of the hero-worship age.

In April, 1919,³⁴ Pilsudski began a movement in the north which resulted in the capture of Wilno. In May 1920, the advance was started into eastern Galicia with the ex-enemy and Ukrainian leader Symon Petlura for the relief of the Ukraine.³⁵ In a short time, Kiev was taken and the Polish troops were ordered to remain there until a regular Ukrainian government was constituted, but this idea was (a) not understood and it produced a violent political campaign against Pilsudski in Poland itself while in Allied countries

33 Murray, Kenneth M., Wings Over Poland, New York, Appleton, 1932, p. 363.

34 Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 88.

35 Raymond Leslie Buell, (See page 68).

POLISH REPUBLIC

it led to a belief of Polish Imperialism.³⁶

The outcome of this Ukrainian venture changed the fortune of the war and the Poles had to abandon the Ukraine. The Soviet attacked the north and the great retreat began. By August 13th, 1920, the Red Armies were only thirteen miles from Warsaw.³⁷ The situation looked so bad that the majority of foreign diplomats left what appeared to be the doomed city.

On the Day of the Virgin, the Polish army prayed to God and Our Lady for victory. Early in the morning of the next day the great attack had been launched and from the very beginning came success, and that success continued. The battle for the capital raged for two days, the 14th and the 15th of August, 1920, and ended in a complete defeat of

35 ... op. cit., p. 272. "It was this ill-fated and misunderstood alliance with Petlura that caused Pilsudski to be regarded as a traitor by his own people, and the same accusations were held against Petlura by the Ukrainians which resulted in the assassination of Petlura in Paris in 1927". cf. Oskar Halecki, op. cit., p. 286.

36 Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 89.

37 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 177.

POLISH REPUBLIC

the Red Army led by the twenty-eight year old Mikhail Tuk-hatshevsky.³⁸ As a result of the further battles of the Niemen and Szczara,³⁹ the Bolsheviki were driven further into Russia, and the ground was laid for the Treaty of Riga. The United States was vehemently opposed to these further encroachments on Russian territory.⁴⁰

Much credit for the strategy of this battle of the Vistula has been accorded to the French General Weygand, but Weygand himself declared that the battle was a "Polish victory" executed by "Polish generals in accordance with a Polish plan".⁴¹

38 Edward Elgoth Ligoocki, op. cit., p. 95. cf. Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 102.

39 Raymond Leslie Buell, op. cit., p. 78.

40 Raymond Leslie Buell, op. cit., p. 78. cf. Foreign Relations of the U.S., 1920, Washington, 1936, Vol. 3, p. 391.

41 Robert Machray, Pilsudski of Poland, New York, Dutton, 1937, p. 165. cf. Rom Landau, Pilsudski, Hero of Poland, London, Jarrolds, 1929, p. 192.

POLISH REPUBLIC

Lord d'Abernon⁴² subsequently called this battle for Warsaw "the eighteenth decisive battle of the world" and wrote that if the battle had been a Russian victory, it would have been a turning point in European history, for there would have been no doubt at all that the whole of Central Europe would at that moment have been opened to Communist propaganda and to Soviet invasion. Had the Communists conquered Poland, they might have been equally successful in neighboring Germany, where Communism was finding much favor.⁴³

It was not known at the time, that in the decisive moment, August 14, 1920, His Holiness Pope Benedict XV ordered a forty-hours' Mass for Poland in all the 400 churches of Rome. An enormous wave of prayer thus supported

42 Viscount D'Abernon wrote a book entitled The Eighteenth Decisive Battle of the World which was published in London in 1931 and which appears important enough to be in the bibliography of Lednicki's Life and Culture of Poland, New York, Roy Publishers, 1944.

43 Raymond Leslie Buell, op. cit., p. 78.
cf. Gazeta Polska, issue of August 17, 1930.

POLISH REPUBLIC

and upheld the Polish armies in their dire struggle for the country and Western Europe. It was the faith of the Polish people, more than their military strength (which was far below that of the Russians) that won the battle of the Vistula and stopped the triumphant march of Bolshevism.⁴⁴ It was the battle of civilization, for liberty and justice, and for every principle for which democracy stands. Centuries before, Poland had influenced the destiny of Europe when King John Sobieski's army drove the Turks from the plains of Vienna and gained the victory for the Cross over the Crescent. In 1920, Poland, by her indomitable faith, again influenced the destiny of Europe by her stand against the forces of Bolshevism.⁴⁵

With a comparative peace following the Treaty of Riga (March 18, 1921)⁴⁶ Poland looked next to the recons-

44 Edward Elgoth Ligocki, op. cit., p. 95.

45 The Battle of the Vistula has been called the "Miracle of the Vistula", and Poles speak of this battle in reverent tones to this day.

46 Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 103.

POLISH REPUBLIC

truction of her devastated country. The human mind beggars description in terms of homeless refugees, starving children, families ravaged by typhus and other diseases. Invading belligerents carried away ten billion gold francs, and the Austro-German armies blew up 7,500 bridges, and destroyed 940 railway stations before they left the Country.⁴⁷

During the terrible aftermath of the World War, the American Relief Committee, under Herbert Hoover,⁴⁸ rendered invaluable aid by feeding and caring for the children of Poland. Except for the remarkable staying power of the Polish people, and for the relief extended by the United States,⁴⁹ Communism might easily have triumphed during this early period.⁵⁰

47 Raymond Leslie Buell, op. cit., p. 82. cf. Roman Gorecki, Poland and her Economic Development, London, Allen and Unwin, 1935, p. 21.

48 This is the same Herbert Hoover who guaranteed Paderewski's concert in California. See footnote 17 for details.

49 Joseph Statkowski, op. cit., p. 94.

50 Raymond Leslie Buell, op. cit., p. 82.

POLISH REPUBLIC

In the meantime, the Constituent Diet had been working on a "Little Constitution"⁵¹ which they completed in March, 1921 but which was still lacking the essentials of a strong government. This Diet, or Sejm as it is called in Poland, was made up of thirteen political parties and two independent parties.⁵² From the outset, this was a very unhealthy situation since each party in its vie for control began to place party and individual politics above the welfare of the nation. What was even worse, cabinets had to be formed on a very unstable coalition. Knowing and fearing Pilsudski, these men who composed the Sejm realized that Pilsudski's immense popularity would elevate him to the Presidency. The Sejm was not eager to throw away its own power, and in framing the constitution, it placed the executive powers below and subject to those of the Sejm. This consti-

51 J.C. Gidyaski, Constitutional Development of Poland in Poland, edited by B.E. Schmitt, Berkeley, California Press, 1945, p. 91.

52 id. ibidem. p. 91.

POLISH REPUBLIC

tution was based on the French⁵³ Constitution, but placed the Executive in a much inferior position.⁵⁴ Another house, the Senate, was also created but its function was negligible.

The Sejm's suspicions were confirmed about Pilsudski's popularity, for in the next election, December 9, 1922,⁵⁵ he was nominated for the presidency and elected. Pilsudski immediately declined, stating that he was not at all content with the powers granted to the Executive by the constitution and suggested that a close friend of his, Gabriel Narutowicz,⁵⁶ be elected to fill the position.

Both houses complied, but if it had not been for the National Minorities Party which formed its own block,

53 Edward Elgeth Ligoeki, op. cit., p. 96.

54 S. Mackiewicz, Historja Polski, London, M. I. Kollin, 1941. p. 152.

55 Rom Landau, Pilsudski and Poland, New York, Dial Press, 1929, p. 199.

56 id. ibidem. p. 199. cf. Oskar Halecki, op. cit., p. 299.

POLISH REPUBLIC

Narutowicz would not have been elected, since Pilsudski had no organized party of his own. Seven days later, December 16, 1922, the new President was assassinated⁵⁷ (by Eligiuzz Niewiadomski⁵⁸) a fanatical youth who objected to a President elected by a coalition of Left and the National Minorities group.

The new election brought another man to the executive position who was one of Pilsudski's old friends, the same Stanislaus Wojciechowski who had collaborated with Pilsudski in the publication of The Robotnik in the old days of the P.P.S. Sikorski became Premier and Pilsudski took over the office of Chief of the General Staff.

The early months of 1923 witnessed developments which could only inflame Pilsudski's contempt for the parliamentarians whom universal suffrage and proportional representation sent to Warsaw.⁵⁹ Both within and without,

57 Robert Machray, op. cit., p. 242. This is the first crime of its sort in the history of Poland.

58 D.R. Gillie, op. cit., p. 336.

59 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 201.

POLISH REPUBLIC

Poland encountered difficulties, which the government did its utmost to solve, yet the Sejm moved steadily towards the Right, and Pilsudski's enemies seemed to be attracting the cautious Witos.⁶⁰ The deal between the Rights and Witos was completed, and on the 26th of May, the government was defeated by more than two to one. Two days later, Witos became Premier,⁶¹ and on May 30, Pilsudski indignantly resigned from the General Staff, declining to accept any government pension,⁶² and retired to Sulejowek, in the neighborhood of the capital where he lived in a modest little villa which his legionaires had provided for him as a sign of their love and gratitude.

60 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 180.

61 Robert Machray, op. cit., p. 246.

62 Robert Machray, op. cit., p. 253.

CHAPTER VI

PILSUDSKI'S CONFLICTS IN ESTABLISHING A STABLE GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION

Although Pilsudski remained aloof from all active political work, he nevertheless kept in constant touch with events in Warsaw. During his entire stay at Sulejowek from July 1923 to May 1926,¹ there was a continual procession of visitors to his home; ministers and politicians who wanted his advice, many officers who would not let him retire into oblivion and brought him their problems.

In the first year of his retirement (1923), Poland had asked to be admitted to the membership of the Council of the League of Nations, but her request had been refused, although Germany was duly installed there, for at that time the sentimentalists of every nation were preaching the necessity of extending a helping hand to the German people. "Such a state of affairs would no doubt be ideal", said Pilsudski, "but for the mentality of Germany, who would keep to this pose of penitence as long as it suited her purpose,

¹ Alexandra Pilsudski, Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski, London, Hurst and Blackett, p. 40, p. 317.

PILSUDSKI'S CONFLICTS IN ESTABLISHING A
STABLE GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION

78

and change it as soon as she was ready to strike again".² But because even statesmen are deceived with fair words, everyone believed in Germany's good intentions, and distrusts the blunt realism of Pilsudski who desired peace, perhaps more so than anyone else in Europe, since it was vital to Poland's very existence, but who admitted frankly that his country must remain sufficiently strong in arms to resist attack.

Pilsudski insisted that the only practical means of enforcing peace in Europe was for the League of Nations to maintain a standing army to which all countries would contribute and which would be at the service of any victim of aggression.³

The year of 1925 was a year of varied fortunes for Poland. Her fate was once again debated, this time at Locarno, whereon the longing eyes of a war-weary world were

² Raymond Leslie Buell, Poland, Key to Europe, New York, Knopf, 1939, p. 87.

³ Note how closely the Northern Atlantic Pact follows Pilsudski's suggestions twenty five years later.

focused. Unfortunately, Pilsudski had already acquired there the reputation of a war-monger which had previously been bestowed upon him by historians in Berlin, Warsaw, and Moscow, and the Western Powers hesitated to guarantee the frontiers of Poland.⁴

The internal situation in Poland was no less complicated. In December 1923 the Witos Government fell, and Wladyslaw Grabski became Prime Minister.⁵ He immediately introduced grandiose schemes of finance and economy, but not knowing how to carry them out, it was impossible to arrive at a budget. Currency inflation had drained the treasury, capital had fled the country, and the peasants, distrusting the new currency⁶ (zloty), refused to supply any one else with food except themselves. The zloty fell lower and lower every day, (1924) and those who received monthly salaries

4 Oskar Halecki, A History of Poland, New York, Roy Publishers, 1943, p. 301.

5 William F. Reddaway, Marshal Pilsudski, London, Routledge, 1939, p. 193.

6 Roman Dyboski, Poland in Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 18, p. 145.

were obliged to turn them immediately into goods before their purchasing power dwindled still further. Shopkeepers altered their prices every few hours, and financiers speculated wildly in foreign exchange. There was poverty everywhere; the unemployed in the big industrial towns were reduced to the verge of starvation.⁷

The disastrous and progressive fall of the zloty ruined the credit of the Grabski Ministry and on November 13, 1925,⁸ having lost the confidence of the country, it was forced to resign, and Witos,⁹ the leader of the Peasant Party which represented 65% of the people was recalled to form a new cabinet.¹⁰

7 Cambridge History of Poland, edited by Reddaway et al., Cambridge, University Press, 1941, p. 598.

8 Robert Machray, Pilsudski of Poland, New York, New York, Dutton, 1937, p. 242. cf. Rom Landau, Pilsudski and Poland, New York, Dial Press, 1929, p. 225.

⁹
9 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 193.

10 Edward Elgoth Ligoeki claims that Korfanty, leader of the Christian Labour Party was asked to form the new government.

PILSUDSKI'S CONFLICTS IN ESTABLISHING A 81
STABLE GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION

The frequent changing of cabinets from 1919 to 1925 gave Poland an unstable foreign policy. Each cabinet change meant and resulted in new foreign minister appointments. This coupled with the German-Russian Treaties with their anti-Polish implications¹¹ made it imperative that Poland have a definite foreign policy.

The need for a strong army was also apparent since Russia recognized that Poland alone held Communism from spreading throughout Europe, for at a meeting of the Third Congress of the Comintern, held in March 1925, it was stated that the task of the international proletariat was the "smashing of capitalist Poland and turning it into a Soviet Republic".¹²

Already some of the members of the Sejm were urging reduction of the army and complaining that the money expended on it would be better employed in the development of a

¹¹ Robert Machray, Poland and Pilsudski, in Fortnightly Review, issue of August 1926, p. 167.

¹² R. Umiastowski, Russia and the Polish Republic 1919-1941, London, Aquafondata, 1947, p. 101.

building program. These were natural sentiments since not more than twenty of the six hundred members of the Senate and Sejm had seen active service. They therefore had no knowledge of the army's organization, no care for its welfare, and no interest in it except to use it as a pawn in the political game for self-advancement.¹³ Pilsudski, realizing the future of Poland was only as strong as its army, revolted at this idea which was brought to a climax when Witos, in announcing his new cabinet on May 10, 1926, appointed an anti-Pilsudski general, Malczewski,¹⁴ as Minister of War. This of course meant there would be a purge in the army, a purge in which the firends of Pilsudski would be the victims.

On that same night, it was rumored that shots had been fired on the Marshal's house, and troops stationed at Rembertow,¹⁵ most of them Pilsudski's adherents, placed

13 Robert Machray, op. cit., p. 253.

14 Eric James Patterson, Pilsudski, Marshal of Poland, Bristol, Arrowsmith, 1935, p. 113.

15 Military barracks near Warsaw.

themselves at his disposal. On May 11th, a Warsaw newspaper, Kurjer Poranny,¹⁶ published a long interview with Pilsudski in which he attacked the government, accusing them openly, and in the strongest terms, of corruption. The Government suppressed that issue of the paper, but too late to achieve the purpose of preventing Pilsudski's words from having their effect; meanwhile, the government newspaper threatened the Marshal with high treason.

By this time, popular circles in Warsaw began to show their dislike of the Witos Government. Pilsudski enthusiasts entered the streets and proclaimed their hero as the "only possible saviour of the country".¹⁷

After a consultation with the officers at Rembertow, Pilsudski decided to lead a demonstration against the Witos Government, in the hope of forcing it to resign. At that time neither he nor the officers and men of the few regi-

16 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 228.

17 Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 114.

ments who followed him intended anything other than a peaceable demonstration.¹⁸

Reaching Warsaw, Pilsudski and his soldiers embarked on the Vistula river at Praga (suburb of Warsaw, separated by the river) where they could see the Government's machine-gun emplacements and the dull green of the uniforms of the Government's soldiers.

But Pilsudski was certain of victory; the President (Wojciechowski) was an old friend; twenty years ago they had printed the Robotnik together; both had grown up together through the struggle for independence.¹⁹

The President's position was very difficult; though he liked and had always admired Pilsudski, yet as the highest representative of his land, he must stand for the law of the land. He revered the constitution, and once legally

¹⁸ Alexandra Pilsudski, Memoirs of Madame Pilsudski, London, Hurst and Blackett, 1940, p. 330.
cf. William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 226.

¹⁹ Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 230.

formed, a government was an inviolate thing.

The two former friends met at the Poniatowski bridge which divided the two armed camps. But each man held tenaciously to his own ideas through which no middle road was possible.

Pilsudski, not wishing to fire upon his former friend and President,²⁰ retired with his troops, crossed another parallel bridge and occupied the center of Warsaw. His position, indeed, was critical, for a few thousand men had a city of a million souls before them, the Citadel on their right flank, and rail communication open with Poznan, the stronghold of the government. On May 12, Pilsudski could only offer to the army and the nation an opportunity of judging between Witos and a better Premier.

Witos the Premier was even then holding an emergency meeting. The only other elected authority who at the moment could preside over parties was Rataj, the Speaker of the

²⁰ Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 238.
cf. William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 232.

Sejm, so he was commissioned to negotiate with Pilsudski at his garrison headquarters. But Pilsudski refused to negotiate. He had made known his terms. To him, this was not a personal matter, but rather, one which concerned the honor of the army and the Polish Republic.²¹

Rataj returned to the Belvedere with nothing done. He had hoped for concessions from the President, but Witos was determined to prevent any concessions, and Rataj was forbidden to see the President who remained alone in his study, deep in prayer for help and light.²²

That night, the pressmen sought out Pilsudski at his headquarters and received from one who confessed himself physically and morally exhausted, a brief but memorable statement:

"Though opposed to violence, as I showed while Head of State, I have brought myself, after a severe struggle, to a trial of strength, with all its con-

²¹ Pilsudski's Warning in Nation, issue of July 21, 1946, p. 65.

²² Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 330.

PILSUDSKI'S CONFLICTS IN ESTABLISHING A
STABLE GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION

87

sequences. All my life I have fought for what are called imponderables--honor, virtue, manhood, and in general, man's inward forces--not for profit for myself or for those about me. If the State is not to perish, there must not be falsehood, iniquities, and injustice. All must work for the common good... 23."

From the Belvedere, on the same night, the government had sent out a wireless message intended for the rest of the world: "M. Pilsudski in rebellion. We stand for law and justice. This shameless act of treason will be a warning to all future generations. Pilsudski far more dangerous to his country than any foreign enemy could ever be."24

On the 13th the Marshal was re-enforced. All over the country regiments put themselves at his orders. Troops led by his close friend, General Edward Rydz-Smigly,²⁵ came from Wilno in the night. The Socialist party who, "in

23 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 228.

24 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 233.

25 Raymond Leslie Buell, op. cit., p. 87.

spite of everything" still saw Pilsudski as their founder; the enemy from the Right; and the National Democrats, -- all joined him to end the government's power.²⁶ Their council met and called a general strike; all railway transportation was halted except troop trains moving Pilsudski's regiments to Warsaw.

On the afternoon of the 14th, at the end of a bitter struggle, Pilsudski's regiments took the Academy, and the way lay open to the Belvedere where Wojciechowski was alone in his private room. Despair had seized him after his fruitless interview with Pilsudski.²⁷ He had striven for more than forty years to be a faithful to the teachings of Socialism; for more than forty years he had striven for Polish unity, and now he had to stand by and watch Poles shoot each other down.

An officer of the President's body-guard came with the news that the Academy was taken; it seemed likely that

²⁶ A. L. Bizoska, Bloody Days in Warsaw in Living Age, issue of June 26, 1926, p. 66.

²⁷ Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 236.

PILSUDSKI'S CONFLICTS IN ESTABLISHING A
STABLE GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION

89

the enemy would advance into the courtyard of the Belvedere. Resistance was useless, but it would be too undignified to be taken prisoner by these rebels. The President and his ministers made their way via back streets under cover of darkness to the King Sobieski's summer place, Wilanow, near Warsaw, and despatched Rataj, Speaker of the Sejm, with their official resignations.²⁸

Pilsudski had won; it was inevitable--the man whose will had never been bent, whose nerve had never snapped. Now the game was his but at what a price! A thousand wounded and almost four hundred dead had been picked up in the streets within three days of this civil war. Thus, to his opponents Pilsudski became the man who had brought Poland near to overthrow in 1920, and who now in 1926 drowned law in blood.²⁹

But great as it was, the price to be paid was greater. Pilsudski was appalled by the visible signs of

28 Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 115.

29 Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 245.

his action--the endless funeral processions; this stir which would be heard all around the world. His heart sank. He had hoped to win by force of personality and set about reforms. Instead, he had made a civil war with entrenchments and heaps of dead: his soldiers, whose regiments he had built up, the first free Polish army, whose idol and Marshal he was, had shot one another down. The country and his supporters expected him to seize the absolute power of dictatorship. But he abstained.³⁰

Though he had fought them for years, in his heart Pilsudski revered Sejm and the constitution. A dictatorship would have meant the end of both, and he felt he had not the courage to destroy a possession of his countrymen to which they had aspired for more than a century. And he did not dare accept a gift of such a power if, to reach it, he must step over corpses.

Technically, at least, there was no revolution. The President had resigned, and, in strict accordance with

³⁰ Rom Landau, op. cit., p. 249.

the constitution, Speaker Matthias Rataj became Acting President, as he had done when Narutowicz was shot down. Casimir Bartel was appointed temporary Premier,³¹ Pilsudski became Minister of War, and a cabinet was formed pending the election of a President by the National Assembly of the Seyn and Senate.³²

Pilsudski's coup d'état was inspired less by personal ambition than by a belief that Poland was drifting back to the anarchy that had preceded the Partitions.³³ This coup d'état was less drastic than imagined. It had been designed to restrict the "sejmocratie"³⁴ and to correct Parliamentary misrule. No sweeping changes followed and only three points in the constitution were amended. The executive position was strengthened so that the President could dissolve parliament and order new elections, pass

31 Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 115.

32 Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 333.

33 Raymond Leslie Buell, op. cit., p. 89.

34 V. Fiala, La Pologne D'Aujourd'hui, Paris, Paul Hartmann, 1936, p. 41.

legislation by decree when the Sejm was not in session, and parliamentary discussion on the budget was limited to four months.³⁵

Going before the Sejm on May 29, 1926, Pilsudski would not discuss the events of May, for which he was answerable only to his own conscience, except to explain that Poland had been made poor and weak by the unpunished wickedness of selfish men and parties; he warned that either the Sejm would place the State above party politics or he would rule with an iron hand.³⁶

Yet, when Pilsudski was again elected President on May 31, he refused this honor saying, "I must assert again, I cannot live without work from which the President is barred by the existing constitution."³⁷ He had let the National Assembly elect him President, while refusing the

³⁵ Raymond Leslie Buell, op. cit., p. 91.

³⁶ Pilsudski's Warning in Nation, issue of July 21, 1926, p. 65.

³⁷ Wm. Reddaway et al., Cambridge History of Poland, Cambridge University Press, p. 603.

office,³⁸ to demonstrate that the majority of the nation approved his coup d'état. He considered his election as an act of endorsing or legalizing³⁹ his actions by the very authorities against which it had been directed.

At Pilsudski's suggestion, the Assembly elected Ignacy Moscicki, who had gained great distinction in the world of electricity and chemistry. The advent of Moscicki coincided with a sudden development of Polish trade, favored by the coal strike and general strike in England. The new President brought into the service of the State an energetic assistant, Kwiatkowski,⁴⁰ who developed factories, and once again pressed on the construction of the new port of Gdynia. Aided by American advice, Poland acquired a modest degree of economic freedom, and this at once improved her status among the Powers, gaining for her a seat on the

38 Robert Machray, op. cit., p. 253.

39 Raymond Leslie Buell, op. cit., p. 91.

40 Oskar Halecki, A History of Poland, New York, Roy Publishers, 1943, p. 302.

Council of the League of Nations.⁴¹

Although budget deficits disappeared,⁴² the stabilization of currency became evident, and employment rose, still the hostile Sejm drove Bartel to resign,⁴³ and again Pilsudski was asked to form a new cabinet. This time he included almost every shade of Left and Right, because to him Left and Right had lost their meaning. What he sought was social equilibrium, and as a result, the next election held in 1928 reduced the strength of all parties by creating new ones, so that there were 35 different factions, each with a list of their own candidates,⁴⁴ and the issues were reduced to "ou avec Pilsudski, ou contre Pilsudski".⁴⁵ Even the Left which had widely acclaimed his coup d'état in 1926, now opposed

41 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 266. cf. Oskar Halecki, op. cit., p. 302.

42 V. Fiala, op. cit., p. 109.

43 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 236.

44 Roman Dyboski, Poland in Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 18, p. 146.

45 V. Fiala, op. cit., p. 98.

Pilsudski when it was evident that Pilsudski would not inaugurate drastic social and governmental changes.

In the meantime a strong non-party bloc built up behind Pilsudski. This group represented almost every party, whether Left or Right. When one of the party members was asked, "Mais quel est donc le lien qui vous unit si solidement? il me montra dans la pénombre de la salle du groupe le portrait du maréchal Pilsudski, et prononça un seul mot, réponse qui disait tout et qui est devenue courante aujourd'hui: 'Zaufanie (la confiance)'"⁴⁶

The elections of 1928 were very competitive over 2,000 candidates, representing every shade of political belief, fought for the 454⁴⁷ positions in the government. The Govern-

46 "But what is the hold which united you so strongly? he showed me in the darkness of the group's hall, the portrait of Marshall Pilsudski and pronounced only one word, answer which told everything, and which has become popular today: "Zaufanie (confidence)"."

47 New International Yearbook 1928, p. 610.

ment succeeded in winning over one-third of the seats at the expense of Right and Left, but this was not enough to secure the majority votes needed to amend the constitution in favor of a still stronger executive.

In spite of the outcome of this election, the Sejm determined to reassert some of the authority it had held previously and proceeded to elect Daszynski over Pilsudski's candidate as Marshal of the Sejm. Pilsudski, showing his displeasure, immediately resigned his position and turned his office over to the former Prime Minister Bartel.⁴⁸

The Sejm then issued a direct challenge to Pilsudski by attempting to impeach his Finance Minister, Czechowicz, for expending government funds without first securing proper authority from the Sejm.⁴⁹ Pilsudski immediately accepted the challenge by stating that he himself was responsible for these expenditures and he dared the Sejm to do something about it. The climax in the new crisis came when Bartel

48 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 248.

49 S. Mackiewicz, Historja Polski, London, M. I. Kollin, 1941, p. 196.

sided with Parliament and was replaced as Prime Minister by Switalski.⁵⁰

The next battle between Pilsudski and the Sejm came during the next session (31 October 1929). Pilsudski and a number of officers in uniform were present and the Marshal of the Sejm (Daszynski) refused to convene the House until the soldiers left. Pilsudski thereupon withdrew, but the session adjourned for a month.⁵¹

The tension between Pilsudski and the Sejm continued. Finally Pilsudski took the office of Prime Minister and the Government dissolved the Sejm and a new election was called. The Left and the Right immediately formed one party, regardless of past differences, against the Government. This coalition was called the "Centralow" (Central Party) and was made up of Socialists, Radical Populists, Christian Democrats, National Workers, and a few other independent

50 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 261.

51 Wm. Reddaway et al., Cambridge History of Poland, Cambridge, University Press, 1941, p. 612.

STABLE GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION

parties.⁵² This was immediately followed by a number of arrests and several of the officials were sent to prison, including Witos, Pilsudski's most persistent political foe. These men were tried for treason when they openly flouted the Government by exclaiming that none of the present government debts would be honored when the present government ceased to be in power.⁵³

The election held in 1930 gave the Government a clear cut majority of total votes. Election results showed the Government received 5,300,000 out of 13,000,000 votes cast.⁵⁴ Yet the number of seats in the Sejm acquired by the Government were not enough to pass the constitution that Pilsudski had formulated to bring the Executive above the Sejm. When the opposition walked out of the Sejm as a protest against Pilsudski's attempt to push the new reforms through without first obtaining the required two-thirds

52 Raymond Leslie Buell, New Governments in Europe, New York, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1934, p. 300.

53 William J. Rose, Poland Old and New, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1948, p. 123.

54 Wm. Reddaway, et al., Cambridge History of Poland, Cambridge, University Press, 1941, p. 612.

vote, the Government in their absence passed the necessary legislation required to commence work on a new constitution,⁵⁵

In the meantime, other pressing problems were waiting to be solved. Through the second half of 1933, the economic crisis filled the foreground of Polish history and of Pilsudski's life. It had already lasted for some three years, and no way of escape lay open. Two-thirds of the population lived from agriculture. In three years, foreign trade per head of the population had fallen by more than two-fifths. The unemployed were struggling to maintain their families on an income of less than eighteen-pence a day, many living on bread, potatoes and a little tea. Everywhere industry ceased to be profitable, debts remained unpaid, and businesses collapsed, while cut followed cut in the incomes of public servants.⁵⁶

Agriculture being the chief industry of Poland, the country's economic recovery depended to a great extent upon

55 id ibidem., p. 613.

56 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 304.

improving farming methods, and this was done to a large extent by a land reform.

The Land Reform in Poland was a scheme entirely different from similar activities bearing the same name and carried out in many European countries after the first World War, such as in Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia. In the first three countries named, agrarian reform amounted practically to expropriation of landowners without indemnity. In the latter--to a splitting up of large estates and dividing them among small landholders. In Poland, however, agrarian reform had nothing to do with expropriation. It was a much wider and far-reaching scheme, which aimed at the rebuilding of this structure in Poland. This was to be achieved by threefold means: rational replanning of the fields, reclaiming of waste lands, and the parceling up of large estates.⁵⁷

Internal achievements during the depression years (1931-1934) were the equivalent of ten normal years, and

57 Joseph Statkowski, Poland, Old and New, Warsaw, Arct, 1938, p. 104.

PILSUDSKI'S CONFLICTS IN ESTABLISHING A 101
STABLE GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION

Gdynia rose to be one of the largest ports in Europe under Pilsudski's guidance.

In the interest of Poland, Pilsudski would still not submit to any collective interference with her military forces. Poland's sad experiences of the XVIII century was the principle reason why she could not agree to the conclusion of the Eastern Pact, which as a consequence could compel her to let pass through her territory the armies of one of the belligerent parties. Poland felt that the strong adherence to this fundamental principle, the prohibition of transgression of the frontiers of Poland by any power, would be the best guarantee of peace in Central Europe.

Through the year 1934, Pilsudski still fashioned and guided Poland. Although the peace of Europe remained unbroken, unrest continued, and on some sides grew threateningly from day to day. Political instability increased in France, while in Germany, Hitlerism became ever stronger, and in August the death of Hindenburg raised Hitler to the semi-divine dignity of the Fuhrer. At the same time, Stalin's triumph over Russian peasant individualism seemed to be

complete, and Russia, which had replaced Germany in the League of Nations, obviously intended to play a greater part in Europe.⁵⁸

Because of the obvious necessity, Pilsudski formulated a definite foreign policy for Poland--a formula for the maintenance of peace. As early as 1921, Poland, fully realizing the value of alliances between nations who were devoid of aggressive aims, concluded purely defensive alliances with France and Rumania.

When a perpetual state of war existed between Lithuania and Poland for a few years, Pilsudski approached Premier Waldemaras, the synonym for Lithuanian intransigence. Face to face with Waldemaras at the Council meeting of the League in Geneva in December 1927, Pilsudski insisted on learning from him whether he would have peace or war. The Lithuanian could only answer "Peace".⁵⁹

58 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 305.

59 Eric James Patterson, op. cit., p. 120.

Therefore, in 1927 at the Eighth Meeting of the League of Nations in Geneva the Polish Delegation advanced a motion demanding the confirmation of the following formula: "All attempts of war as the means of settlement of international conflicts are and will be forbidden" and voted for the resolution that "all conflicts, irrespective of their cause, which might arise between nations should be settled by peaceful means only."⁶⁰

In 1931 Poland submitted a memorandum to the League of Nations which introduced to the international forum for the first time the idea of moral disarmament as the only guarantee of permanent peace.

In the further development of her international policy, Poland applied the ideas which she professed. While the old tendency of England, France, and America to treat Poland as an upstart had not entirely vanished, Pilsudski struck out heroically and designed a policy so strong that it set each of the major powers in Europe back in their turn.

60 Joseph Statkowski, op. cit., p. 98.

PILSUDSKI'S CONFLICTS IN ESTABLISHING A
STABLE GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION

104

The assassination of a high Russian official in Polish territory almost touched off another war between Russia and Poland. After Poland apologized for the incident and offered an indemnity, even though the culprit was not a Polish citizen, Russia was not satisfied. Pilsudski in a message to the Russian government said, "You only run the risk of humiliating yourself since you have not sufficient force behind your threats, which you know as well as we do".⁶¹ This resulted in a ten year non-aggression pact with Russia in 1932.

Germany was the next power to feel the weight of Pilsudski's strong hand. He was the first to call Hitler's bluff in 1933 when Germany made claims for the return of Danzig and the Polish Corridor. This too resulted in a ten year non-aggression pact signed in 1934 that shocked the world.⁶²

61 New International Year Book, "Poland", 1927, p. 652.

62 Wm. F. Reddaway, et al., Cambridge History of Poland, Cambridge, University Press, 1941, p. 652.

PILSUDSKI'S CONFLICTS IN ESTABLISHING A
STABLE GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION

105

Through this, the last year which he was destined to complete, Pilsudski more than ever lived to discharge his public duties. His strength was undoubtedly declining, and for the first time no greeting to the Legionary meeting in August came from his pen.

Pilsudski had given to Poland a breathing spell in which he hoped to build Poland so that she could play the part assigned her inherently by her geographical position in Europe, that is, the buffer state against Russian Communism in the East and Germany's "Drach Nach Osten" on her West.⁶³

Finally, the new constitution of Poland, based on that of the United States, was presented to Pilsudski for his signature on April 23rd, 1935. After close to twenty years of constant struggle, Pilsudski had succeeded in building up a Parliamentary Republic with strong executive powers. In the light of events of the next month, it appeared that the signing of the Constitution was destined

⁶³ Grace Humphrey, Pilsudski, Builder of Poland, Washington, Polish Information Service, 1936, p. 241.

to be Pilsudski's last mission for Poland as his life reached its peaceful close on Sunday, May 12, 1935, (the ninth anniversary of the Coup d'état) in the presence of his wife, daughters, and three old Legionnaires. In his hand the dead man clasped the medallion of the Ostra Brama Virgin, which he always bore with him, through all the battles of his life.⁶⁴

The technical apostasy of his marriage in 1899 was never punished by the erasure of his name from the muster-roll of the faithful, and his second marriage was celebrated with Catholic rites. In his last hour, and after death, the Church treated him as a cherished member.

The funeral ceremonies of May, 1935, were worthy of a sensitive nation, long schooled in suffering, and now mourning for her greatest man. Amid immense and reverent crowds, the Marshal's body was borne with every military honor from the Cathedral where a great service was held at

64 William F. Reddaway, op. cit., p. 312.

midnight. His body was laid to rest in the Wawel crypt in Cracow with the kings and heroes of Poland, but his heart was buried, in fulfillment of his last wish, at the feet of his mother in Wilno, in the same cemetery where so many of his soldiers are laid.⁶⁵

His successors, meeting after his death, agreed to carry out the future policies of Poland that Pilsudski had carried to his grave.⁶⁶

65 Alexandra Pilsudski, op. cit., p. 343.

66 V. Fiala, La Pologne d'Aujourd'hui, Paris, Paul Hartmann, 1936, p. 191.

CONCLUSION

Historians who have made a study of the Pilsudskian era of Poland are inclined to state that a dictatorship existed in Poland during that time, but hastily add that it was not really a dictatorship, but rather, a "veiled dictatorship". They describe Pilsudski as a dictator, but add that certain qualifications should be made to take him out of the classification of dictator.

Since these historians find difficulty in ascribing a definite character to Pilsudski and his policies, it is not strange or unusual that the average American reader gathers these same indefinite and contradictory opinions.

The events of the Pilsudskian era in Polish history, in review, show two sides of a picture. On the one side: 1905--Empty streets--dead workmen in their Sunday best lying on the pavements, wet with red pools of blood, all over Poland. 1915--Young Legionnaires, fighting with Austria, who was herself an oppressor, against the Russian subjugation. Polish youth lay down on Polish earth, never to get up again.

1920--Now again, empty universities. All the young men marching out under the flags of hero, out to fight the Bolsheviks. And then, trains, trams, and cars came back from the front, full of young men--some of them alive.

1926--More young men--men who were friends or enemies--picked up off the streets of Warsaw, taken away, laid out.

The loss in dollars and cents through these years added up to billions, but it was impossible to count the loss of human souls in the heartless coin of currency.

On the other side of the picture, it is apparently evident that Pilsudski gave his country stability, faith, and a confidence in possibilities which have made Poland's opportunities possible of realization. Pilsudski was a realist, and as such, he followed the path of understanding and peace in Poland's foreign relationships. A Poland divided by political factions would have been a danger not only to herself but to the whole of Europe; an Imperialistic Poland seeking after vain ambitions would have been an equal danger, but through strength, Pilsudski in twenty years made Poland a progressive State of thirty-five millions, enjoying super-

ficial neighborly relations with Germany and Russia, a reasonably stable parliamentary government with strong executive powers, a balanced budget, a well-trained army, and best of all, a memory of eighteen years of peace.

From "dictator" to "great" is a far cry, and many have denied Pilsudski greatness. Whatever his distant goal, he approached it by an irregular course. First a member of the P.P.S., then of the Fraction, then not a Socialist at all, now for the Central Powers, now for the Allies, long a bitter enemy of the Powers with which he later made ententes, a democrat who abused the parliament when they worked against his will, and who led troops to drive the Premier from his elected office--on the face of it, Americans especially need an adequate explanation of this dualistic picture of Pilsudski's career and the corresponding history of Poland.

World War II of the very recent past brought about the first mass contact of English-speaking peoples with the Poles, especially the Polish air force in England, and the Polish government in exile in London.

This contact exposed the slight and fragmentary knowledge of Poland's past which was the extent of the average

Englishman. By virtue of being removed even farther from the scene, and having less direct contact with the Poles, the average American must claim only a surface knowledge of Poland.

To discover the knowledge on which the average American bases his opinion, derogatory or glorifying, subjective or objective, the writer attempted to reach the sources which to a great degree were responsible for the expressed opinions.

However, to stay within the restricted limits of a Master's dissertation, the writer selected Pilsudski as a representative of Poland's men and women who make up her history, thus reflecting the history of Poland through Pilsudski's life.

Results of this research have shown that since the first World War, many sections of American opinion have become alienated from Poland. To a certain extent, the American picture of Poland has been distorted, and it should be to the interest of the United States to improve its relations with this country which by its geographical location and its historical fundamental principle of non-intervention of foreign

powers can play an important role in preserving the peace in Europe which has been delayed so long.

An analysis of the books most commonly found in the American community dealing with Pilsudski and the corresponding history of his era proves that most of these books were written during his life time or immediately after his death which did not give history sufficient time to evaluate Pilsudski's greatness, especially since events of World War II have borne out many of the prophecies of this leader and clearly explained the why's and wherefore's of his semi-dictatorial methods and "imperialistic" tendencies which so unjustly earned for Poland the misnomer of "warmonger".

The jury readers of this thesis, having spent their life in Poland, know their own experiences that the opinions expressed here and which were based on available sources, are necessarily inadequate.

The writer, being an American herself, and a student and teacher of history, felt equal to expressing these American opinions, the more so because of her neutrality to the subject.

At the conclusion of this research, the writer now wishes to make the following recommendations to correct the fallacies in the minds of the average American reader:

1. If good books in the field of history are available in Poland, it is suggested that learned Poles be made financially independent through the assistance of the various Polish American organizations so that they can devote all their time and energy to the translation or re-writing of these texts, on a level for American school-children who are most impressionistic, most enthusiastic, and whose opinions can be moulded, by virtue of their youth and pliability, to the truth.
2. Professor Oskar Halecki's book "A History of Poland", published in 1944 by Roy of New York, is a scholarly and well-written history which presents a synthesis and interpretation of the history of his country. It states a philosophy of that country, and discusses the essential historical problems of the Polish nation, and most important of all, this book causes the reader to reflect on these problems

before condemning a nation because of the action of one man or a group of individualists. This book should definitely be found in every American library as a primary source of American opinion. To execute this suggestion, the Educational Committee of the Polish American Congress might be prevailed upon to undertake the distribution of this excellent text as a part of their program for positive Polish propaganda in America.

3. There is a definite need for histories of Poland which will integrate the economic, religious, social, cultural, and political aspects in a complete and harmonious whole from the pens of specialists. Such histories of Poland, as well as biographies of important contributors to Polish history, should be written by qualified Polish emigrés such as Melchior Wankowicz, Tadeusz Strzetelski, and others who fulfill the following requirements:

- a) An educational background that would assure an objective and historically correct history.
- b) Residence in the United States of not less

than two years, preferably more, which would permit the prospective writer to become Americanized to the extent that he could write these histories from the point of view of an American whose previous background of Polish history has been limited, superficial, or even distorted through no fault of his own.

To put these recommendations into operation at the first possible moment, the writer feels that the Educational Committees of the various Polish American organizations in the United States, such as the Polish National Alliance, the Polish Women's Alliance, the Polish Roman Catholic Union, and the Society of the Sons of Poland, would gladly contribute the necessary financial assistance as soon as they become aware of these glaring inadequacies.

Realizing that the suggestions stated above might not become effective immediately, the writer optimistically listed books on Pilsudski and Poland in order of the most recent publication date, and sent these questionnaires to representative community libraries, hoping that the librarians, in checking this list against their books owned by

them, would themselves realize their lack of up-to-date books and make purchases of the newest books according to the list. Thus, the writer would feel that she had definitely contributed in a small way to the extension of the knowledge of the American public on the subject of Joseph Pilsudski of Poland.

ABSTRACT

So many conflicting opinions about Joseph Pilsudski of Poland have been expressed by Americans that the writer, a student and teacher of history, became interested in learning the basis for these opinions, the more so since the history of Poland was so frequently misinterpreted by these same people.

Undoubtedly, the average American obtains his knowledge of Joseph Pilsudski of Poland from books which are most commonly available in his community library.

To learn which books these are, the writer sent more than a hundred questionnaires to libraries in U.S. cities of 50,000 population or less, requesting the libraries to indicate which of the twenty-six books listed thereon were currently available to the average readers in that particular community.

By using the books which the tabulation showed to be most commonly available, the writer set forth in exposition form the general idea and knowledge about Pilsudski and his era as probably formed by the average American reader.

Analyzing the interpretations of the most commonly available books, it was found that all were inclined to

state that a dictatorship existed in Poland from 1926-1936, but they hastily added that it was not really a dictatorship, but rather a "veiled dictatorship".

Had Pilsudski desired to be an absolute ruler, he could have done so easily in 1918, when the Regency Council surrendered all authority into his hands and he was placed in charge of all forces in Poland. But he knew his people would not tolerate it for long, and he had no desire to give them this type of government.

Pilsudski had just brought back to Poland the glory of an independence that had been denied her for over 200 years. What seemed to be the fourth partition of Poland by the advancing Bolsheviks in 1920, turned out to be a Polish victory which is now called the eighteenth decisive battle in history.

When he was urged by his close friends to again dissolve the irreconcilable Sejm and once more lead the country, Pilsudski boasted that he created in Poland conditions by which the nation could develop its own creative ability, and that he never broke the law.

When Poland was on the brink of economic disaster in 1926, Pilsudski staged his extraordinary coup d'état and almost immediately the situation in Poland improved. Had he wished, he could have assumed dictatorial powers then, but he didn't. His faith that Poland could govern herself intelligently was not shaken.

The world, looking to Poland and knowing of Pilsudski's early socialistic affiliations, was quick to expect the worst. They did not realize that Pilsudski joined the Socialist Party solely because it was the only active party that was anti-Czarist. He had used the Socialist Party only to further the aims of Poland's fight for freedom. This became quite evident when the Left, which had previously supported him, suddenly became his opposition after his coup d'état in 1926. He refused to place any party above his country and could never understand anyone placing "partyism" first.

The writer concludes that Americans especially need a better explanation of this dualistic picture of Pilsudski's career and the corresponding history of Poland.

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