

Between *Realpolitik* and Idealism: The Slovak - Polish Border, 1918-1947

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To aunt Lenka, the woman who put my feet on a path of learning
and to my wife Zuzana, the woman who sustains me on this path.

In loving memory of my *beau-père*, Ján Jerga
(1924 - 2007)

and of my *belle-mère*, Zuzana Jergová
(1935 - 2010).

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In the end the responsibility for any shortcomings in this dissertation rests solely with me.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AAN</i>	<i>Archiwum Akt Nowych, Warsaw</i>
<i>AD/MAE</i>	<i>Archives diplomatique, Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Paris</i>
<i>AOBM</i>	<i>Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939-1943, Acta Occupationis Bohemiae et Moraviae (Prague, 1966)</i>
<i>APIP</i>	<i>Archiwum polityczne Ignacego Paderewskiego (Warszawa-Wroclaw, 1973-1974)</i>
<i>AMZV</i>	<i>Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí, Prague</i>
<i>CAW, TB</i>	<i>Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe w Rembertowie, Teki Baczyńskiego</i>
<i>CSPMK</i>	<i>Československo na pařížské mírové konferenci 1918-1920, sv. I (listopad 1918 - červen 1919) (Prague, 2001)</i>
<i>CSZP-18</i>	<i>Vznik Československa 1918. Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky (Prague, 1994)</i>
<i>CSZP-38</i>	<i>Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky. Československá zahraniční politika v roce 1938 (Prague, 2000-2001)</i>
<i>CSPC 39-44</i>	<i>Czechoslovak-Polish Negotiations of the Establishment of Confederation and Alliance, 1939-1944 (Prague, 1995)</i>
<i>CSPL 44-48</i>	<i>Dokumenty a materiály k dějinám československo-polských vztahů v letech 1944-1948 (Prague, 1985)</i>
<i>CSSO 45-48</i>	<i>ČSR a SSSR 1945-1948. Dokumenty mezivládních jednání (Prague, 1996)</i>
<i>DBFP</i>	<i>Documents on British Foreign Policy</i>
<i>DCER</i>	<i>Documents on Canadian External Relations</i>
<i>DDF</i>	<i>Documents Diplomatiques Français</i>
<i>DGFP</i>	<i>Documents on German Foreign Policy</i>
<i>FRUS</i>	<i>Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States</i>

- HEB* *Listy důvěrné. Vzájemná korespondence Hany a Edvarda Benešových* (Prague, 1996)
- MBPPC* *Masaryk a Beneš ve svých dopisech z doby Pařížských mírových jednání v roce 1919* (Prague, 1994)
- PPC* *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*
- PWW* *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*
- PCIJ* _____ *Permanent Court of International Justice, Publications*
- SPCS 18-39* *Stosunki polsko-czesko-słowackie w latach 1918-1939* (Rzeszów, 1994)
- SFVE* *Sovetskij faktor v Vostochnoj Evrope 1944-53, 2 vols.* (Moscow, 2002)

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PLACE NAMES

Polish	Slovak	Polish	Slovak
SPISZ	SPIŠ	ORAWA	ORAVA
Czarna Góra	Čierna Hora	Bukowina-Podszkle	Bukovina-Podsklie
Dursztyn	Durštín	Dolna Lipnica	Nižná Lipnica
Falsztyn	Falštín	Dolna Zubrzyca	Nižná Zubrica
Frydman	Fridman	Górna Lipnica	Horná Lipnica
Jurgów	Jurgov	Górna Zubrzyca	Horná Zubrica
Kacwin	Kacvín	Harkabuz	Harkabúz
Krempak	Krempach	Chyżne	Chyžné
Łapszanka	Lapšanka	Jabłonka	Jablonka
Łapsze Niżne	Nižné Lapše	Orawka	Orávka
Łapsze Wyżne	Vyšné Lapše	Piekielnik	Pekelník
Niedzica	Nedeca	Podwilk	Podvlk
Nowa Biała	Nová Belá	Sernie	Srnie
Trybsz	Tribš		
Jaworzyna	Javorina		

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ABSTRACT

Between *Realpolitik* and Idealism: The Slovak - Polish border, 1918 - 1947

(January 2012)

Marcel Jesenský

My doctoral dissertation examines the delimitation of the Slovak - Polish border in the interwar period and the impact of the cession of the parts of the Slovak districts in Orava and Spiš to Poland on the relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and Slovakia and Poland. The Tešín question dominated the border delimitation and the relations and the Orava and Spiš questions and the delimitation of the Slovak - Polish border received much less scholarly attention. While acknowledging the complexity of the issue under consideration, this work attempts to make small contribution towards filling existing gap in historiography. The majority of research work occurred at the diplomatic archives in Prague, Paris and Warsaw (Archives of the Foreign Ministry, *Archives diplomatiques* and *Archiwum Akt Nowych*). Some primary research also took place in Bratislava, Warsaw, Washington and Ottawa.

This work seeks to interpret primary sources in an innovative way which demonstrates influence exerted by the Orava and Spiš questions on the relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, Czechoslovakia and Poland, Slovakia and Poland, Slovaks and Poles, Slovaks and Czechs, and Czechs and Poles. Effectiveness of the Orava and Spiš questions to carve out their own

constituencies and to communicate the message of their populations were limited or enhanced by contemporary configuration of international and internal factors.

The Orava and Spiš border delimitations in the Slovak-Polish border and their consequences for the Slovak-Czech-Polish relations, remain largely neglected by the scholars in the English and French historiographies. The Orava and Spiš border delimitations play an important role in understanding of Slovak-Polish-Czech relations and international relations in the interwar and post World War II periods. The questions posed by examining the Orava and Spiš border delimitations are as relevant in Schengen Europe as they were almost a century ago.

1.

INTRODUCTION.

Between *Realpolitik* and Idealism: The Slovak - Polish Border, 1918 - 1947.

The Poles pretend that the population of northern parts of the Trenčín, Orava, Spiš and Šariš counties is Polish and not Slovak. This is a rather recent discovery. It is true that the linguists studying the dialects of these regions concluded that the dialects are closer to Polish than to Slovak. However, the inhabitants considered themselves Slovaks until these linguist conclusions, and even these conclusions did not modify their significantly developed Slovak national consciousness because one of the few Slovak national deputies at the Budapest parliament, Skyčák, had been elected in the northern Orava constituency, which is resolutely claimed by Poles.

It was only few years before the war when a Magyarophile priest from Ružomberok, Mackay [Machay], originally from northern Orava, started, at an instigation by the Magyar government, to claim to the farmers of his native region that they were Poles and not Slovaks, as they had believed until then. ...during the last census, in 1910, the [Magyar] government discovered 16,000 Poles in northern part of the Orava County. These 16,000 Poles, have otherwise claimed to be Slovaks, but they have been recorded as Poles by Magyar officials in charge of the census.

...Due to these reasons the Czecho-Slovak government, which does not recognize these districts as Polish, is in fact quite ready to abandon some parts to Poland, if this facilitates a settlement with the Polish government. But it is of utmost importance how the question is presented. If the abandonment of these districts does not constitute a *quid pro quo* yielding some advantage, it would seem to the Czechs as well as to the Slovaks as a violation of rights of the Czecho-Slovak Republic and could not but excite the public opinion against the Big Powers which could propose such decision.¹

F. Simon-Clément, Minister, Prague, 8 September 1919

On 28 July 1920 the Conference of Ambassadors decided that the regions of Orava² and Spiš³ were to be cut in two and their upper parts⁴ were given to Poland. It was widely assumed that the two districts were incorporated into Poland as a compensation for allocating predominantly Polish areas in the former Duchy of Teschen⁵ to Czecho-Slovakia⁶ and a result of a gross misapprehension that

¹ F. Simon-Clément to S. Pichon, Prague, tel. no. 75, 8 September 1919, Archives Diplomatiques/Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (hereafter AD/MAE) Paris, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 53, 109-111.

² The territory of the former county of Orava (*Orawa* in Polish, *Árva* in Magyar), a part of Slovak territory within the bounds of the Kingdom of Hungary before 1918.

³ The territory of the former county of Spiš (*Spisz* in Polish, *Zips* in German, *Szepesség* in Magyar, *Scepusium* in Latin), a part of Slovak territory within the bounds of the Kingdom of Hungary before 1918.

⁴ The upper parts of Orava and Spiš are also referred to as Upper Orava and Upper Spiš.

⁵ The Duchy of Teschen (*Těšínsko* in Czech, *Śląsk Cieszyński* in Polish, *Teschen* in German), also referred to as Austrian Silesia, formed a separate *Land* in the administrative structure of Austria. The Duchy of Teschen was a small territory rich in coal and heavy industry and was an important railway centre connecting northern and southern Europe. Inhabited by a mixture of Polish, Czech, and German populations, it had been claimed by Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.

the local population was purely Polish.⁷

In *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948*, Irene Matasovsky Matuschak wrote: "Today, students can find little reference to this subject in books, and when they do, it is usually an addendum about the Tešín compromise."⁸ One way of addressing this shortfall in the literature on the Slovak - Polish border in Orava and Spiš is to examine the border delimitation between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland after World War I from the perspective of its Slovak-Polish part. The present work examines the effects of the Paris Peace Conference border settlement on the regions of Orava and Spiš in Slovakia. The purpose of this study is to illustrate how Orava and Spiš were affected by higher diplomacy and Czecho-Slovakia's

Silesia, lying on the confines of both the Poles and the Czechs, was long disputed between them. In the three hundred years between 990 and 1290, Silesia remained mainly within the Polish orbit. In the fourteenth century, its native princes, tracing their origins to the senior line of the Piasts, opted in the main for the Bohemian allegiance. Apart from the minor duchies of Cieszyn (Teschen) and Świdnica (Swidnitz) which continued to be contested into the sixteenth century, the whole of the province was renounced by Casimir the Great in 1340. Thereafter it passed in 1526 with the rest of the Bohemian kingdom into the hands of Austria. Austria ceded the rest of Silesia to Prussia in the 1742, retaining only the Duchy of Teschen. See Norman Davis, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 84-85; Dagmar Perman, *The shaping of the Czechoslovak state: Diplomatic history of the boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914 - 1920* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 97. Davis writes that Silesia, with exception the Duchy of Teschen, "passed in 1740 into the clutches of Prussia." Davis, *op.cit.*, 85.

⁶ Czecho-Slovakia ceased to exist on 31 December 1992 and the two successor states, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, took its place as of 1 January 1993. Czecho-Slovakia was spelled with and without a hyphen in 1918 - 1992. The hyphen was a bone of contention between Slovaks and Czechs in 1918 - 1992 and remains an object of disagreement among historians.

To the politically sensitive question of when, and when not, to write the hyphen, the following policy has been adopted. The hyphenated form "Czecho-Slovakia" will be used for the period from 28-30 October 1918 (Czecho-Slovakia's independence) to 1920 (the Versailles and St. Germain Peace Treaties of 1919 used the hyphenated form; and although the Constitution of 29 February 1920 used the unhyphenated form, the Trianon and Sèvres Peace Treaties, signed on 4 June and on 10 August 1920, and the decisions of the Conference of Ambassadors with regard to Tešín, Orava and Spiš, dated 5 August 1920, used the hyphenated form); then from 6 October 1938 (when Slovakia became autonomous and the hyphen was reinserted) until 14 March 1939 (Slovakia's independence); and then again from 29 March 1990 (when the hyphen was reinserted) onwards.

Some historians prefer to use "Czecho-Slovakia" instead of "Czechoslovakia" for the entire period 1918-1992. The naming convention for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia may provide another perspective on "Czecho-Slovakia" vs. "Czechoslovakia" dilemma. The more recent name "Yugoslavia" is generally used by historians for the entire period 1918-1992 and supersedes the official name "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" used in the period 1918-1929.

⁷ See the chapter 4 for President Wilson's encounter with the two Polonophile peasants in Paris on 11 April 1919 who misinformed him that the population in Orava and Spiš is purely Polish.

⁸ Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948* (S.l.: Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, 2008), 113.

and Poland's priorities in the border settlement and to assess the impact of Orava and Spiš on the relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.

The Slovak - Polish border is formed by the crest of the central Carpathians and resembles a natural barrier.⁹ This border had been remarkably stable, with the exception of a small territory in Spiš,¹⁰ until the 20th century¹¹ and divided the Polish lands¹² from Slovak territory within the bounds of the Kingdom of Hungary.¹³ This border was accepted in 1918 - 1919 as the natural frontier between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. Orava and Spiš were two small "teacups," two exceptions, which became a source of controversy between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland after World War I.¹⁴

Overwhelmingly peaceful relations among the Slovaks, Czechs and Poles foster a certain sense of belonging to a common Central European cultural heritage forming an integral and dynamic

⁹ The Slovak-Polish border formed the border between the Kingdom of Hungary and Galicia/Poland until 1918.

¹⁰ In 1412, Sigismund of Luxemburg, King of Hungary, mortgaged Stará Ľubovňa (castle with town and estate), Podolíneč, Hniezdne and the thirteen Spiš towns - Spišská Belá, Ľubica, Vrbov, Spišská Sobota, Poprad, Veľká, Stráže pod Tatrami, Spišské Vlasy, Spišská Nová Ves, Ruskinovce, Spišské Podhradie, Matejovce and Tvarožné - to his brother-in-law Władysław II Jagiełło, King of Poland. Stará Ľubovňa, Podolíneč and Hniezdne were located adjunct to the Polish border, the thirteen Spiš towns were situated farther from the border. The mortgaged territory, the so-called Spiš Mayorship (*Starostei Zips*), administered Polish Mayor, but the towns respected the sovereignty of the Crown of St. Stephen and had always considered themselves to be a part of the Kingdom of Hungary. Austria formally reincorporated the mortgaged territory into the Crown of St. Stephen in December of 1770. Poland strengthened its links to this territory during 1412-1769 and fostered interest in its permanent attachment. These ambitions motivated efforts to establish and demonstrate the Polish character of the mortgaged territory and its population and gradually evolved to include the entire region of Spiš.

¹¹ The last minor border rectification occurred in 1897 in the Morské oko/Morskie Oko area in the High Tatra Mountains. Jozef Klimko, *Vývoj územia Slovenska a utváranie jeho hranice* [The Evolution of Slovakia's Territory and Its Borders] (Bratislava: Obzor, 1980), 111.

¹² In 1773-1795 Austria, Prussia and Russia partitioned the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (the *Rzeczpospolita*). The Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria was created in 1773 from the Polish territories acquired by Austria.

¹³ The Kingdom of Hungary formed until 1918 a part of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. The Kingdom included the territories of today's Slovakia, Hungary and Croatia and parts of Romania, Ukraine, Serbia and Austria. According to the 1900 census the Magyars constituted 45.5% of Hungarians, followed by the Roumanians (14.6%), Germans (11%) and the Slovaks (10.5%). See R.W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1972), 3. The Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920 tried to separate the non-Magyar ethnic groups from the Magyars, yet both the Magyars and non-Magyars remained beyond the new borders.

¹⁴ According to Norman Davis, in more than four hundred miles, there were only three gaps in the frontier between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland - at Spiš (Spisz), at Orava (Orawa), and at Tešín (Těšín/Cieszyn). Each of these teacups gave rise to protracted storms. In Norman Davis, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 494. Spiš and Orava were two "teacups" in the Slovak - Polish section of the frontier between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.

part of a larger European heritage (see Map 1). These peaceful relations support a view that cooperation and friendship prevail over discord and misunderstanding in Slovak-Czech-Polish relations.¹⁵ Newly available archival materials and societal changes invite scholars to contemplate new perspectives on Slovak-Czech-Polish relations that, in this sense of mutual understanding and belonging, inspire a frank exchange of views on topics previously deemed too polemical to debate. Few topics, indeed if any, are capable of being more disputable than border delimitation and everything related to it. Border delimitation, with its related territorial claims and the assessment of roles certain persons played in it, establish what we may call a “borderland polemic.”

In the Slovak-Czech-Polish circumstances, this “borderland polemic” is a legacy of post-World War I border delimitations in the regions of Tešín, Orava, Spiš and the village of Javorina.¹⁶ In a bilateral Slovak-Polish context, this “borderland polemic” comes to the forefront from time to time, and with a variable emotional impact, as attests the examples of the evaluation of the historical legacy of Józef Kuraś,¹⁷ the memory of Michal Dočolomanský¹⁸ or a relatively obscure act of vandalism on the eve of the World Cup soccer qualifying match between Slovakia and Poland.¹⁹

¹⁵ The expressions of solidarity in the aftermath of the tragic air accident of the Polish President and his entourage in April 2010 represent one of the latest examples of this sense of belonging.

¹⁶ *Jaworzyna* in Polish.

¹⁷ Józef Kuraś “Ogień” (1915-1947) - member of Polish resistance during World War II, after the war Kuraś joined anti-Communist guerillas. Kuraś operated along the Slovak - Polish border. The Slovaks in the Spiš region, whom the guerrillas deemed disloyal to Poland, became victims of their activities. The controversy surrounding Kuraś falls within the dictum of U. S. President Ronald Reagan: “One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” Józef Kuraś “Ogień” and his activities are a source of controversy in Poland. *Towarzystwo Słowaków w Polsce*, organization of the Slovaks in Poland, officially protested against unveiling a memorial dedicated to Józef Kuraś in 2006 in Poland by the Polish president.

¹⁸ Michal Dočolomanský (1942-2008) - famous Slovak actor, was born in 1942 in Nedzeca (*Niedzica* in Polish) in Upper Spiš, the territory formerly belonging to Slovakia and now part of Poland.

¹⁹ On the eve of the 2010 World Cup soccer qualifying match between Slovakia and Poland in Bratislava (16 October 2008) unknown vandals defaced the wall in the small Slovak town Ždiar with graffiti depicting the Polish flag, [the year of] 1938 and the description in the Polish language „*Jaworzyna jest nasza*“ ([the village of] Javorina is ours). Tatranská Javorina, formerly known as Javorina, is one of several Slovak villages claimed by Poland in border delimitations after World War I. [Slovak Press Agency] SITA, “Ždiarčanov pobúril poľský nápis” [The Ždiarans Upset by the Polish Graffiti], *Sme* 16 October 2008, (available at <http://www.sme.sk/c/4127570/zdiarcanov-poburil-polsky-napis.html#ixzz1KjxytHZu>), accessed on 27 April 2011.

The Slovak - Polish border and its delimitation became an issue after World War I when several states, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland among them, sought international recognition of their political and territorial presence in Central Europe. The delimitation and recognition of the Slovak - Polish border originated as a relatively minor and secondary issue on a bilateral border delimitation agenda between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. The question of the Slovak - Polish border rose in status when it was put on the multilateral international agenda at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and the 1920 Conference of Ambassadors. In the early 1920s, a relatively obscure and minuscule village of Javorina became a very enduring point of discord between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland that successfully blocked their eventual rapprochement. Javorina and its surroundings on the Slovak - Polish borderland attained their share of international limelight as the Permanent Court of International Justice in the Hague weighed in on a dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland and cut the proverbial Gordian knot.

Evidently the delimitation of the Slovak - Polish border after World War I was a part of the larger problem of border delimitations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. These border delimitations focused primarily on Tešín Silesia due to economic, strategic, transportation, and ethnic considerations. Whereas the Czech - Polish border jigsaw concentrated on one larger and ethnically complex territory (Těšín Silesia), the Slovak - Polish border puzzle revolved around the smaller and ethnically less complex regions of Spiš, Orava and initially also the Kysuce region adjoining the town of Čadca.²⁰

The regions of Spiš and Orava failed to earn a comparable attention as Tešín Silesia. The Slovak - Polish borderland, in comparison with Tešín Silesia, was scarcely populated and deemed

²⁰ The Kysuce region is referred to as *Czadecki* in the Polish sources.

economically less important. The question of what criteria to apply in order to pass a sensible judgment on the importance of regions open to dispute necessarily invites criticism. But it would be fair to state that from a perspective of the Czecho-Slovak government the importance of disputed regions in Spiš and Orava, came a distant second to the region of Tešín Silesia. The population of the Spiš and Orava regions waged and lost an uneven fight with Tešín Silesia for the hearts and minds in Czecho-Slovakia and at the international fora as well.

The question of borders between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in Tešín Silesia and in the regions of Spiš and Orava was on the agenda of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. While the Peace Conference desired the parties to the dispute to resolve their differences bilaterally, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland disappointed them. Subsequently, the Peace Conference assumed its responsibility for the delimitation of the borders in the three disputed regions of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava.

The 1919 Paris Peace Conference inaugurated in international relations a new concept of national self-determination. As a manifestation of political idealism, the Conference advanced, albeit selectively and carefully, the idea that each nation should freely dispose of its own fate, if necessary in its own state. The concept of national self-determination was a very attractive and effective foreign policy tool. The Marxist leader in Russia Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin and the U. S. President Woodrow Wilson became the two most outspoken advocates of national self-determination during and after World War I. In 1919, at the Paris Peace Conference, the nations of Austria-Hungary and Central Europe expected to transform their national self-determination hopes into the reality of their own statehood. Inescapably, the national self-determination programs of neighboring nations “overlapped” in their territorial designs. Thus, the political idealism - embodied in the principle of national self-determination - collided with political realism, the so-called *Realpolitik*, incarnated in

other foreign policy considerations (economic, strategic and military aspects) and the local balance of power.

The statehood expressions of the national self-determination of the Slovaks, Czechs and Poles collided with the *Realpolitik* of the Paris Peace Conference. Border delimitations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland acquired very rapidly all the attributes of *Realpolitik* arm-twisting. In 1919 Czecho-Slovakia and Poland failed to resolve their borders by themselves and consented to accepting the decision of the Paris Peace Conference. The Conference assumed its responsibility over the border settlement between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in order to avoid any further escalation of smouldering conflict between two allies. The Conference decided in September of 1919 upon a plebiscite, a vote by the local population, to trace the borders. The plebiscite of the local population in the disputed areas between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland symbolized the principle of national self-determination in its purest form, and if applied correctly, it could have been the most just solution to the dilemma of the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. But, as the idea of a plebiscite in contested areas between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland lost support over time, the Conference abandoned it in favour of international arbitration by the Conference of Ambassadors at Spa in 1920. Thus a solution inspired by political idealism - self-determination of the local population through a plebiscite - ceded to a solution anchored in the world of *Realpolitik*, the decision made from the negotiating table and behind the scenes.

International arbitration authorized a small group of powerful nations (represented by their ambassadors) to draw boundary lines between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. The arbitration was compounded by the fact that at stake was, not only a question of what borders Czecho-Slovakia and Poland were to have, but also of what position they were to occupy in the new relationship between

nations. The discordant reactions to the decision of the Ambassadors Conference at Spa in 1920 indicate that in *Realpolitik* some territories could be awarded to the state despite the population's yearning to remain in another state.

The framers of the Treaty of Versailles weighed historical, geographical, political, or strategic considerations and facts and figures produced by experts, academics and lobbyists. Simultaneously, the framers of the Treaty of Versailles were compelled to recognize the power realities of the postwar world, to some extent of their own making. Privately, the framers were often predisposed to favor individual causes or other interests and were at times willing to compromise or even flout the principles proclaimed by themselves.

It is my hope that this dissertation will uncover the complexities of the decision-making at the Paris Peace Conference, and the role of the governments of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in it. I also hope to unveil the key problems and objectives of the foreign policies of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. I trust that this dissertation will enable us to view the questions of the border delimitations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland as two independent components: Slovak-Polish, and Czech-Polish.

My interest in writing a dissertation dedicated to the issues of the delimitation of the Slovak - Polish border after World War I was inspired by several factors. While many authors have studied the border delimitation between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in Tešín Silesia, the border delimitation in the Orava and Spiš areas have attracted far less interest. The prevailing view is that the Orava and Spiš regions were of lesser strategic and economic value in comparison with the Tešín Silesia area, which was coveted for its coal mines. Economic and strategic (transportation) factors made the Orava and Spiš regions on the Slovak - Polish border relatively 'unimportant' and

‘insignificant’ and, therefore, dispensable for Czecho-Slovakia. Since I found this explanation insufficient in representing all facets of the question, I decided to search for other evidence that could offer a more nuanced view.

The question of shared borders linked the establishment of Czecho-Slovakia and the re-establishment of Poland, their mutual relations and their relations with other nations, particularly with their Great Power ally - France. Delegates to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference struggled with contradicting and mutually exclusive claims and, occasionally, with a limited grasp of the facts in the cases of Tešín, Orava, Spiš and Javorina.

The fact that the Paris Peace Conference considered the border settlement between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in the three regions - in the Tešín Silesia, the Orava and the Spiš regions - as a “package solution” under one agenda item, was viewed by some historians as fatal for Orava and Spiš: “It became fatal to the Upper Orava villages, that they were considered together with the Tešín regions.”²¹ The Tešín problem, “comparatively unimportant” in the fall of 1918, became in March of 1919 a vital question for the very existence of Czecho-Slovakia.²² Some historians view the adopted “package solution” as detrimental to the Slovak side where “the communes in Orava and in Spiš were allotted to Poland in compensation for Tešín’s coal basin.”²³ Others view that the outcome of the territorial delimitation in the Orava, Spiš and Javorina regions was a compensatory measure for the allocation of ethnically Polish territories along the strategic railway in Tešín Silesia

²¹ (*Pre hornooravské slovenské dediny sa stalo osudným, že sa o nich rozhodovalo spolu s územím Tešínska*). Juraj Žudel, “Stanovenie čs. - poľskej hranice na Orave,” in *Politické a právne dejiny hraníc predmnichovskej republiky (1918-1938)* [Political and Legal History of the Pre-Munich Republic's Boundaries (1918-1938)], Jozef Klimko (Bratislava: Veda, Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1986), 128.

²² The Czecho-Slovak Peace Conference *Mémoire* no. 4, p.1; quoted in Z. J. Gąsiorowski, “Polish-Czechoslovak Relations, 1918-1922,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 35 (1956-1957), 180.

²³ Jozef A. Mikuš wrote that Eduard Beneš, the Czecho-Slovak Minister for Foreign Affairs, deemed Tešín’s coal basin indispensable to Czecho-Slovakia’s economy and he wanted to recover it at all costs. Mikuš, *Slovakia, A Political History: 1918 - 1950*, 208.

to Czecho-Slovakia:

The Peace conference in Paris accepted basically the ethnic division of the Duchy [of Tešín] but a strip of land in the middle, along the strategic railway, was allocated to Czechoslovakia. By way of compensation, in May [sic] 1920 ‘a special Ambassadors’ conference dealing with border issues in the area assigned to Poland several small rural areas in northern Slovakia (amounting to about 25 000 people altogether) on the ground [grounds] that their local dialect appeared more Polish than Slovak.²⁴

The defensive convention between Poland and Czechoslovakia, signed on 6 November 1921, according to some scholars, also pointed to the direct link between the Tešín and the Orava, Spiš and Javorina cases.²⁵ The Polish Foreign Minister Erazm Piltz viewed the Javorina dispute as a test of Czechoslovakia’s goodwill to improve strained Polish - Czechoslovak relations. Javorina became his “invention” in order to provide some *quid pro quo* for his countrymen that would soothe Poland’s feelings that had been offended by the Tešín setback.²⁶ Poland protested against the partition decision in 1920 and warned it would not make possible normal relations with Czecho-Slovakia.²⁷

The looming dissolution of Czecho-Slovakia in late 1992 and the debate on sharing Czecho-Slovak federal assets made the post-World War I border delimitation part of debate. The question

²⁴ Jaroslav Krejčí, “The Balance Sheet of Ethnic Changes,” in *Czechoslovakia, 1918-92: A Laboratory for Social Change*, ed. Jaroslav Krejčí and Pavel Machonin (New York: St.Martin’s Press, 1996), 36. The Conference of Ambassadors adopted its decision on 28 July 1920, not in May 1920.

²⁵ In the said convention Poland and Czecho-Slovakia undertook to respect each other’s territorial integrity, Czecho-Slovakia proclaimed her *désintéressement* in Eastern Galicia, and Poland hers in Slovakia. Gąsiorowski, “Polish-Czechoslovak Relations, 1918-1922,” 192.

²⁶ Anna M. Cienciala and Titus Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno: Keys to Polish Foreign Policy, 1919-25* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 4.

²⁷ Paderewski wrote on 30 July 1920 to the President of the Supreme Council, A. Millerand, that the adopted decision took into consideration “neither the wishes of the population, nor the principle of nationality. Paderewski explained that as a result of the adopted decision 24,043 Poles in Spiš and Orava would be assigned to Poland and more than 45,000 of them would be assigned to Czecho-Slovakia. In Tešín Silesia, 94,169 Poles would be assigned to Poland, but 139,681 Poles would join 114,079 Czechs, who inhabited a part of Tešín Silesia never claimed by Poland and which was now assigned to Czecho-Slovakia. Paderewski observed that under these circumstances, it would not be possible to establish normal and friendly relations between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia. See Declaration of I. Paderewski upon the signing of the Decision of the Conference of Ambassadors Regarding Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava, 30 July 1920, Paris, *Archiwum polityczne Ignacego Paderewskiego*, Vol. 2 (1919-1921) (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1974), 440-443.

of eventual compensation for the Slovak villages ceded to Poland in exchange for the villages of Polish Tešín resurfaced²⁸ and the border delimitations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in the Tešín, Orava and Spiš regions became part of an imaginary “balance sheet” in the division of the federal assets between Slovakia and the Czech Republic:

Bratislava also accused Prague of stealing the former federal flag (which both republics agreed in November 1992 not to use) and demanded compensation for the post-World War II trade of Polish Těšín to the Czech Lands [sic] in exchange for part of Slovakia.²⁹

Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the two successors of Czecho-Slovakia, eventually succeeded in dividing Czecho-Slovakia’s federal assets, yet some old recriminations re-appeared:

The major point of direct disagreement between the governments of the two states continued to be the division of federal assets. As some assets were successfully allocated, the remaining disputes caused much bitterness and new demands. ...The Slovaks wanted compensation for the Czech Republic’s use of formerly common symbols like the flag, and of corporate names, as well as for the value of federal databases located in Prague. They demanded more State Bank gold, and even raised the issue of Slovakian villages ceded to

²⁸ The Slovak Prime Minister, Vladimír Mečiar, alluded to the Slovak territorial losses in Orava and Spiš after WWI and a compensation thereof by the Czech Republic as a part of Slovak-Czech settlement in the aftermath of the dissolution of Czecho-Slovakia. Mečiar’s comments in May 1993 sparked debate on the issue of compensation and on the origins of the 1920 border delimitation.

The Slovak regional journal *Spiš, Liptov, Orava* gave space on its pages to the polemical debate of the border delimitation in Orava and Spiš, an issue until then rather unknown by the general public and neglected by the press. See the following articles: “Český pohľad na nastolenú tému” [The Czech View of the Issue], *Spiš, Liptov, Orava*, no. 3, vol. III (1993): 7; “Revízia hraníc a pobúrenie v Poľsku” [Border Revision and Indignation in Poland], *Spiš, Liptov, Orava*, no. 3, vol. III (1993): 6; JUDr. Matej Andráš, “Všetko je na niečo dobré” [There Is Always Something Good In Everything], *Spiš, Liptov, Orava*, no. 3, vol. III (1993): 6-7; JUDr. Matej Andráš, “Znovu inak alebo každý inak” [Again Differently or Everyone Differently], *Spiš, Liptov, Orava*, no. 2, vol. III (1993): 8-9; Andrej Bán, “Chtějí nás prodat Čechům” [Do They Want To Sell Us to the Czechs?], *Spiš, Liptov, Orava*, no. 4, vol. III (1993): 8-9; and the articles by Dr. Janusz Kamocki and JUDr. Matej Andráš, “Znovu inak” [Again Differently], *Spiš, Liptov, Orava*, no. 5, vol. III (1993): 12-13.

The Czech authors Mečislav Borák and Rudolf Žáček wrote “*Ukradené vesnice. Musí Česi platit za 8 slovenských obcí?*” [“Stolen” Villages: Must the Czechs Pay for 8 Slovak Villages?] (Český Těšín: Muzeum Těšínska, 1993), in which they defended the 1920 border settlement and its *spiritus movens* Edvard Beneš. The authors noticed little familiarity with the issue in Czecho-Slovakia and dismissed calls for compensation for the loss of the Slovak population and territory.

²⁹ Rick Fawn, *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), 139.

Poland after World War II.³⁰

In 1918 - 1924 Czecho-Slovakia, Czechoslovakia and Poland settled their territorial disputes through bilateral and multilateral negotiations. In 1938 Poland and then in 1939 Slovakia effected new - unilateral - border rectifications. In the post-World War II period the pre-1938 border *status quo* was fully restored in 1945 and confirmed by signing of the Treaty of Friendship between Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1947.

The chronological limits of this study are October 1918, when the Czecho-Slovak State came into being and March 1947, when Czechoslovakia and Poland signed a friendship treaty. Occasionally the author has found it necessary to move beyond these chronological boundaries for the purpose of clarifying some necessary facts.

This examination of the Slovak - Polish border delimitations is grounded on a collection of primary sources from archives in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, France, Canada and the United States. These sources include records of the central and local administration in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the central administration in Poland, France, Canada and the United States, the press in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, to mention just a few. Moreover, my dissertation is based on secondary sources overlapping several bodies of literature, including the history of international relations in the twentieth century, the history of relations between Czecho-Slovakia, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the history of Czecho-Slovakia, Czechoslovakia, Slovakia, Poland and the interwar history of Central Europe.

The number of publications relevant to the study of the border settlement between Czecho-

³⁰ Jiří Pehe, "Czech-Slovak Relations Deteriorate," *RFE/RL Research Report* (30 April 1993) (Munich: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, 1993); quoted in Robert A. Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia* (Kingston, ON: Queen's University, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1994), 61.

Slovakia, Czechoslovakia and Poland after 1918 is impressive, still, relatively few studies deal exclusively with the border settlement in its Slovak - Polish part.

The border settlement between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland was the focus of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Primary sources of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 include: the French series of complete official documents of the Conference, *Recueil des actes de la Conférence de la Paix*, 45 vols (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1922-34); the U. S. documents *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Paris Peace Conference 1919* (Washington: United States G.P.O., 1942-1947); *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and papers from Foreign Office Confidential Print, Part II. From the First to the Second World War. Series I. The Paris Peace Conference of 1919*, 7 vols. (Maryland, MD: University Publications of America, 1989); as well as the records from the Council of Four debates by Paul Mantoux, *Les Délibérations du Conseil des Quatre, 24 mars - 28 juin 1919*, 2 vols (Paris, 1955) or Paul Mantoux, *The Deliberations of the Council of Four (March 24 - June 28, 1919): Notes of the Official Interpreter*, Paul Mantoux, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). The Czech and Polish primary sources of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 include: Jindřich Dejmek, *Československo na pařížské mírové konferenci 1918-1920*, vol. 1 (listopad 1918 - červen 1919) [Documents on Czecho-Slovak Foreign Policy. Czecho-Slovakia at the Paris Peace Conference 1918-1920, vol. 1] (Prague: Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, 2001); Antonín Klimek, *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky. Vznik Československa 1918* [Documents on Czecho-Slovak Foreign Policy. Creation of Czecho-Slovakia 1918] (Prague: ÚMV, 1994); R. Bierzanek and J. Kukulka, *Sprawy polskie na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu 1919 r. Dokumenty i materiały* [The Polish Affairs at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Documents and Materials], 3 vols. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1965-1968); *Akty*

i dokumenty dotyczące sprawy granic Polski na Konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu 1918-1919 zebrane i wydane przez Sekretariat Jeneralny Delegacji Polskiej [Acts and Documents Related to the Question of Polish Border at the Paris Peace Conference 1918-1919 Collected by the General Secretariat of the Polish Delegation], 4 vols. (Paris: Société Générale d'Imprimerie et d'Édition, 1920). Two Czech-language publications of the private correspondence of T. G. Masaryk and E. Beneš during the Paris Peace Conference are interesting: Zdeněk Šolle, *Masaryk a Beneš ve svých dopisech z doby Pařížských mírových jednání v roce 1919* [Masaryk a Beneš in their correspondence from the Paris Peace Talks period in 1919] (Praha: AV ČR, 1994) and Jana Šetřilová and Jaroslav Čechura, eds., *Listy důvěrné. Vzájemná korespondence Hany a Edvarda Benešových* [Confidential Letters. The Correspondence of Hana and Edvard Beneš] (Prague: Česká expedice riopress, 1996).

The historical literature on the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 is extremely rich, one of the latest accounts is Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed The World* (New York: Random House, 2001). Perhaps the best Western-language treatment of the delimitation of the borders of Czecho-Slovakia at the Paris Peace Conference is now dated Dagmar Perman, *The shaping of the Czechoslovak state: Diplomatic history of the boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914 - 1920* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), despite the fact that the author could not benefit from the archival sources in Czecho-Slovakia. A focused study of the Polish case is K. Lundgreen-Nielsen, *The Polish Problem at the Paris Peace Conference* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1979). Three Slovak-language publications, in spite of their age, are still valuable: Fedor Houdek, *Vznik hraníc Slovenska* [Genesis of the Boundaries of Slovakia] (Bratislava: Knižnica Prúdov, 1931); Jozef Klimko, *Vývoj územia Slovenska a utváranie jeho hraníc* [The development of Slovakia's territory and its borders] (Bratislava: Obzor, 1980) and Jozef Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny hraníc predmníchovskej*

republiki (1918-1938) [Political and Legal History of the Pre-Munich Republic's Boundaries (1918-1938)] (Bratislava: Veda, 1986).

The border settlement of 1918-1921 is still the subject of heated debates. Polish primary sources include: Marek Jabłonowski and Adam Koseski, eds. *O niepodległą i granice. Komunikaty Oddziału III Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego (1919-1921)*. [Communiqués of the 3rd Operational Department of the General Command of the Polish Army] (Warsaw: Wydział Dziennikarstwa i Nauk Politycznych, Uniwersytet Warszawski; Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. A. Gieysztor, 1999). Mémoires of a leading Polish activist in Orava include: Ferdynand Machay, *Moja droga do Polski* [My Road to Poland] (Warsaw/Kraków: Nakład Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1923) and Ferdynand Machay, *Nasi gazdowie w Paryżu. Wspomnienie z podróży* [Our Highland Farmers in Paris. Recollections from Travel] (Kraków: Nakł. Polskiego komitetu plebiscytowego dla Spisza i Orawy, 1919). A Polish-language publication concentrating entirely on the Polish-Czech dispute is Marek Kazimierz Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918-1921* [The Polish - Czech Conflict 1918 -1921] (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2001). One of the latest Czech-language contributions is Petr Jelínek, *Zahraničně-politické vztahy Československa a Polska 1918-1924* [Foreign Policy Relations of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland] (Opava: Matice Slezská, 2009). Another Czech-language work which addresses the question of *quid pro quo* in the Czech-Slovak debate is Mečislav Borák and Rudolf Žáček, “*Ukradené*” vesnice. *Musí Česi platit za 8 slovenských obcí?* [“Stolen” Villages: Must the Czechs Pay for 8 Slovak Villages?] (Český Těšín: Muzeum Těšínska, 1993). Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948* (S.l.: Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, 2008) narrates her relatives' efforts to advocate for the cause of Spiš and Orava after two world wars. Two

Slovak-language publications are dated but still the most exhaustive coverage: Alojz Miškovič, *Napravená krivda* [Injustice Undone] (T. Sv. Martin: Kompas, 1940) and Andrej Bielovodský,³¹ *Severné hranice Slovenska* [The Northern Boundaries of Slovakia] (Bratislava: Ústredná správa Slovenskej ligy, 1946).

The Javorina dispute has its own bibliography. English and French primary sources include the Permanent Court of International Justice, The Hague, “Advisory opinion regarding the delimitation of the Polish Czechoslovakian Frontier (Question of Jaworzina) delivered by the Court on December 6, 1923,” *Collection of Advisory Opinions*, Series B, No.8 (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff’s Publishing Company, 1923) and a collection published by the Polish Foreign Ministry *Ministerstwo spraw zagranicznych* [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], *Recueil des documents diplomatiques concernant la question de Jaworzyna, décembre 1918-août 1923* (Varsovie: Imprimerie de l’Etat, 1923). A Polish-language publication dealing with the territorial settlements of 1920-1925, with significant attention to Javorina, is Zbigniew Kazimierz Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów. Kwestie terytorialne w latach 1920-1925. Studium prawno-polityczne* [Poland and the League of Nations. Territorial Questions in 1920-1925. A legal-political study] (Wroclaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wroclawskiego, 1993). Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation represents a Slovak-language analysis of Pavol Jakubec, “Československo-pol’ský spor o Javorinu v kontexte bilaterálnych vzťahov medzivojnového obdobia (1921-1939)” [Czechoslovak-Polish Dispute Over Javorina in the Context of Bilateral Relations of the Interwar Period (1921-1939)] (Ph.D. diss., Charles University Prague, 2009).

A great deal has been written on the foreign policies of Czecho-Slovakia, Czechoslovakia

³¹ Alojz Miškovič (1902 - 1967) - Slovak priest, university professor, Church historian. Prof. Miškovič published his work *Severné hranice Slovenska* under the pseudonym Andrej Bielovodský.

and Poland in the period 1918 - 1939. The Polish primary sources on the relations between Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1918-1939 include work edited by Sławomir M. Nowinowski, *Stosunki polsko-czechosłowackie 1932-1939 w relacjach dyplomatów II Rzeczypospolitej* (Łódź: Ibidem, 2006); a memoir of Polish Foreign Minister Jozef Beck, *Ostatni raport* [The Last Report] (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1987) and a multi-volume diary of Jan Szembek, *Diariusz i teki Jana Szembeka (1935-1945)* [The Diary of Jan Szembek (1935-1945)], 4 vols. (London: Polish Research Centre, 1964-1972). The Polish diplomacy in 1918-1939 is a focus of Polish-language work edited by Piotr Łossowski, *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [History of Polish Diplomacy], vol. 4 (1918-1939) (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1995). Useful, although dated, are works: A. Szklarska-Lohmanová, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki dyplomatyczne w latach 1918-1925* [The Polish-Czechoslovak Diplomatic Relations in 1918-1925] (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1967); Jerzy Kozeński, *Czechosłowacja w polskiej polityce zagranicznej w latach 1932-1938* [Czechoslovakia in the Polish Foreign Policy in 1932-1938] (Poznań: Instytut zachodni, 1964); Roman Dembicki, *Foreign Policy of Poland 1919 - 1939: From the Rebirth of the Polish Republic to World War II* (London/Dunmow: Praeger, 1962); Stanisław Kutrzeba, *Nasza polityka zagraniczna* [Our Foreign Policy] (Cracow: Gebethner i Wolf, 1923) and Felix John Vondracek, *The Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia 1918-1935* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937).

There are a number of books which cover the interwar period in general. Piotr S. Wandycz analyzed relations between Paris, Warsaw and Prague in two illuminating books: Piotr S. Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) and Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances, 1926-1936* (Princeton: Princeton University

Press, 1988). Two Slovak-language studies of Ladislav Deák deal with Poland's and Hungary's activities in Central Europe: Ladislav Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938* [The Struggle for Central Europe 1933-1938] (Bratislava: Veda, 1986) and Ladislav Deák, *Hra o Slovensko. Slovensko v politike Maďarska a Poľska v rokoch 1933-1939* [Game for Slovakia. Slovakia in Hungarian and Polish Politics in 1933-1939] (Bratislava: Veda, 1991). Two Polish-language works of Ewa Orlof focus on Poland's diplomatic activities relating to Slovakia: Ewa Orlof, *Dyplomacja Polska wobec sprawy słowackiej w latach 1938-1939* [The Polish Diplomacy and the Slovak Government in 1938-1939] (Krakow: Wydawn. Literackie, 1980) and Ewa Orlof, *Polska działalność polityczna, dyplomatyczna i kulturalna w Słowacji w latach 1919-1937* [The Polish Political, Diplomatic and Cultural Activities in Slovakia in 1919-1937] (Rzeszow: Wydaw. Uczelniane Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1984).

The tumultuous years 1938 - 1939, including the Munich Conference, are the subject of several studies and published primary sources. A series of primary sources in Polish and Czech include: Włodzimierz T. Kowalski, *Polska w polityce międzynarodowej (1939-1945). Zbiór dokumentów. 1939* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1989); Zbigniew Landau and Jerzy Tomaszewski, eds., *Monachium. Polskie dokumenty dyplomatyczne* [Munich 1938: Polish Diplomatic Documents] (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985) and dated *Mnichov v dokumentech* [Munich in Documents], 2 vols. (Prague: SNPL, 1958); as well as dated but helpful memoirs of Eduard Beneš, *Memoirs, From Munich to New War and New Victory* (Connecticut: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1954). For Poland's policy during the Munich crisis and in 1938-1939 see: Henryk Batowski, *Sytuacja międzynarodowa Polski 1938-1939* [The International Situation of Poland in 1938-1939] (Warszawa, 1991); Anna M. Cienciala, *Poland and the Western Powers 1938-*

1939 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968) and Stefania Stanisławska, *Polska a Monachium* [Poland and Munich] (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1967).

The Second World War and its implications for Slovak - Polish relations still awaits its complex analysis. A series of primary sources in Polish and Czech include: *Protokoły z posiedzeń Rady Ministrów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Tom I (październik 1939 - czerwiec 1940) [Protocols from the Sessions of the Council of Ministers of the Polish Republic, Vol. 1 (October 1939 - June 1940)] (Kraków: Secesja, 1994) and Ivan Štovíček and Jaroslav Valenta, eds., *Československo-polská jednání o konfederaci a spojení 1939-1944: Československé diplomatické dokumenty*. [Czechoslovak - Polish Negotiations of the Establishment of Confederation and Alliance 1939-1944: Czechoslovak Diplomatic Documents] (Prague: Karolinum and HÚ AV ČR, 1995). More focused studies include: Marek K. Kamiński, *Edvard Beneš kontra gen. Władysław Sikorski* [Edvard Beneš against Gen. Władysław Sikorski] (Warszawa: Wydawn. Neriton, Instytut Historii PAN, 2005) and Marek K. Kamiński, *Edvard Beneš we współpracy z Kremlem* [Edvard Beneš in Cooperation with the Kremlin] (Warszawa: Wydawn. Neriton, Instytut Historii PAN, 2009); Dušan Segeš, *Dvojkříž v siločiach bieleho orla. Slovenská otázka v politike poľskej exilovej vlády za 2. sv. vojny* [The Slovak Cross as an Object of Interest of the White Eagle. The Slovak Question in the Policy of the Polish Government-in-Exile During WWII] (Bratislava: Veda, 2009); Dušan Segeš, *Susedstvo v čase prelomových zmien: vybrané aspekty československo-poľských vzťahov v rokoch 1943 - 1948* [Neighbours in the Breakthrough Times: Selected Topics From Czechoslovak - Polish Relations in 1943-1948] (Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV, 2009); Igor Baka, *Slovenská republika a nacistická agresia proti Poľsku* [Slovak Republic and the Nazi Aggression Against Poland] (Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav, 2006).

The post-war period (1945-1947) is focus of the following studies: Piotr Pałys, *Czechosłowackie roszczenia graniczne wobec Polski 1945-1947. Racibórz, Głubczyce, Kłodzko* [Czechoslovak Border Claims against Poland 1945-1947. Racibórz, Głubczyce, Kłodzko] (Opole: Wydawnictwo i Agencja Informacyjna WAW Grzegorz Wawoczny, 2007) and Marek K. Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948* [Polish - Czechoslovak Political Relations 1945-1948] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawn. Nauk, 1990).

Although the number of works dealing with Slovak - Polish relations pale in comparison with the number of works dealing with Polish - Czech relations, there is a systematic effort to improve it. So far, there is no monography on Slovak - Polish relations in English or French. The latest Polish and Slovak contributions are edited works: Joanna Głowińska, ed., *Stosunki polsko-słowackie w I połowie XX wieku* [Polish-Slovak Relations in the 1st Half of the 20th Century] (Wrocław: Oddział Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej, Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu we Wrocławiu, 2006); Jozef Hvišč, ed., *Vývin a význam slovensko-poľských vzťahov* [Evolution and Importance of the Slovak-Polish Relations] (Bratislava: Lufema, 2003); Halina Mieczkowska and Jozef Hvišč, eds. *Polsko-słowackie stosunki po roku 1918* [The Polish-Slovak Relations After 1918] (Wrocław: Centrum Badań Śląskoznawczych i Bohemistycznych Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2002). Michal Jagiełło's analysis of the Slovaks in the Polish Literature Michal Jagiełło, *Słowacy w polskich oczach. Obraz Słowaków w piśmiennictwie polskim* [The Slovaks in Polish Eyes. Picture of the Slovaks in the Polish Literature], 2 vols. (Warszawa: Warszawa Biblioteka Narodowa, 2005) is a specific but valuable addition to the general treatises on Slovak - Polish relations. Dated but still useful are V. Borodovčák, L. Haraksim, J. Hroziencik, F. Gondor, eds., *Poliaci a my* [Poles and Us] (Bratislava: Osveta, 1964) and Władysław Semkowicz, *Słowacja i Słowacy* [Slovakia and the

Slovaks], 2 vols (Krakow: Nakładem Sekcii słowackiej Towarzystwa słowiańskiego, 1937-1938). Viktor Borodovčák's *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu* [Polish and Slovak National Struggle During the Dualism Era] (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1969) covers 1867 - 1918 period and is now dated but is still valuable. For Czech - Polish relations see dated edited work J. Macůrek, *Češi a Poláci v minulosti* [Czechs and Poles in the Past], 2 vols. (Prague: Academia, 1967).

General histories of Slovakia in English are available in M. Teich, D. Kováč and M. D. Brown, eds., *Slovakia in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and S. J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival*, 2d ed. (New York, 2005); Karen Henderson, *Slovakia, The escape from invisibility* (London/New York: Routledge, 2002). Jozef A. Mikuš's *Slovakia, A Political History: 1918 - 1950* (Milwaukee, WI, 1963) covers a restricted period and is now dated but it is a good introduction. The latest Polish-language work is Lech J. Kościelak, *Historia Słowacji* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2010). General histories of Poland in English are available in Anita J. Prazmowska, *A history of Poland* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011); Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Norman Davis's *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, 2d ed., 2 vols., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005) and M. B. Biskupski's *The History of Poland* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000). Norman Davis, *Heart of Europe: a short history of Poland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) is concise, although older, work. General histories of the Czech Republic and the the former Czechoslovakia in English include Mikuláš Teich, ed., *Bohemia in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: the state that failed* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009); Jaroslav Krejčí and Pavel Machonin, *Czechoslovakia, 1918-92* (New

York: St.Martin's Press, 1996). Of a more general nature is Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Price of freedom: a history of east central Europe from the Middle Ages to the present* (London: Routledge, 1992).

The post-1918 delimitation of the Slovak - Polish borders linked the outcome of the Czech-Polish border settlement with the outcome of the Slovak-Polish territorial settlement. The Slovak - Polish border delimitation in Orava and Spiš in the years 1918 through 1947 has so far received little attention in historical studies. This study tries to fill an existing gap in historiography and to contribute to a better understanding of the difficult legacy of Orava and Spiš, which should enhance existing knowledge of the relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, Slovakia and Poland, and, by extension, of Central Europe as a whole. Despite his sincere efforts to consult as many archival, published and other materials as possible, the author is aware that this dissertation has far from exhausted all aspects of this perplexing issue.

This dissertation examines the record of events in 1918 - 1947. The narrative starts with the establishment of Czecho-Slovakia and modern Poland and comes to an end with the signing of the Friendship Treaty and, thus, the formal recognition and acceptance of the existing *status quo*. This dramatic change in relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland is attributed to the coercive role of the Soviet Union. The opposition of the Soviet Union to divisive quarrels among its allies had a calming effect upon the differences between Czechoslovakia and Poland. After 1947 Slovak - Polish relations, as well as Czech - Polish relations, entered a new phase. Therefore, their analysis requires a different perspective.

Chapter II provides the reader with the necessary historical background to the evolution of the Slovak - Polish border. Chapter III describes the early formative stages of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland and the situation in the Orava, Spiš and Tešín regions in late 1918 and early 1919. Chapter

IV gives an account of the deliberations at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, the plebiscites in the Orava, Spiš and Tešín plebiscite areas and the international arbitration at the Spa Conference and the Conference of Ambassadors in Paris in July of 1920. Chapter V reviews the dispute over the Javorina area and the influence it exerted upon the uneasy coexistence of Czechoslovakia and Poland in the interwar period. Chapter VI delves into the Munich crisis in 1938 and its fallout for Czechoslovakia, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. Chapter VII describes the activities related to the Slovak - Polish border before and during World War II. Chapter VIII discusses the circumstances in 1945 and beyond and traces their consequences for the situation in the Slovak - Polish borderland in the post-World War II period. The final chapter summarizes the findings and offers some observations drawn from the previous chapters.

The author reproduced all original sources or secondary works *verbatim et literatim*, with spelling errors corrected in square brackets only when necessary for ease of reading. The author had to make a compromise between consistency and historical accuracy when referring to geographical terms, which naturally differ over time and in Slovak, Polish and Czech, or in English/French. The author's use of a particular place name is not intended to express his judgement on any alternative spelling of place names.

2.

HISTORICAL OUTLINE.

Who amongst you, would now say that I am not Pole? Obviously, nobody. And yet, five years ago, I considered myself not Pole, but Slovak. During my travels to Cracow, during my reading of books I found out, that our Goral “Gvara” which you also speak, is not a Slovak dialect, but a Polish one. Gradually I came to believe strongly in my Polish extraction.

Ferdynand Machay to Feliks Gwizdź, 1914

This chapter will present a brief historical background to Slovak - Polish relations and Slovak - Polish borderland prior to World War I.¹ It will also introduce processes which affected ethnic dynamics along the Slovak - Polish linguistic border. The events on the Slovak - Polish border are incomprehensible outside this context. The circumstances in Slovak - Polish borderland after World War I developed against a background of international and domestic events. From the perspective of World War I, the relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland anticipated the opening of new possibilities and there was a lot of excitement and hope. The situation in 1918 - 1920 put the relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland to a test of border settlement. The outcome of this border settlement affected the Slovak - Polish border and marked the new beginning of the relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.

The modern Slovak - Polish border is 597 km long and is formed by the Carpathian Mountains. This border was established as an international border even before the formation of the

¹ For one of the latest historical outlines concerning Spiš, see Milica Majeriková, “Náčrt slovensko-poľských vzťahov pred rokom 1918” [Outline of Slovak-Polish Relations before 1918], chap. in *Vojna o Spiš. Spiš v politike Poľska v medzivojnovom období v kontexte česko-slovensko-poľských vzťahov* [The War for Spiš. Spiš in Polish Policy of the Interwar Period in the Context of Czech-Slovak-Polish Relations] (Cracow: Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2007), 13-19.

modern Slovak and Polish states (Czecho-Slovakia and Poland).² Czecho-Slovakia and Poland successfully established their mutual border in 1918 - 1919 with three exceptions - Spiš, Orava and Tešín.³ The Paris Peace Conference approved the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in 1919 - 1920 in the peace treaties of St. Germain⁴ and Sèvres,⁵ and the Conference of Ambassadors decided the fate of the three small “teacups” in 1920-1923. With the exception of the protracted dispute over Javorina and the uneasy period of 1938 - 1945 the Slovak - Polish border remained stable and peaceful.

Geography and geographical features profoundly influence the history of every country. While Slovakia displays a variety of terrains, Poland, reflecting its name, is for the most part entirely flat.⁶ The Carpathians,⁷ which in its central Slovak - Polish part known as the High Tatras⁸ reach 2,665 metres at the Gerlachovský štít, constitute a natural barrier between Slovakia and Poland. The High Tatras, which are the tallest in both Slovakia and Poland, are renowned for their beauty and

² The Slovak - Polish border before World War I was the border between Galicia and the Kingdom of Hungary. The Permanent Court of International Justice, in its advisory opinion on the question of Jaworzina [Javorina] of 6 December 1923, stated: “In the opinion of the Court, which differs from that adopted by the Delimitation Commission on September 25th, 1922, the frontier between Hungary and Galicia was in August 1914 an international frontier, Galicia being then part of the Austrian Monarchy. This is proved, e. g. by the Arbitration Award of September 13th, 1902, with regard to the “Meerauge” [Morské oko/Morskie Oko] question. Although Austria and Hungary had common institutions based on analogous laws passed by their legislatures, they were none the less distinct international units.” The Permanent Court of International Justice, *Question of Jaworzina, Advisory Opinion, 1923 P.C.I.J. (ser. B) No. 8 (Dec. 6)* (Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff's Publishing Company, 1923), 42-43.

³ Norman Davies observed that “in more than four hundred miles [of the borders between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland], there were only three gaps in the watershed - at Spisz [Spiš], at Orawa [Orava], and at Cieszyn [Tešín]. Each of these teacups gave rise to protracted storms.” Norman Davies, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 494.

⁴ The Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, also the Treaty of Peace between the Allied Powers and Austria, signed on 10 September 1919 at Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

⁵ The Treaty of Sèvres, also the Treaty of Peace between the Allied Powers (France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and Armenia, Belgium, Czecho-Slovakia, Greece, the Hedjaz, Poland, Portugal, Romania and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State) and Turkey, signed on 10 August 1920 at Sèvres.

⁶ The name of Poland is derived from “pole,” meaning field or plain in English. M. B. Biskupski, *The History of Poland* (Westport, CT-London: Greenwood Press, 2000), 1.

⁷ Karpaty in Slovak and in Polish.

⁸ Vysoké Tatry in Slovak, Tatry Wysokie in Polish.

play important part in national traditions of both the Slovaks and Poles.⁹

The Slovaks and the Poles are very close to each other and share many historical memories. Commonly accepted traditional friendship between Poland and Hungary,¹⁰ expressed by the dictum “*Hungariae natum - Poloniae educatum*”¹¹ or by the song about two cousins “*Węgier, Polak - dwa bratanki*,”¹² referred probably also to the Slovaks, and it would not exist without Slovakia as a land having many ties to Poland.¹³ The population and nobility on both sides of the Carpathians maintained lively and cordial contacts.¹⁴

Historians have a disposition to accept a generally peaceful nature of coexistence between the Slovaks, Czechs and Poles.¹⁵ These peaceful relations should give rise to greater sense of unity

⁹ Biskupski, *The History of Poland*, 1-2.

¹⁰ “Hungarian” is a territorial term without ethnic connotation, whereas, the term “Magyar” denotes the non-Slav ethnic group constituting the majority of the population in today’s Hungary. In common usage, the terms “Magyar” and “Hungarian” are frequently used interchangeably. The Slovak, Czech and Polish languages have different terms for “Magyar” and “Hungarian” (“Maďar”/“Uhor” in Slovak, “Maďar”/“Uher” in Czech, “Madziar”/“Węgier” in Polish). The Slovak and Czech languages use different names for Hungary before 1918 and after 1918, the Slovak term “Uhorsko” and the Czech term “Uhersko” denote “Historic” Hungary (before 1918), the appellation “Maďarsko” (in both languages) denotes post-1918 Hungary. Slovak historian Dušan Kováč writes that the distinction “Magyar”/“Hungarian” is necessary for proper interpretation of Slovak history, because Slovaks as well as Magyars were inhabitants of [the Kingdom of] Hungary, a multi-ethnic state; however Slovaks were never Magyars and the two spoke different languages. See Dušan Kováč, “Slovakia, the Slovaks and their history,” in *Slovakia in History*, eds. Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč and Martin D. Brown (Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 13-14.

¹¹ “Born in Hungary, educated in Poland.”

¹² “Hungarian, Pole - two cousins.”

¹³ President of Poland, Mr Lech Kaczyński, stated during his December 2007 visit to Slovakia: “For me, close relations with Slovakia are only natural. Lack of historic conflicts, similar languages, friendship which was sometimes disguised under, one could say, not entirely true costumes reflected in the saying: ‘Polish, Hungarian, two good friends,’ essentially meant friendship between Polish and Slovak nobility.” See Visit by the President of the Republic of Poland to Slovakia, Monday, 3 December 2007. (available at <http://www.president.pl/en/archive/news-archive/news-2007/art,125,visit-by-the-president-of-the-republic-of-poland-to-slovakia.html>), accessed on 8 November 2011.

¹⁴ Jerzy [Jiří] Bandrowski wrote that the Poles used to call the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Hungary the Slovaks, not the Magyars [Madziar] or the Hungarians [Węgier]. In his opinion, the dictum “*Hungariae natum - Poloniae educatum*” or the song about two cousins “*Węgier, Polak - dwa bratanki*” [Hungarian, Pole - two cousins] referred probably more to the Slovaks, than to the Magyars, because Poles did not speak and did not learn Magyar. See Jiří Bandrowski, *Bílý lev* [White Lion], transl. Jiří Scerbinský (Praha: Nakladatelství Hejda & Tuček, 1917), 98-99.

¹⁵ The thesis of the “thousands of years of peaceful relationship of these neighbors” is voiced in Andrzej Rzepniewski, “Neue Forschungsperspektiven der Europäischen Krise September 1938-März 1939 aus Polnischer Sicht 1994” [A new research perspective on the European crisis, September 1938-March 1939: a Polish view], *Slezský Sborník* 1996, 94(1): 29-33.

among the Slovaks, Czechs, and Poles.¹⁶ Hence, the common borders were relatively peaceful and stable, however this would not preclude border disputes, though there were few of them.

The history of the Slovaks and the Poles intertwined since the beginning of their recorded political histories.¹⁷ The starting points, for both the Slovaks and the Poles, relate to the introduction of Christianity.

The recorded political history of the Slovaks starts in 828 with the consecration of the first Christian church in Central Europe. Adalram, the Archbishop of Salzburg, consecrated a church in Nitra, Slovakia, to Prince Pribina.¹⁸ The Slovak political history continued with the formation of the first state, which is referred to as Great Moravia, in 833.¹⁹ Prince Rastislav²⁰ successfully expanded and consolidated Great Moravia in cooperation with Rome and Byzantium and initiated the evangelizing mission of Sts. Cyril and Methodius²¹ on the territory of today's Slovakia and its neighbours, including Poland.²² Constantine and Methodius, sent by Byzantine Emperor Michael III, arrived to Great Moravia in 863. Their mission contributed to solidifying political,²³ ecclesiastical²⁴

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ This comment naturally has a larger geographical area of application, as it may be used in reference to the histories of other nations in Central Europe or elsewhere.

¹⁸ Pribina (? - 861) - Prince of Nitra, the first known Prince on territory of today's Slovakia.

¹⁹ Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenétos (913 - 957) used the designation "Great Moravia" for the first state of the Slovaks and the Moravians in his treatise *De administrando Imperio*. Great Moravia comprised originally two principalities, the Principality of Nitra and the Principality of Moravia, which were united by the Prince Mojmir I (833 - 846) in 833. Július Bartl, *Slovak History: Chronology and Lexicon* (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2002), 237-238.

²⁰ Rastislav (846 - 870) - Prince of Great Moravia.

²¹ For more on Sts. Cyril and Methodius, see Michael Lacko, S.J., *Saints Cyril and Methodius* (Rome: Praeses Pontifici Instituti Orientalis, 1969).

²² Pope John Paul II proclaimed Sts. Cyril and Methodius in 1985 the Apostles of the Slavs.

²³ Pope John VIII accorded with the bull *Industriae tuae* (880) political sovereignty to Great Moravia and recognized its ruler King Svätopluk I (870 - 894) as equal to other Christian rulers.

²⁴ Pope John VIII confirmed Methodius as Archbishop for Great Moravia and established in 880 the bishopric of Nitra, the first bishopric in Central Europe.

and cultural²⁵ independence and influence of Great Moravia. Great Moravia attained its largest territorial expansion under the rule of King Svätopluk I,²⁶ between 870 and 894, when it encompassed the territories of today's Slovakia, Moravia, Bohemia, Hungary and the southern parts of Poland.²⁷

The irruption of the nomadic Magyars in the tenth century had brought the decline and demise of Great Moravia and changed the face of Central Europe. In the year 907, seven tribes under the warlord Arpad took possession of the plains between the Tisza (Theiss) and Danube rivers, engulfed a number of Slavs, such as the Slovaks and the Croats, and cutting through their territories separated the West and South Slavs.²⁸ Following the decline and demise of Great Moravia from the early 10th century onward, the territory of today's Slovakia gradually integrated into what became after 1000 the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen,²⁹ commonly referred to as the Kingdom of Hungary, and the Slovaks lost their independence.

The year 966 serves as year one for a political history of Poland.³⁰ The conversion of the

²⁵ Constantine (St. Cyril) and St. Methodius created an alphabet, the very first Slavic letters, for the Slovaks and the Moravians, called Glagolitic. Sts. Cyril and Methodius translated the principal liturgic and legal texts into the native language also referred to as the Old Slavonic. This language was later authorized by Rome, alongside Hebrew, Greek and Latin, as the exclusive liturgical language.

²⁶ Svätopluk I (870 - 890) - King of Great Moravia.

²⁷ The Vistulians, with their fortress of Cracow, seem to fostered connections more with the Danube Basin than with life on the northern plain. They were subjects of Great Moravia and they first received Christian baptism from the Methodian mission. At this time, their links with the Polanians to the north are unknown. N. Davies, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 44-45.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 107. Davies writes that the Magyars were the last of the nomadic colonists from the east, and were quite unrelated to any of the peoples among whom they settled. Their recent origins lay in the middle of the Pontic steppes, and their more distant roots in the depths of Central Asia. Their agglutinative language, of the Finno-Ugrian family, was totally incomprehensible to all their neighbours. For the next half-century till their defeat in 955 at the Lechfeld at the hands of Otto the Great, they lived by annual raids which penetrated deep into the western lands. *Ibid.*

²⁹ Vajk (997 - 1038) - Magyar Prince, baptised under the name of Stephen (*István* in Magyar) and crowned in 1000 as Stephen I, the first King of Hungary. The Crown of St. Stephen is named after him.

³⁰ Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3. Norman Davis writes that the earliest documentary record from that part of Europe which is now called Poland, dates from AD 965 to 966. N. Davies, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, vol. 1, 3.

Poles to Christianity dates back to 966 when Mieszko I³¹ was baptised and the first missionary bishop arrived in Poland.³² His successor, Bolesław I Chrobry,³³ successfully expanded his realm, which included also Slovakia, but by 1040 Poland lost almost all her previous conquests.³⁴ The kingdoms of Hungary and Poland, as many of their contemporaries, represented multinational kingdoms, where the native cultures of the composite elements were subordinated to the Latin culture of Church and State.³⁵ Both kingdoms formed the easternmost outposts of the Roman Church and regarded themselves as the twin bastions of the *antemurale Christianitatis*.³⁶

The links between the territories of the Slovaks, Poles, Czechs and Magyars thus appeared very early in their recorded political histories. Germanic (Frankish) kings reacted against the growing power of their neighbours - the Slovaks and the Moravians (Great Moravia), the Poles (Poland), the Czechs (Bohemia) or the Magyars (Hungary). German policy instigated rivalries between the various nations, playing them off against each other. This policy aimed to prevent ecclesiastical autonomy,

³¹ Mieszko I (- 992) - Prince of Poland.

³² Mieszko I married Dobroslava, daughter of Duke Boleslav I of Bohemia in 965. He accepted Christianity in 966. Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed., 5.

³³ Bolesław I Chrobry (the Brave) (982-1025) - Polish Prince. Also known as Bolesław I the Valiant.

³⁴ Bolesław I annexed Cracow in 999, pushed back a Hungarian invasion and added Trans-Carpathian territories (today's Slovakia) to Poland. Bolesław also entered Prague, proclaimed himself Prince of Bohemia, and fused the two principalities into one State in 1003, but his conquests did not last. Bolesław had to pull out of Bohemia and his successors had to abandon Moravia and Slovakia. Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed., 7. Bolesław I was succeeded by Mieszko II (1025 - 1034), with whose death "a very dark period began." *Ibid.*, 35. Milan S. Ďurica writes that in 1018 Bolesław I concluded peace with Hungarian King Stephen I and agreed on the common border on the peaks of the Carpathians. Thus the Hungarian King "had free hands to gradually integrate the territory of all Slovakia to his Hungarian state." Milan S. Ďurica, *Dejiny Slovenska a Slovákov* [A History of Slovakia and the Slovaks], 2d ed. (Bratislava: SPN, 1996), 20.

³⁵ N. Davies, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, vol. 1, 108. Davies observes that despite their different origins, the history of the Magyars was surprisingly similar to that of the Poles. They accepted Roman Christianity at the same moment and under the same auspices. The coronation of Steven I at Estergom (Gran) in 1001, and the creation of the Hungarian See, coincided almost exactly with the proceedings at Gniezno several weeks earlier. *Ibid.* Davies writes that to be 'Polish' in the Polish-Lithuanian state was equivalent to being British, as opposed to being English or Scottish. It did not mean that the Poles and the Lithuanians, any more than the English or the Scots, lost their sense of separate identity. See *ibid.*, 119-20. Similarly, to be 'Hungarian' in Historic Hungary was equivalent to being British, as opposed to being English or Scottish and it did not mean that the Slovaks and the Magyars lost their sense of separate identity.

³⁶ N. Davies, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, vol. 1, 107.

mainstay of political independence in those days. These considerations guided German policy towards its eastern neighbours throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries.³⁷

Rastislav, Mieszko, Stephen and their successors endeavoured to loosen the ties binding them to the German Empire and sought to establish an entente with the Pope and confided their countries to the protection of the Apostolic See. By a skillful playing off of them against each other, and by the active encouragement of internal hereditary strifes, the German Emperors kept Central European countries from developing into powerful states.³⁸ Central European countries, Bohemia, Poland and Hungary (which included Slovakia), at times, successfully cooperated and coordinated their activities. The summit of Charles Robert d'Anjou, King of Hungary, John of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, and Casimir III, King of Poland, in the spring of 1335, at a castle overlooking the Danube, demonstrated mutual interest in cooperation and inspired modern political tradition.³⁹

The Slovaks and Poles - with the Magyars and others - shared an undisputed frontier in the Carpathians and, from time to time, they shared common enemies - the German Empire and eventually Tartars and Turks.⁴⁰ Louis of Anjou (1326-83), king of Hungary, forged a dynastic link between Hungary (with Slovakia) and Poland. With the help of Europe's most valuable gold mines

³⁷ S. Kętrzyński, "The Introduction of Christianity and the Early Kings of Poland," in *The Cambridge History of Poland, From The Origins to Sobieski (to 1696)*, ed. W. F. Reddaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 16., *op. cit.*, 34-35. In the eleventh century, the Germans lent their aid to Kazimir the Restorer (1040-1058) of Poland, who, reconquered some of the lost provinces, restored unity and peace; and in compensation for the aid of Germany, Kazimir recognized the sovereignty of the German Emperor and renounced the title of King. Edward H. Lewinski-Corwin, *The Political History of Poland* (New York: The Polish Book Importing Company, 1917), 22-23.

³⁸ Lewinski-Corwin, *op. cit.*, 24-26. During the reign of Boleslav II the Bold (1058 - 1079) occurred the famous struggle for supremacy between Pope Gregory VII, Hildebrand and the Emperor Henry IV. In recognition of the assistance, the Pope crowned Boleslav as independent King in 1076. The Emperor, seeking revenge, recognized the Bohemian ruler as King and offered him the Polish provinces of Cracow and Silesia, which led to a war in Poland. *Ibid.*

³⁹ The Visegrád summit of 1335, inspired in the 20th century the creation of informal Central European grouping called V-4 (previously V-3), which includes Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary.

For more on the 1335 summit, see N. Davies, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 95.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

in Slovakia and an efficient administration, Louis reigned over the largest political complex of fourteenth-century Europe which also included, since 1370 Poland.⁴¹ This brief Angevin's connection of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and other territories remained close and was emulated in 1440-44, and again in 1490-1516, when Polish princes were elected to the Hungarian throne.⁴²

Interactions and contacts between the two sides of the Carpathian Mountains which formed a natural frontier between the Slovak and Polish populations, left numerous marks in language, culture and customs on both sides.⁴³ While the preserved written records are relatively scarce,⁴⁴ Slovak and Polish linguistic influences,⁴⁵ folk songs and legends,⁴⁶ fashion and architectural elements,⁴⁷ they all attest to the vitality and extent of the Slovak - Polish cultural, linguistic, economic and social interchanges.⁴⁸

Important cultural and economic centres developed on both the Slovak and Polish sides of the Carpathian mountains. The Spiš region in Slovakia, located adjunct to the Polish border, was one

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 108-9.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 113.

⁴³ Mieczysław Małecki divided Polish expansion south of the Carpathian mountains into two waves. The older wave occurred between the 12th - 17th centuries, the later wave started after the creation of the Polish - Slovak ethnographic frontier. According to Małecki, the Polish element, expanding into the Slovak environment south from the above ethnographic frontier, created Polish islands, villages and small settlements in Slovakia. Ivor Ripka, "Mieczysław Małecki (1903 - 1946)", *Slavica Slovaca* XXXIIX, No.2 (2003): 174.

⁴⁴ Danuta Skorwider writes that Polish settlement of the Podhale region, on the Polish side of the Tatra mountains, started with the Wislanie tribe and lasted until the 13th century. Until the 13th century, the presence of the Poles in Podhale could be traced only ethnographically. Historians could demonstrate the Polish presence in the Podhale region only since the 13th century. See Danuta Skorwider, "Losy gospodarczej i politycznej kolonizacji Podhala w XIII-XVIII wieku," in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 73.

⁴⁵ Slovakisms and Polonisms were noted in use in Poland and in Slovakia. Jan Długosz's *Liber Beneficiorum* referred to a presence of Slovakisms in the handbook of Polish gold prospectors in the High Tatra mountains. On the other side of the Tatra mountains, *Žilinská kniha* (the Book of Žilina) in Slovakia demonstrated a presence of Polonisms in Slovakia. In Viktor Borodovčák et al., *Poliaci a my* [Poles and Us] (Bratislava: Osveta, 1964), 16.

⁴⁶ Juraj Jánošík (1688 - 1713) - popular folk hero, Slovak version of Robin Hood, is respected on both, Slovak and Polish, sides of the High Tatra mountains.

⁴⁷ There are noticeable similarities in architectural design, folk fashion and daily products between the Slovak regions of Orava, Liptov and Spiš and the Polish region of Podhale. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 16.

⁴⁸ Contemporary records testify about Polish immigration to the Liptov region in Slovakia around 1265. *Ibid.*, 15. A large number of Polish names among sheep herdsmen, the so-called *valasi*, attest to immigration of Polish ethnic to Slovakia during the so-called Wallachian colonization. *Ibid.*, 15-16.

of the most prosperous regions in Central Europe with flourishing and prosperous mining resorts. The Spiš region maintained close economic and cultural links with the Cracow region.⁴⁹ Casimir III (1310-70) issued on 12 May 1364 the royal Charter of Foundation of the University of Cracow which provided additional stimulus to the contacts between the Slovak and Polish sides of the Carpathian Mountains.⁵⁰

Multiethnic, rich Spiš constituted an important source of royal revenue and a lucrative sought-after prize.⁵¹ Polish interest in control over the lucrative Spiš region materialized in the fifteenth century. On 15 March 1412,⁵² Sigismund of Luxemburg,⁵³ King of Hungary, mortgaged several towns and estates to his brother-in-law Władysław II Jagiełło,⁵⁴ King of Poland, to finance his upcoming war with Venice. King Sigismund of Luxemburg mortgaged Stará Ľubovňa (castle with town and estate), Podolíneć, Hniezdne and the thirteen Spiš towns - Spišská Belá, Ľubica,

⁴⁹ Spiš maintained lively trade links with the Cracow region. Many Polish church bells originated in Slovakia, some of them in the city of Spišská Nová Ves in Spiš. The largest bells in Poland, in the St. Mary's Church in Cracow, came from Slovakia as well. *Ibid.*, 21-22. Borodovčák writes that Štefan Monetarius, native of Kremnica in Slovakia, lived and published in Cracow his treatise on theory of music around 1518. The author of the first Polish operas, Matej Kamiensky, was of Slovak origin. *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁰ N. Davies, *God's Playground, A History of Poland*, vol. 1, 98. Since the first university in Slovakia, *Academia Istropolitana* in Bratislava (established in 1467) was short-lived, the students from Slovakia studied at the universities in Prague (established in 1348), Vienna, Bologna and elsewhere. Another university in Slovakia, in Trnava, was established in 1635. Davies observes that the Piast's 'Studium Generale' did not outlive its founder (1370) and began its continuous existence in 1400 when it was refounded, but the University of Cracow can fairly claim to take second place only to Prague in the seniority of Central Europe's seats of learning. *Ibid.*, 99.

⁵¹ The thirteenth century chronicle by Polish annalist Boguchval evidenced Polish claims to the Spiš region. Boguchval claimed that the Spiš region was transferred from Poland to Hungary at the end of the eleventh century, as a dowry of King Koloman. *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵² Chalupický writes Sigismund of Luxemburg and Władysław II Jagiełło agreed the mortgage on 8 November 1412 in Zagreb. See Ivan Chalupický, "Snahy Uhorska o vykúpenie spišských miest z poľského zálohu v 15.-17.storočí" [The Efforts of Hungary to Redeem the Spiš Town from the Polish Mortgage in the 15th - 17th Century], *Historické štúdie* 41 (2000): 115. Chalupický cites C. Wagner, *Analecta Scepusii sacri et profani, Viennae, Posonii et Cassovieae 1774*, 212-216; W. Semkowicz, "Akt zastawu XVI miast spiskich Polsce z r.1412," *Wierchy* 8, (1930): 152-157.

⁵³ Sigismund of Luxemburg (1368-1437) - King of Hungary and Bohemia, German King, Emperor. Sigismund of Luxemburg was a younger son of the Emperor Charles IV. After marrying Maria, the elder daughter of Louis d'Anjou, King of Hungary and Poland, he got himself crowned as her consort in 1387 and, after her death in 1395, Sigismund ruled Hungary alone until his own death in 1437. Sigismund was also elected German king in 1410, and he succeeded his brother in Bohemia in 1420. In C. A. Macartney, *Hungary: A Short History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1962), 47.

⁵⁴ Władysław II Jagiełło (Jogaila) (1386 - 1434) - King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania (1377 - 1401).

Vrbov, Spišská Sobota, Poprad, Veľká, Stráže pod Tatrami, Spišské Vlachy, Spišská Nová Ves, Ruskinovce, Spišské Podhradie, Matejovce and Tvarožné (see Map 2).⁵⁵ Sigismund concluded a treaty of alliance with Władysław, because Poland was negotiating with the Venetians and formed an alliance with the Austrian Habsburgs.⁵⁶ Stará Ľubovňa, Podolíneć and Hniezdne were located adjunct to the Polish border, but the thirteen Spiš towns were situated farther from the border. The mortgaged territory formed the so-called Spiš Mayorship (*Starostei Zips*) and was administered by the Polish Mayor,⁵⁷ but the towns respected the sovereignty of the Crown of St. Stephen and had always considered themselves to be a part of the Kingdom of Hungary.⁵⁸

Sigismund of Luxemburg was criticized for mortgaging the main source of his wealth,⁵⁹ but he could not collect sufficient funds to repay his loan.⁶⁰ In 1419 Sigismund persuaded Władysław II Jagiełło to return the mortgaged towns without repayment - for his promised military assistance

⁵⁵ Richard Marsina, "Boje proti Osmanskej riši [The Struggles Against the Ottoman Empire]," in *Dejiny Slovenska* [A History of Slovakia], vol. I (do roku 1526) [until 1526], ed. Samuel Cambel et al. (Bratislava: Veda, 1986), 388-389. Marsina quotes a loan of 37,000 piles of silver Prague *groschen* (an equivalent of 88,000 Gold florins) for the mortgaged towns and estates. In *Ibid.* Chalupický cites 37,000 piles of Czech *groschen* for the mortgaged towns and estates. In Chalupický, "Snahy Uhorska o vykúpenie spišských miest z poľského zálohu v 15.-17.storočí," 115. Borodovčák cites a loan of 150,000 goldens (*zlatých*) for the mortgaged towns and estates. In Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 19. Eduard Pavlík cites a loan of 37,000 piles of the Prague *groschen*, paid at the castle Dunajec in the Zamagurie region, later known as the castle of Nedeca. Eduard Pavlík, "Poľské vplyvy a Spišská Magura," [Polish Influences and Spišská Magura] *Spiš* 2 (1968): 101.

⁵⁶ Oscar Halecki, "Problems of the New Monarchy," in *The Cambridge History of Poland, From The Origins to Sobieski (to 1696)*, ed. W. F. Reddaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 216.

⁵⁷ The Spiš Mayorship (*Starostei Zips* in German) was referred to in Poland as *Spiszkie starostwo*. Administratively, the Mayorship consisted of the Province of the Thirteen Spiš Towns, the free royal cities Stara Ľubovňa, Podolíneć, Hniezdne and two estates, the so-called keys (*klucz* in Polish, or *Schlüssel* in German), the Ľubovňa and Podolíneć estates. See Ivan Chalupický, "Inventár spišského starostovstva z roku 1758" [Inventory of the Spiš Mayorship From 1758], *Z minulosti Spiša*, III-IV, (1995-96): 81-88.

⁵⁸ Pavlík, *op. cit.*, 101.

⁵⁹ Bohuš Chňoupek writes that Spiš was one of the most prosperous regions in Central Europe, with flourishing and prosperous mining resorts. Chňoupek estimates that one year's revenues from its mining would fully cover Sigismund's mortgage and the principal. See Bohuš Chňoupek, *Pogrom. Na sny sa nezomiera* [Pogrom. One Does Not Die of Dreaming] (Bratislava: Knižné centrum, 2003), 18.

⁶⁰ Sigismund's agreement with Władysław II Jagiełło stipulated return of the mortgaged towns and estates on condition of issuing two months advanced notice and full repayment of the loan in silver or gold. Sigismund of Luxemburg and his successors failed to repay the loan in full and the mortgaged towns and estates remained under Polish administration until 1772. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 19-20.

against the Teutonic knights - but Adalbert Jastrzębiec, Bishop of Cracow, and Zbigniew Oleśnicki, Bishop of Cracow and the King's Secretary, stopped the transaction at the last moment.⁶¹ Sigismund of Luxemburg never redeemed his loan.⁶²

The pawning of Stará Ľubovňa, Podolíneć and Hniezdne and the thirteen Spiš towns and estates had a lasting impact on Slovak - Polish relations. The mortgaged territory remained under Polish administration for more than three hundred years (1412-1769).⁶³ Poland strengthened its links to the important region and it fostered Polish interest in permanent attachment of the mortgaged territory. These ambitions motivated efforts to establish and demonstrate the Polish character of the mortgaged territory and its population, which gradually evolved to include the entire region of Spiš.⁶⁴ Sigismund of Luxemburg and Władysław II Jagiełło did not anticipate their agreement would make of the mortgaged towns and estates an important actor in the drama of partition of the Polish - Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th century.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Chalupický, "Snahy Uhorska o vykúpenie spišských miest z poľského zálohu v 15.-17.storočí," 116. Marsina cites the year 1418. Marsina, *op. cit.*, 389.

⁶² Sigismund of Luxemburg expelled the Venetians from Dalmatia, the main *raison d'être* for his mortgage, but by then, he has almost completely lost interest in affairs of his Hungarian kingdom. *Ibid.* Sigismund of Luxemburg, his successors and the Hungarian Diet tried repeatedly to redeem the mortgaged territory. The last attempt to redeem the territory made the Archbishop of Kalocsa, Juraj Széchényi in 1681. See Chalupický, "Snahy Uhorska o vykúpenie spišských miest z poľského zálohu v 15.-17.storočí," 120. For more on efforts to redeem the territory mortgage in 1412, see Ivan Chalupický, "Snahy Uhorska o vykúpenie spišských miest z poľského zálohu v 15.-17.storočí" [The Efforts of Hungary to Redeem the Spiš Town from the Polish Mortgage in the 15th - 17th Century], *Historické štúdie* 41 (2000): 115-121.

⁶³ Austria formally reincorporated the mortgaged territory into the Crown of St. Stephen in December of 1770. Chalupický writes that the Sigismund's mortgage is one of the longest in European history. See Chalupický, "Snahy Uhorska o vykúpenie spišských miest z poľského zálohu v 15.-17.storočí," 115. Bohuš Chňoupek estimates the total revenue from the mortgaged Spiš townships during the Polish administration (1412-1770) could reach approximately 500,000,000 gold florins. In this case, the Sigismund's mortgage of 37,000 piles of the silver Prague *groschen*, which could equal approximately 100,000 gold florin, would be well paid back by the incorporation of the mortgaged Spiš townships in 1770. Chňoupek, *op. cit.*, 18.

⁶⁴ Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 20. Borodovčák argues that Polish administration strengthened contacts of the mortgaged towns with Poland, affected the demography of the region but did not change its ethnic composition substantially. *Ibid.* Pavlík points out that the mortgaged Spiš towns were located further from the Polish borders, they were not adjoining it. Therefore, it is difficult to sustain later Polish claims to the entire territory of the Spiš county. See Pavlík, *op. cit.*, 101.

⁶⁵ For more on the the Polish - Lithuanian Commonwealth see Daniel Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386-1795* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2001).

The mortgaged towns, due to their unique geographical and political situation, implicated Austria into the civil war in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which had started in 1768. When the Diet in Warsaw sanctioned Russia's role as a guarantor of the territorial integrity, the dissenting minority of the Diet members resorted to armed struggle against the Warsaw Diet. Russia's renewed sponsorship of Stanisław II August Poniatowski,⁶⁶ the last king of Poland, sparked the formation of a new confederation at Bar.⁶⁷ The civil war between the confederates of Bar and the Diet of Warsaw helped Russia, Austria and Prussia to interfere in Polish internal affairs.⁶⁸ The confederates were encouraged by Turkey, which declared war on Russia, France provided financial assistance and military training, Saxony provided subsidies, Austria tolerated a confederate government-in-exile on its territory. A confederate government-in-exile met in Prešov in Slovakia (Kingdom of Hungary), and declared Stanisław II August Poniatowski dethroned on 22 October 1770. But when confederates kidnaped Poniatowski in Warsaw on 3 November 1771, this assault on the royal person, despite his later release, led the Habsburgs to expel the government-in-exile from their territory.⁶⁹

During the civil war the retreating Confederate troops sought, on occasion, a refuge in neighbouring countries and their violations of the frontiers were destined to bring retaliatory measures.⁷⁰ The Confederates also intruded into a territory mortgaged to Poland in 1412, which was under the Polish administration, but formed an integral part of Hungary, now controlled by Vienna.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Stanisław II August Poniatowski (1732 - 1797) - king of Poland.

⁶⁷ Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386-1795*, 271-272.

⁶⁸ Austria favoured the confederates of Bar but feared that their violations of the frontiers might cause an incident that could bring Austria in the Russo-Turkish war. Herbert H. Kaplan, *The First Partition of Poland* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1962), 112.

⁶⁹ Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386-1795*, 272.

⁷⁰ Kaplan, *The First Partition of Poland*, 111.

⁷¹ The mortgage territory included Stará Ľubovňa (castle, town and estate), Podolíneč, Hniezdne and the thirteen Spiš towns - Spišská Belá, Ľubica, Vrbov, Spišská Sobota, Poprad, Veľká, Stráže pod Tatrami, Spišské Vlasy, Spišská Nová Ves, Ruskinovce, Spišské Podhradie, Matejovce and Tvarožné. The mortgaged territory was not compact and only Stará Ľubovňa, Podolíneč and Hniezdne adjoined the Hungarian-Polish frontier. The remaining mortgaged towns were lying further inland from the Hungarian-Polish frontier and not on the frontier. The towns mortgaged to Poland in 1412

Vienna and Budapest considered their legal right to the mortgaged territory temporarily waived, but not discontinued permanently. Warsaw, on the other hand, viewed the mortgaged territory as a Polish land. Austria's territory provided a foothold for the Confederates.⁷² In February of 1769 Austria protested against the intrusions into "its" territory, proclaimed a military cordon around the mortgaged area and Austrian troops displayed Habsburg imperial eagles around the territory. Austria presented a military cordon as a preventive security measure to stop an outbreak of infectious disease raging in Poland. But Austria incorporated the territory mortgaged without the payment and consent of Poland and effectively started partitions.⁷³ Austria opportunistically revived the Hungarian claim to the territory mortgaged in 1412.⁷⁴ Austria annexed Spiš (Spisz) and made the first step in the direction of the partition of Poland.⁷⁵ Frederick II⁷⁶ tried out St. Petersburg's interest in proposing a plan, presented by Count Rochus Lynar in February 1769. The plan anticipated annexation of Spiš and Lwów by Austria, Pomorze and Warmia by Prussia and some part of Poland by Russia.⁷⁷

In the summer of 1770 Austria extended its military cordon further, to also include the Polish towns of Nowy Targ, Czorsztyn, Nowy Sącz, Bochnia and Wieliczka.⁷⁸ Vienna annexed the districts

continued to recognize the suzerainty of the Crown of St. Stephen and considered themselves as a part of Hungary, yet the towns recognized the jurisdiction of a Polish Mayor. Pavlík, *op.cit.*, 101.

⁷² Jerzy Michalski, "Początki panowania Stanisława Augusta (1764-1772) [The Beginning of the Reign of Stanisław August (1764-1772)]," in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [A History of Polish Diplomacy], vol. 2 (1572-1795), ed. Zbigniew Wójcik (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982), 520.

⁷³ Commission polonaise des travaux préparatoires au congrès de la paix. Le Spisz, l'Orawa et le district de Czaca, AAN, Delegacja Polska na Konferencję Pokojową w Paryżu, t. 150, 10-11.

⁷⁴ Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386-1795*, 273.

⁷⁵ Michalski, "Początki panowania Stanisława Augusta (1764-1772), 514.

⁷⁶ Frederick II the Great (1740-1786) - king of Prussia.

⁷⁷ Michalski, "Początki panowania Stanisława Augusta (1764-1772), 514.

⁷⁸ Kaplan, *The First Partition of Poland*, 126. Austria rejected a protest by the Polish court against the occupation of Polish towns by disputing the Polish claims to those districts. Austrian Chancellor Kaunitz dismissed Polish protest against the seizure of Nowy Targ, Czorsztyn, Nowy Sącz, Bochnia and Wieliczka: "...before Poland could claim injury, she would first have to prove that those districts belonged to the Commonwealth." In fact, Austria never regarded as an act of partition its seizure of Polish towns of Nowy Targ, Czorsztyn, Nowy Sącz, Bochnia, and Wieliczka in 1770. *Ibid.*, 126-127, 188.

Feliks Lojko, Polish treasury official, collected archival evidence to prove Poland's rights to the territories claimed by Prussia and Austria in the First Partition. Lojko's treatise of 1773 dealt also with the towns mortgaged in

of Nowy Targ, Czorsztyn and Nowy Sącz, invoking Hungary's historical rights to these regions.⁷⁹ Austria's move provided an excuse for Prussia and Russia to grab Polish territory as well.⁸⁰ Prussian troops surrounded "sanitary cordon" (under a pretext of an epidemic outbreak in Podole) in Polish Pomorze.⁸¹ Franciszek Kwilecki⁸² came to Berlin in February 1772 to seek the King's help against economic exploitation of his region by Prussian occupiers and found out in the second half of March 1772 about the Prusso-Austrian partition agreement but believed Austria would annex only Spiš and Sadecczyzna.⁸³

Austria's activities inspired Prussia and Russia to start negotiations for partition of the Polish - Lithuanian Commonwealth.⁸⁴ The civil war in Poland, accompanied by a cholera outbreak, furnished excuses for Austria, Prussia and Russia to protect their frontiers and intervene into the adjacent Polish territories. Austria's reincorporation of the mortgaged territory in 1770 was an opportunistic move, but Vienna never regarded this reincorporation as an act of partition.⁸⁵ In fact, Austria never regarded the mortgaged territory as a part of Poland.⁸⁶ The way the mortgaged territory

1412. Daniel Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386-1795* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2001), 326.

⁷⁹ Michalski, "Początki panowania Stanisława Augusta (1764-1772), 514.

⁸⁰ Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386-1795*, 273.

⁸¹ Michalski, "Początki panowania Stanisława Augusta (1764-1772), 521.

⁸² Franciszek Antoni Kwilecki (1725-1794) - Mayor of Wschowa, envoy to Berlin.

⁸³ Michalski, "Początki panowania Stanisława Augusta (1764-1772), 544.

⁸⁴ A Prusso - Russian agreement of February of 1772 was joined by Austria in August of 1772. Austria, Russia, and Prussia signed the partition conventions on 5 August 1772 in St. Petersburg. The treaties of 5 August 1772 and subsequent delimitations completed the First Partition of Poland.

⁸⁵ Kaplan, *The First Partition of Poland*, 147, 186-188. Kaplan writes that Austria touched off the partition by opportunistically reviving medieval Hungarian claims to the mortgaged territory and by occupying it in 1769. He argues: "...Had not Austria 'reincorporated' several Polish districts into the Crown of Hungary, it is highly unlikely that the dismemberment idea would have been accepted so completely by the Russian and Prussian courts." *Ibid.*, 147. Kaplan believes there was no legal or moral basis for Austria's claim of "reincorporating" territory as the mortgaged towns had passed out of its hands approximately three hundred and fifty years before. In his view the reincorporation was a simple issue of aggrandizement executed by the force of arms. *Ibid.*, 186-187.

⁸⁶ Austria occupied the mortgaged towns in Spiš in 1769 and in 1770 it occupied the Nowy Targ and Nowy Sącz districts (*Sadecczyzna* and *Nowotarszczyzna*). These territories were originally incorporated into Hungary, but after the First Partition, in 1772, Austria included *Sadecczyzna* and *Nowotarszczyzna*, but not Spiš, to Galicia. See Zofia Nowak, *Władysław Zamoyski a spór o Morskie Oko w latach 1889 - 1909* (Kraków: Oficyna Podhalańska, 1992), 7.

had passed from Polish administration helped to justify the future Polish claims to the entire Spiš County in the time of the re-surrection of Poland. The Crown of St. Stephen recovered the mortgaged Stará Ľubovňa, Podolíneč and Hniezdne and the thirteen Spiš towns and estates but not in a way anticipated by the mortgage contract.⁸⁷

The Polish - Lithuanian Commonwealth disappeared from the map of Europe after three partitions by Russia, Austria and Prussia in 1772, 1793 and 1795. The different patterns of political, economic and social development of the separate parts of historic Poland were to accentuate regional differences and made the recreation of a Polish state after 1918 an uneasy task. The answers to the questions “Who is a Pole?” or “What is Poland” would be very different in 1918 from those in the 18th century.⁸⁸ After the Partitions of Poland, the Poles were downgraded to an unhappy class of stateless people. While some other nations built their nation-states and economies, the Poles had to concentrate on simply surviving as an ethnic entity. They were denationalized and economically exploited. Occupied by Russia, Austria, and Germany, the Poles struggled to save their national identity, language, and culture, and hoped to rebuilt their state.⁸⁹ However, the so-called Polish question, the idea of a Polish state, did not disappear from international relations.⁹⁰ Polish insurrections in 1830-31, 1846 and 1863-64 challenged the permanence of the partitions and the threefold loyalty (*trójlojalizm*) of the Poles towards Russia, Austria and Prussia. Repeated failures

⁸⁷ The Polish towns of Nowy Targ, Czorsztyn, Nowy Sącz, Bochnia and Wieliczka - the *Sądecka* and *Nowotarska* regions - were incorporated into Hungary in December of 1770. After the First Partition of Poland in 1772, Vienna revoked its previous decision and incorporated them back into Galicia (Austrian Poland). Zofia Nowak, *Władysław Zamoyski a spór o Morskie Oko w latach 1889 - 1909* [Władysław Zamoyski and the Morskie Oko Dispute in 1889 - 1909], (Kraków: Oficyna Pohalańska, 1992), 7.

⁸⁸ Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 135-136.

⁸⁹ Piotr Wróbel, *The Devil's playground. Poland in World War II* (Montreal: Canadian Foundation for Polish Studies, 2000), 10.

⁹⁰ Napoléon resolved the Polish question by creating the Duchy of Warsaw (1807-1813), the Congress of Vienna sanctioned a creation of the Congress Kingdom (the Congress Poland) (1815-1831). The Republic of Cracow (1815-1846), although a virtually self-governing entity, was obviously a territorially very limited solution to the Polish question.

led to necessary compromises, but the idea of a Polish state remained.

The nationality question of the Habsburg monarchy and difficulties in the reconciliation of conflicting national aspirations affected the outcome of the Spring of Nations in 1848-1849 in Austria. The Magyars and non-Magyar nations in Hungary had conflicting programs. Adam Czartoryski⁹¹ and other Poles working in the Hotel Lambert⁹² in Paris tried to reconcile the Magyars and the non-Magyars in Hungary. The reconciliation was a very difficult task due to escalating conflicts; particularly in Croatia, but also - to a lesser extent - in Slovenia, Vojvodina and Slovakia.⁹³ Czartoryski organized an informal meeting to explore a possibility of reconciliation. A meeting took place on 18 May 1849 in Paris. Neither of the present representatives, the Magyar delegates, László Teleki,⁹⁴ Frigyes Szarvady⁹⁵ and Ferenc Pulszky,⁹⁶ nor Czech deputy František Rieger,⁹⁷ had any formal mandate to accept binding commitment on their parts. The question of the Slovaks caused controversy between Rieger and the Magyar participants, as Rieger defended inclusion of Slovakia to Bohemia, a solution opposed by the Magyars who defended their historical rights to Slovakia. Consequently Rieger had to withdraw his proposal. The agreement reached at a meeting and signed by all outlined that from non-Magyar nations in Hungary, only Croats, Serbs and Rumanians would receive autonomy within a federated Hungary, whereas the Slovaks and the Germans would receive only their own local administration and with a right to use their languages therein. The agreement

⁹¹ Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770-1861) - Polish politician, Russian Foreign Minister (1804-1806), the President of the Provisional Government, the Supreme National Council and the National Government during the Uprising in November 1830, since 1833 in exile in France.

⁹² A group of Polish emigrés in Paris under leadership of Adam Jerzy Czartoryski.

⁹³ Sławomir Kalembka, "Polskie wysiłki dyplomatyczne w okresie Wiosny Ludów [Polish Diplomatic Efforts During the Spring of Nations]," in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [A History of Polish Diplomacy], vol. 3 (1795-1918), ed. Ludwik Bazylow (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982), 373.

⁹⁴ László Teleki (1811-1861) - Hungarian journalist, diplomat and politician.

⁹⁵ Frigyes Szarvady (1822-1882) - Hungarian collaborator of Lajos Kossuth, a leader of Magyar Revolution in 1848-1849.

⁹⁶ Ferenc Pulszky (1814-1897) - Hungarian writer, participant in the Revolution of 1848-1849.

⁹⁷ František Ladislav Rieger (1818-1903) - Czech politician.

was supposed to be confirmed by the Hungarian Diet, but it was not accepted by Lajos Kossuth,⁹⁸ a leader of the revolution in Hungary.⁹⁹ The fact that the agreement, organized by Poles in Paris, did not concern the Polish population in Hungary could indirectly point to their nonexistence in Hungary.

The Compromise (*Ausgleich*) between German-speaking and Magyar-speaking national groups in Austria and the 1867 constitutional reform altered the political and national landscape of the Habsburg Monarchy and transformed centralized Austria into Austria-Hungary (the Dual Monarchy) (see Map 3).¹⁰⁰ The Compromise granted power to Germans and Magyars to take responsibility for their respective parts of the monarchy. While Vienna refrained from imposing homogeneity in Austria, Budapest introduced a program of Magyarization of Hungary.¹⁰¹

The period of the Austro-Magyar dualism (1867 - 1918) created different conditions for the national life of constituent nations in Austria - Hungary. The German-speaking Austrian minority steered the western half of the Dual Monarchy towards a multinational decentralized state with universal suffrage, whereas the Magyar minority tried to transform the eastern half of the Dual Monarchy into a centralized Magyar-speaking state with an electoral system preserving its

⁹⁸ Lajos (also Louis) Kossuth (1802-1894) - leader of Magyar Revolution in 1848-1849.

⁹⁹ Sławomir Kalembka, "Polskie wysiłki dyplomatyczne w okresie Wiosny Ludów," in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, vol. 3 (1795-1918), ed. Ludwik Bazyłow (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982), 374.

¹⁰⁰ The Compromise (*Ausgleich*) between Vienna and Budapest remodelled the state and established three common ministries - foreign affairs, defense and finance - for Austria-Hungary. Hungary recovered its royal independent status, the head of Austria-Hungary was titled Emperor and King. Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia. Struggle for Survival* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1995), 127-128. Carlile Macartney summarized the principle of Dualism (*Ausgleich*) in the following words: "You [Budapest] look after your Slavs and we [Vienna] will look after ours." See C. A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 548.

¹⁰¹ Budapest concluded its own *Ausgleich* with Croatia (the *Nagodba*) in 1868, which granted to Croatia a limited home rule. Magyarization's ultimate goal was to "transform" non-Magyar population in the Hungarian part of the monarchy into Magyar-speaking subjects. The Magyarization was motivated by ethnic character of the Kingdom of Hungary. In 1910, the Magyars claimed (by their most generous estimate) only 48.1 percent of the population of the Kingdom of Hungary. Raymond Pearson, *National Minorities in Eastern Europe, 1848-1945* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1983), 57-61. According to 1900 census the Magyars constituted only 45.5 percent of a total population, followed by the Roumanians (14.6%), Germans (11%) and the Slovaks (10.5%). See R.W.Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1972), 3.

domination.

The Slovaks and the Poles lived in different parts of Austria-Hungary and their national lots evolved after 1867 in diametrically opposed directions.¹⁰² Vienna granted extensive home rule privileges to Galicia (Austrian Poland), the Poles were often appointed as ministers in Vienna and the Polish fraction in the Austrian Parliament (*Reichsrat*) played an influential balancing role.¹⁰³ The Polish language was introduced in Galicia (Austrian Poland) in 1869 as a language of administration and all education systems in Galicia were gradually Polonized.¹⁰⁴

After the demise of Great Moravia in 907 the Slovaks lived in the Kingdom of Hungary. While the advent of the national renaissance (revival) and successful nation and nation-state building allowed several European nations to build their modern states and economies, the Slovaks had to assure their survival as an ethnic entity. Systematic Magyarization of the administration and education in Hungary planned to eliminate any non-Magyar national movement. In the 1870s Budapest closed all Slovak secondary schools and *Matica slovenská* (the Slovak Matica), the embryonic Slovak Academy of Sciences, the only Slovak cultural institution.¹⁰⁵ Although less

¹⁰² For more on Slovak - Polish relations in 1867 - 1918 see Viktor Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*. [Poles and Slovak National Struggle in the Dualist Era] (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1969).

¹⁰³ According to Fedor Houdek, the Poles [in Galicia] enjoyed, after the Germans and Magyars, the most privileges in Austria-Hungary and, therefore, they did not cooperate politically with other national groups (the Slovaks, Czechs, etc.). Fedor Houdek, *Vznik hraníc Slovenska* [Genesis of the Boundaries of Slovakia] (Bratislava: Knižnica Prúdov, 1931), 189. In 1866-1878, Vienna had to take into account the position of the Polish deputies in the *Reichsrat*. The Poles did not support the federal programme advocated by the Czechs and this stance led to far-reaching concessions, such as extension of Galician autonomy or a freer Polish national life. H. Wereszycki, "The Autonomy of Galicia," in *History of Poland*, 2d ed., ed. Aleksander Gieysztor et al. (Warszawa: PWN - Polish Scientific Publishers, 1979), 462-463.

¹⁰⁴ Borodovčák writes that the Polish language "blossomed" in Galicia in the 1870s. He points to the Polonization of the universities in Cracow and Lwów in 1871-1874 and the technical university in Lwów in 1877. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 57.

¹⁰⁵ Polonization of educational institutions in Galicia (the Cracow and Lwów universities in 1871-1874, the Lwów Technical University in 1877) and the establishment of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow (1873), coincided with closing of all Slovak secondary schools and elimination of *Matica slovenská*, the Slovak Academy of Sciences, in 1873-1875. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 57.

privileged than the German-Austrians and the Magyars, the Poles in Austria (Galicia) experienced after 1867 a considerable national revival, whereas the Slovaks in Hungary faced significant challenge to their national survival.

The disproportionate conditions for national life in Austria-Hungary had important consequences for Slovak - Polish relations and the Slovak-Polish linguistic border. The more tolerant environment in Austrian Poland stimulated the nationally-conscious expansion of sciences, arts and learning, which was accompanied by interest in neighbouring peoples and countries.

In the mid-1870s the Poles in Galicia started to “discover” the Slovaks and to familiarize themselves with Slovak territory and the Slovak national question in Hungary.¹⁰⁶ The tourist guides published in Galicia spread subtle Slovakophile agitation and encouraged readers to know more about Slovakia, which still remained a “terra incognita” for the Poles.¹⁰⁷ The scholars and visitors from Galicia discovered the presence of the Highlander population living along the Slovak-Polish linguistic border.¹⁰⁸ Some visitors started to awaken Polonophile feelings among the local

¹⁰⁶ Some Poles believed in possible reconciliation of the Magyars with the Slovaks. Jan Grzegorzewski embarked on an unsuccessful “Slovakophile mission” to Budapest in 1878 to lobby for scrapping Magyarization program. Grzegorzewski encouraged the delegates of Cracow and Lwów, at an exhibition at Pest in 1885, to lobby in favour of the Slovaks. Viktor Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 54-55. Jan Grzegorzewski (1850-1922) - Polish writer, Slavist and orientalist.

¹⁰⁷ The last quarter of the 19th century brought literary calls for defence of Polish population and formation of its national consciousness. The calls reacted to increasing national oppression in the Russian and German partitions of Poland. The national awakeners worked successfully in Upper and Tešín Silesia and in Kashubia. Tomasz Grabiński, Jerzy M. Roszkowski, and Stanisław A. Sroka, “Badania nad Spiszem w polskiej historiografii” [Studies of Spiš in Polish Historiography], *Terra Scepusiensis. Stav badania o dejinách Spiša [Terra Scepusiensis. Status of Research on History of Spiš]* (Levoča/Wrocław: MŠ SR & MNVŠ PR, 2003), 35. The following works encouraged Polish readers to familiarize themselves with Slovakia and the Slovaks: H. Müldner, *Szkyce z podróży po Slowacyi* [Sketches From Travels in Slovakia] (Krakow, 1877); A. Giller, *Z podróży po Kraju Slowackim* [Travels in Slovak Land] (Krakow, 1876). Müldner encouraged the Poles to discover Slovakia, which was for them “terra incognita.” Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 54. Bandrowski wrote in 1917 that the Poles knew very little about the Czechs and even less about the Slovaks. See Bandrowski, *Bílý lev*, 97.

¹⁰⁸ The Slovaks call the Highlanders along the Slovak - Polish linguistic border Gorals (*Gorali*) or Horals (*Horali*). The Poles call the Highlander population Góralś (*Górale*). The Highlanders themselves often decline these appellations. Several Slavic scholars noted the presence of the so-called Gorals throughout the 19th century. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 406-407.

population.¹⁰⁹ The Gorals in Orava and Spiš lived in a “transitional” area of the Slovak-Polish linguistic frontier where the intercourse of Slovak and Polish, two linguistically close groups, made it impossible to draw a sharp line.¹¹⁰ The Gorals in Orava and Spiš spoke the “Gvara” dialect, which is phonologically related to Polish, in their day-to-day life.¹¹¹ The status of Polish aspirations in northern Slovakia at the end of the 19th century reflected the terms - “neglected land” (*kraina zaniedbana*) or “forgotten districts” (*zapomniane kresy*) - employed in relation to the districts concerned.¹¹²

There was considerable increase in Polish scholarly works on “neglected Polish brothers behind the Carpathians” at the turn of the 19th - 20th centuries, which sharply contrasted with relative *désintéressement* in this subject displayed by the Galician political circles.¹¹³ The Highlanders

¹⁰⁹ Ferdynand Machaj (also Machaj) (1889 - 1967), a native of Jablonka in Orava, was a central figure of Polonophile movement in Orava. Machaj, attributed the rebirth of Polonophile sentiments in Orava and Spiš to two visits. The first one occurred in 1904, when Franciszek Wojciechowski and Julian Jerzy Teisseyre came from Cracow from Galicia to Zubrica in Orava. The visitors from Galicia were embarrassed by a local Highlander (Goral), who blamed them for neglecting the local population. After their return to Cracow, Wojciechowski and Teisseyre started to correspond with the locals and mail them Polish journals and calendars. The second visit concerned Machaj, his brother Karol and priest Kobylak, who visited Cracow in 1906. They were shocked to discover very lively Polish national life in Galicia. See Ferdynand Machaj, *Moja droga do Polski* [My Road to Poland] (Warsaw/Kraków: Nakład Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1923), 13-18.

¹¹⁰ Leon Wasilewski commented the situation on the Slovak-Polish linguistic frontier in 1896: “In the north, also in Spiš and Orava, the Slovaks blend with the Poles to such extent, that it is impossible to determine exactly where Slovak villages end and Polish ones begin. Owing to long lasting interaction of these two kin shoots, local folk dialects so assimilated and loaned adjacent elements, that the most skillful ethnographer could not sort out scientific classification of the population in the border zone.” See Leon Wasilewski, *Tydzień* 1896, IV, 273; quoted in Alojz Miškovič, *Napravená krivda* [Injustice Undone] (Turčiansky Svätý Martin: Kompas, 1940), 131.

¹¹¹ Slovak linguist V. Vážny was the first to suggest the expression “goral dialects” (*goralské nárečia*) in his study *Slovenské nárečia na Orave* [The Slovak dialects in Orava] in 1923. Allegedly, this proposal did not receive enthusiastic reception by the Polish linguists. Mieczysław Małecki found the expression “goral dialects” too broad and identifying some unspecified “mountain” dialect, unlike the expression “Polish dialects of Orava, Spisz, Czadecki” (*polskie gwary orawskie, spiskie, czadeckie*) that reflected its Polish character. See Ivor Ripka, “Mieczysław Małecki (1903 - 1946)”, *Slavica Slovaca* XXXIIX, No.2 (2003): 174. Ferdynand Machaj read his first complete Polish book (Sienkiewicz’s *Na polu chwały*) in 1910, he admitted he did not understand many Polish words. Machaj, *Moja droga do Polski*, 36-37. Matuschak wrote that the Gorals in Orava and Spiš spoke Slovak in their public, academic and religious activities. Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 120-124.

¹¹² Tomasz Grabiński, Jerzy M. Roszkowski, and Stanisław A. Sroka, “Badania nad Spiszem w polskiej historiografii,” 40.

¹¹³ Bandrowski argued: “We did not care about the fate of this people [the Highlanders]. Quite recently, when the Magyars showed interest to support our agitation among the Slovaks in the Spiš County, [Polish organization] *Macierz Szkolna* (the School Mother) started its activities there.” Bandrowski, *Bily lev*, 97-98.

(Gorals), presented as “unredeemed [Polish] brothers” behind the Carpathians, became an issue that would complicate Slovak - Polish relations in the 20th century.¹¹⁴

Scientific and educational life of the Slovaks, choked by accelerating Magyarization of Hungary, could not compete with the Polish scientific and educational revival in Galicia in the 1870s and the similar trend in Bohemia in the 1880s.¹¹⁵ The limited or no scientific investigation left linguists to speak only with a restrained certainty regarding languages in the borderlands of Slovakia.¹¹⁶ As a consequence, the Slovaks started to lose, as Dr. Cambel¹¹⁷ argued, at that moment only scientifically, their positions in the ongoing debate on the historical, linguistic and cultural character of northern Slovakia, when some scholars started to describe the local population in Orava and Spiš as purely Polish.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 404. For more on “redeeming activities” in Spiš and Orava see *ibid.*, 404 - 438.

¹¹⁵ The Czech language achieved parity with German in the 1880s. Numerous secondary schools appeared and separate universities and technical colleges were founded with Czech as a language of instruction. Prague University was divided in 1882 into German and Czech branches. Otto Urban, “Czech society in 1848-1918,” in *Bohemia in History*, ed. Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 210. All the above stimulated Czech scientific and educational revival in Bohemia and Moravia, the same way the Polonization of education and administration induced the Polish revival in Galicia in the 1870s. Ferdynand Machay and his entourage, during their visit to Cracow in 1906, were shocked to find all signs in Polish and the local population conversing in Polish, in short, the Polish language was freely used, unlike in Hungary, in daily life in Galicia. See Ferdynand Machay, *Moja droga do Polski* [My Road to Poland] (Warsaw/Kraków: Nakład Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1923), 16-18.

¹¹⁶ This was a conclusion made by Casimir Nitsch, Polish linguist, in his study on the Polish-Czech and Polish-Slovak linguistic: “But, as in all the Slovak country, this [Orava] dialect has been subjected to very little scientific investigation and therefore we can only speak with certainty of neighbourhoods where the language is typically Polish.” See BPK, No. 238, Casimir Nitsch, *The Polish Bohemian and Polish-Slovak Frontier* [sic], AAN, Biuro Prac Kongresowych przy Ministerstwie Spraw Zagranicznych w Warszawie, t. 178, 6-7.

¹¹⁷ Dr. Samo Cambel (Czambel) (1856 - 1909) - Slovak linguist, official at the Presidium of the Hungarian Council of Ministers in Budapest, author of the several works dealing with Slovak language (*Príspevky dejinám jazyka slovenského* (1887), *Slovenský pravopis* (1890), *K reči o slovenskom pravopise* (1891), *Potreba nového slovníka slovenského a maďarského* (1891), *Rukoväť spisovnej reči slovenskej* (1902), *Slováci a ich reč* (1903), *Slovenská reč a jej miesto v rodine slovanských jazykov* (1906)).

¹¹⁸ Dr. Samo Czambel, *Slováci a ich reč* [Slovaks and Their Language] (Budapest: nakladom vlastnym. tlacou c. a kr. dvornej knihtlac. Viktora Hornyanszkeho, 1903), 47. Cambel quoted Fr. Pastrnek and his article “Slovenština” in *Slovensko*, 55-56. Pastrnek sketched the Slovak-Polish linguistic frontier in northern Slovakia (in the counties of Trenčín, Orava and Spiš) and classified the population of the borderlands as “Hungarian Poles.” These “Hungarian Poles” were subjected to progressive Slovakization due to the Slovaks’ enormous vitality. Pastrnek believed that the previous Slovak-Polish linguistic frontier in Spiš and in the Trenčín county was different and that the current line was established by subsequent colonization. *Ibid.* Professor Niederle in his work “An ethnological map of the Slovaks of Hungary” observed that the Hungarian Government inscribed the inhabitants of Spiš as Slovaks disregarding their own

Dr. Samo Cambel pointed to the view, which presented Polish claims to Orava and Spiš in northern Slovakia as activities stirred up by some activist scholars: “...So the Poles started scientifically to take from us [Slovakia] the northern Orava, the Russians the Slovak East and the Czech-Moravian nation [our] North-West. But these are purely scientific conclusions, which do no harm to our nation.”¹¹⁹ Some views attributed a loose ethnographic border, such as existed along the Slovak - Polish linguistic frontier, to a character of the Slovak language: “Maybe this is a strength as well as a weakness of the Slovak nation. The strength of [the Slovak nation] rests in the fact that *Slovak forms the linguistic centre of other Slavic languages* [italics in original], hence, its weakness stems therefrom, its *loose ethnographic borders* allows losing of thousands [of Slovak speakers] to the benefit of neighbouring, but not foreign Slavic nations.”¹²⁰ According to this theory the Slovaks were of ancient origin and their territory blended along the linguistic frontier with their Slavic neighbours: “The Slovak nation is an ancient ethnographic individuality, reaching back to pre-history, with its rather clearly delineated territory, but its clean ethnographic colour suddenly transits and approximates neighbouring, however, only Slavic ethnographic individualities.”¹²¹

On the other hand, Polish historians, ethnographers and linguists viewed the Orava and Spiš regions as areas of direct Polish influence since its appearance in history, and linguistically, as purely Polish territories.¹²² They failed to differentiate between Polish roots of Slovak dialects in Orava and Spiš and the Slovak national consciousness of their speakers and deduced from the “Polish dialects”

wishes: “....It is difficult to say how far these villages are still Polish at the present time. As a general rule these Poles have been inscribed as Hungarians.” See Appendix 2 to the Letter from M. Skirmunt, Polish Delegate to the League of Nations to the Secretary-General, 12 September 1923, PCIJ, *Documents (Jaworzina)*, 308.

¹¹⁹ See the article “Nalady a vyhlady” [Opinions and Forecasts], *Národné Noviny* No. 262, (1897); quoted in Samo Czambel, *Slováci a ich reč* (Budapest: nakladom vlastnym. tlaou c. a kr. dvornej knihtlac. Viktora Hornyanszkeho, 1903), 120.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Pavlík, *op.cit.*, 123.

(*gwary polskie*) the existence of the “Polish population” (*ludność polska*).¹²³ Even the Galician Slovakophiles of *Świat Słowiański* (the Slavic World) considered northern parts of Slovakia as the areas inhabited by the Polish population.¹²⁴

The Hungarian government believed that it had arrested the development of Slovak national consciousness in Orava and Spiš and that national consciousness stagnated in the last decade of the 19th century.¹²⁵ Despite continuing repression, surveillance and legislative obstacles, the *façade* of

¹²³ Ivor Ripka, “Mieczysław Małecki (1903 - 1946)”, *Slavica Slovaca* XXXIIX, No.2 (2003): 174. Ivor Ripka writes that “...certain patriotic feelings prevented [Mieczysław Małecki] to differentiate between Polish roots of Slovak dialects in Orava and Spiš and Slovak national consciousness of their speakers, ... and ... deduced from the “Polish dialects” (*gwary polskie*) the existence of the “Polish population” (*ludność polska*). *Ibid.* Machay wrote that this reasoning was the pervading note of the Polish agitation in northern Slovakia in 1910-1913 : “Ludzie, zastanówcie się! Jakim językiem mówicie, takim narodem być musicie.” Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 101. In this regard, Machay admitted committing one of the greatest *faux pas* in his life in Erdudka in Orava. Machay, a freshly ordained priest, visited Erdudka, the westernmost “Polish” village in Orava, during his stay in Zázrivá in the summer of 1912. Machay insisted on exclusively Polish service in this “Polish” village: “I then made one of the biggest mistakes in my life, when I spoke in “our language” [*po naszymu*].” Machay admitted his audience reacted only after he switched from Polish to Slovak, as nobody prayed in Polish in Erdudka: “I prayed in vain in Polish, they always responded in Slovak.” The local population considered him “missionary from Cracow,” who learned something from the local language. *Ibid.*, 79-80. When Machay addressed the parishioners in his native Jablonka in Orava, in November 1912, he spoke exclusively in Slovak. In fact, Machay delivered his first sermon in Polish (except Erdudka in 1912) only on 26 July 1914, during the first Spiš-Orava Day in Zakopane, in Galicia! *Ibid.*, 82, 113-115.

¹²⁴ Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 396.

Świat Słowiański published in 1908 a proposal on federalization of Austria - Hungary. The Galician Slovakophiles and Slavophiles proposed to reform Austria-Hungary into a federation of ten autonomous provinces: 1. Bohemia, Moravia, Czech Silesia and the Czech Lower Austria, 2. Polish Galicia, Polish Silesia and Polish Hungarian Counties, 3. Ukrainian-Polish Galicia, 4. the Upper Austria, German Tyrol, Salzburg, German Steiermark, German Carinthia, Austria, 5. Krajina, Slovenian Carinthia, Gorica, Slovenian Istrija, 6. Italian Tyrol, 7. Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Hungarian Serbia, 8. Magyar Hungary, 9. Slovakia, 10. Romanian Hungary. Cf. “Rozwój Austrii,” *Świat Słowiański* 1908, vol.2, 1025-1033. As the proposal indicated, even the Galician Slovakophiles planned to incorporate “Polish” counties of Hungary into the proposed Polish province of federated Austria - Hungary. The “Polish” counties of Hungary would coincide with the counties of Orava, Spiš and Trenčín on the territory of today’s Slovakia.

¹²⁵ The police report of the chief administrator (*hlavný župan*) of the Orava County, dated 21 October 1890, informed: “...the masses are not only loyal to Hungary, but nationally unconscious, particularly the Catholics, which (in comparison to the more “progressive” Lutherans) form up to 90 % of the population in the county.” Slovak National Archives Bratislava, Uhr. kr. Min. Vnútra, fasc. III, hl. žup. Oravskej župy, Report of the Interior Ministry, 21 October 1890; quoted in Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 411. In spite of relative tranquility the Hungarian authorities remained vigilant and the police applied even the most extreme measures of physical expulsion. St. Stojalowski, Polish political activist, who worked for some time in the area of the Slovak town of Čadca, was later expelled for his activities from Hungary. In Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 411. Cf. Stojalowski’s letter to J.Bednarski, 11 September 1911, Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, *Zbiory specjalne* - the estate of J.Bednarski; Stojalowski’s letter to Bednarski of 11 September 1911, sign 6436/III; or the references in *Gazeta Powszechna* 1909, nos. 64-67, *Przegląd Tygodniowy* 1898, 370; z *Ziemi Spiszskiej*, *Świat Słowiański* 1910, t. II, 248, *Ludność Polska na Węgrzech*.

centralized Magyar-speaking Hungary showed signs of nationally-conscious mobilization of non-Magyar nationals in the first decade of the 20th century.¹²⁶ The Slovak Catholics became more assertive through the People's Party and channeled their educational activities through the St. Adalbert Society (*Spolok sv. Vojtecha*), which distributed Slovak calendars, theological and secular books. The Galician activists distributed Polish literature and grammar books in the northern Slovak regions adjoining Galicia.¹²⁷ The distribution of newspapers, liturgical and secular literature required a network of local distributors and activists, who were recruited locally in order to avoid an impression that an irredentism was "imported" from Galicia.¹²⁸ Intensification of Polonophile activism in Orava and Spiš in northern Slovakia paralleled with increased journalistic and publishing output in Galicia dedicated to the "neglected Polish brothers living beyond the Carpathians."¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Machay described the 1910s as the era of the wildest [Magyar] chauvinism. The Hungarian government persecuted the smallest sentiments of pan-Slavist activities in the theological seminaries, such as conversation in Slovak, public sympathies with the Slovak national movement, correspondence with the "pan-Slavs," etc. The students faced pressure to Magyarize their names and the Ostrihom Seminary offered a special bursary to the students willing to change their names. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 63.

¹²⁷ See the correspondence between V. Kapuštiak, native of Orava, with Galician Polonophiles, Stojalowski and Bednarski, regarding the distribution of Polish books in Orava. See the following letters in the Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, zb. spec. - fond Bednarski: V. Kapuštiak to Bednarski 8.2.1911 (sign. 6436 m); Stojalowski to Bednarski, 25 June 1907; Stojalowski to Bednarski, 25 June 1907 (Sign. 6436); Kapuštiak to Bednarski, 10 February 1908 (Sign. 436 M. no. 426 a). Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 412.

¹²⁸ The state organs, the police and the administration, viewed with concern growing recruitment of local activists for "national liberation" process in the Orava and Spiš regions. The chief administrator (*hlavný župan*) of the Orava County admitted that "new slogans and ideas are already in blood of populace and inspire them." Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 413. Cf. Štátny archív [The State Archives] Bytča, Orav. zupa, hl. zup. 59/1908 dôv. The state machinery applied various preventive measures to arrest local nationalist mobilization, such as re-shuffling and relocation of the teachers and priests, and increased police presence. In Viktor Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 413.

¹²⁹ The following articles in *Świat Słowiański* (The Slavic World) and other works referred to the Polonophile activities in the Slovak districts: *Świat Słowiański*, May 1908 (W. Krotoski, *Stosunki etnograficzne na Spiszu*); *Świat Słowiański*, July 1908 (*Do wiadomości naszych madiarofilów*); *Świat Słowiański*, November 1908 (L. Kolankowski, *Polska a Węgry*); *Świat Słowiański*, June 1909 (F. Koneczny, *Prusofilstwo, mazarofilstwo*); *Świat Słowiański* (August 1909 (G. Smólski, *Ludność Polska we wschodnich i środkowych zupaństwach górnych Węgier*); the articles of E. Kolodziejczyk ("Ludność Polska na Węgrzech," *Dziennik Poznański* 1907, II, 273; "Sprawa Słowacka," *Słowo polskie* 1904, 1381); the articles of Smólski in March and April issues of *Práca* 1909; in *Tydzień* 1909, no. 22, 24. See Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 412. Borodovčák argues that the dramatic increase of Galician publications on "neglected Polish brothers living beyond the Carpathians" occurred at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. *Ibid.*, 407.

Mobilization and coordination of awakening of the Polish consciousness in Orava and Spiš by the Galician Poles made an impression that “national awakening movement” in Spiš and Orava came from abroad.¹³⁰ The Polish press criticized the Slovaks for their silence about or negligence of what the Polish press viewed as the Polish-conscious community.¹³¹ It took some time for the Slovak press to end its silence about the Slovak - Polish linguistic frontier. The Slovak People’s Daily (*Slovenské ľudové noviny*) became the first Slovak newspaper, which admitted existence of the Gorals in Orava and Spiš and praised the Galician Poles for their assistance to the Gorals against the Magyar oppression. The Slovak People’s Daily recognized as justified demands for primary education in respective mother tongue. But *Slovenské ľudové noviny* refused the accusations that the Slovaks were de-nationalizing the Gorals.¹³² On the other hand, *Świat Słowiański* criticized also the Galician Poles for neglecting the Slovak - Polish linguistic frontier.¹³³ The criticism of *Świat Słowiański* prompted other Slovak journals to take part in Slovak - Polish controversy over the character of Orava and Spiš.¹³⁴ The Slavophile activists in Galicia believed that the eventual

¹³⁰ Machay argued that the first Galician “awakener” of Polonophiles in Orava and Spiš was dr. Jan Bednarski. He established contacts with Orava and Spiš in 1897, with the farmers in Podvlk (Podwilk), whom he contacted through Łabuda in Bukovina in Orava, a native from Galician Podhale. Bednarski set up the first Polonophile library at Łabuda in Orava. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 50-51. Dr. Bednarski became one of the coordinators of national awakening activities in the Orava and Spiš regions. Dr. Bednarski co-founded the *Gazeta Podhalańska*, he was a deputy in the provincial, regional and local assemblies for the National Democracy (ND). In 1919 -1921 Dr. Bednarski participated in various delimitation commissions for the Orava and Spiš. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 413.

¹³¹ *Świat Słowiański* criticized the Slovak press for being silent, for a long time, about the Goral question in the Orava and Spiš regions. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 416. Cf. *Świat Słowiański* 1910, vol. 2, 364.

¹³² Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 416. *Świat Słowiański*’s claim for protection of the Gorals against Slovakization accused the Slovaks of the same de-nationalization as practiced by the Magyars through the Magyarization. In *ibid.*

¹³³ *Świat Słowiański* criticized that “Polish-Goral element, together with the Slovaks, have been crying for help for a long time, but the Polish élites fraternized with the Magyars and disregarded “*ścisk Polaków na Węgrzech*” [oppression of the Poles in Hungary].” *Świat Słowiański* 1910, t. II, 364, quoted in *ibid.*, 416-417.

¹³⁴ The polemic between *Slovenské ľudové noviny* and *Świat Słowiański* inspired other Slovak journals to react to the alleged Slovakization of the Gorals in Orava and Spiš: “Slovanská demokracia,” *Slovenský týždenník* 1910, no. 28; “Streštenost’ poľských šovinistov,” *Slovenský denník* 1912, no. 89, 3; *Národnie noviny* 1912, no. 3. *Ibid.*, 417.

recognition of the Polish national and linguistic rights in Orava and Spiš by the Hungarian government could be the last straw to prompt the government to recognize also the Slovak national and linguistic rights.¹³⁵

The Hungarian government and the Magyarophiles¹³⁶ worked hard to prevent possible Slovak-Polish cooperation and, instead, attempted to direct the awakening of the Polish consciousness in Orava and Spiš against Slovak national emancipation.¹³⁷ The Hungarian government played with a card of Pan-slavism, its traditional red-herring tactics, employed by the government against any nascent national emancipation movement.¹³⁸ Budapest skillfully manipulated the so-called Goral question to break down Slovak-Polish cooperation against the Magyarization, which posed a challenge also to the Galician Poles.¹³⁹ Galician Slovakophiles and Slavophiles hesitated to be manipulated by Budapest against the Slovaks, but some activists believed the support

¹³⁵ *Świat Słowiański* 1910, vol. 12, 217-250, quoted in *ibid.*, 418.

¹³⁶ The prominent representatives of the Magyarophiles were A. Divéky, Eugen Stercula and Alexander Matonog. Eugen Stercula (Eugenjusz Stercula), was a native of Podvilk (Podwilk in Polish) and was a pharmacist in Jablonka in Orava. Stercula admitted to Machay he was Goral but he felt more Magyar. Stercula displayed his support to Polonophile cause by adding a Polish sign “Apteka” to the previously displayed “Gyógyszertár” [Pharmacy]. Machay found in him a great friend of Polish cause. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 39-40. A. Divéky worked as professor in Levoča and Alexander Matonog worked as notary in Podvilk in Orava. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 420.

¹³⁷ Machay feared the Hungarian government could manipulate the Polonophile movement the same way it manipulated the so-called “East Slovak national movement.” The Slovak population in Prešov, in East Slovakia, spoke its distinct dialect and maintained its regional character. When the local population received with enthusiasm the first Slovak kindergartens, the Magyarones proposed to “create” East-Slovak language. Slovak Renegade Viktor Dvorcsak (Dvorčák) played crucial role in these activities, the Hungarian authorities found weekly *Naša zástava* (Our Standard) and published religious and secular books. The weekly *Naša zástava* was published with Magyar spelling. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 62-3. Viktor Dvortsak (Dvorčák) declared on 6 December 1918 an independent “East Slovak Republic” on the grounds that “Eastern Slovaks” formed a separate nationality. Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia, The State That Failed* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2009), 44. The Budapest daily *Pesti Hírlap* and the Magyarophile journals such as *Árvamegyei Hírlap* (written in Magyar) and *Naša zástava* (written in the East Slovak dialect) lobbied for Polish linguistic demands and argued for Polish replacing Slovak in Orava and Spiš. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 418-419.

¹³⁸ Machay argued that the Hungarian government viewed pan-Slavism as the worst crime (“...największa zbrodnia na Węgrzech: panslawizm.”), because the government labeled as pan-Slavism any movement of national awareness. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 36.

¹³⁹ Machay wrote that Stercula succeeded to persuade the Hungarian government to tolerate the Polonophile activities in Orava also because of his argument that the Polonized Highlanders (Gorals) in Orava would be more amenable to the Magyarization than the Slovaks. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 63.

of the Hungarian government to their awakening activities in the Slovak-Polish linguistic frontier would be beneficial, even at the price of the Slovak sympathies.¹⁴⁰

The systematic activities among the Slovak Highlanders started in the 1910s.¹⁴¹ The Polonophile activism along the Slovak-Polish linguistic frontier in Orava and Spiš, supported by the Hungarian government, scored significant success at the time of the 1910 population census in Hungary.¹⁴² A novelty of the Hungarian census of 1910 was that it recognized that the Polish language existed in the Trstená district of Orava (there were about 17,000 Poles), but its existence was denied not only in Spiš and in the Trenčín district, but even in the Námestovo district, in Orava itself.¹⁴³ The question of Spiš and Orava's alleged Polish character, propagated by local activists,

¹⁴⁰ The Magyars and Magyarones failed to persuade the Slovakophiles of the *Świat Słowiański* to work against the Slovaks. See their following correspondence (Stercula, Divéki, Bednarski, Gwiżdż): Machay to Bednarski, 7 September 1911, sign. 3446/110, Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, the Bednarski estate; Stercula to Bednarski, 25 September 1911, sign. 6436/III, Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, the Bednarski estate. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 421. The Slovakophiles and Slavophiles saw the Goral question as an integral part of a larger question of nationalities in Hungary, some believed the Goral question would snowball and prompt a complex solution of the nationalities question in Hungary. The Magyarophiles, who believed in traditional Magyar/Hungarian-Polish friendship, saw the Goral question separately from the other nationalities in Hungary. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 423-424. The Magyarophiles and Magyarones in Hungary wanted to detach the Goral question from the package of the nationalities in Hungary and to present the Goral movement in Orava and Spiš as a loyalist Hungarian activism along the traditional Magyar/Hungarian-Polish friendship. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 422-423. Some Polish journals, *Słowo Polskie*, *Rzecz Pospolita* and *Dziennik Cieszyński*, wrote about alleged Slovakization of the Gorals and directed attacks against those who saw the Goral question as a help to the Slovaks against the national oppression. The editor of *Świat Słowiański*, F. Koneczny was attacked by *Rzeczpospolita* in 1911. See "W Polsce o Węgrach," *Rzeczpospolita* 1911, no. 49; and Fr. Koneczny's reply, *Świat Słowiański* 1911, vol. I, 289. *Ibid.*, 423.

¹⁴¹ Machay admitted that: "In 1910-1913, when we started serious movement, the Slovaks exercised uncontested command of our people. Everyone considered himself Slovak here, despite the fact that he spoke the clearest Polish language." Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 101.

¹⁴² Machay described Matenga (Matonog) as the first "apostle" of Polishness in Orava around 1910. Matenga worked at the theatre in Cracow and frequently travelled to Orava, where he worked as a dedicated adherent of Polish-Magyar friendship. Machay attributed to Matenga (Matonog) the Hungarian government's decision to introduce a new statistical category - "Poles" - for the 1910 population census in Orava. (Machay wrote: "On się przyczynił głównie do tego, że przy spisie ludności w r.1911, do statystyki zarejestrowano i nas - jako Polaków.") See Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 46. Matuschak wrote that the alleged Polish background of Orava and Spiš was originated by Matenga and Stercula and approved and supported by Hungarian officials and press. The Hungarian government hoped to weaken the Slovaks at the time of the 1910 census. The Poles (Bednarski, Gwiżdż) received renegades Matenga and Stercula, but the people of Orava and Spiš not. Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 120-124..

¹⁴³ BPK, No. 238, Casimir Nitsch, *The Polish Bohemian and Polish-Slovak Frontier* [sic], AAN, Biuro Prac Kongresowych przy Ministerstwie Spraw Zagranicznych w Warszawie, t. 178, 8.

assumed political meaning. Alexander Matenga (Matonog) and Eugen Stercula (Eugenjusz Stercula) with approved and support by Hungarian officials and press, work actively to enlist the local Highlander population to identify itself as Poles.¹⁴⁴ The Polonophile activities met with very limited success among the local population, but the number of statistical Poles increased rather dramatically in Orava.¹⁴⁵

The intensification of awakening activities along the Slovak - Polish linguistic border signaled the pamphlet *Co my za jedni a kielo nas jest na Węgrzech* (Who We Are and How Many of Us Are There in Hungary).¹⁴⁶ This pamphlet sowed confusion among the local population, but caused a division also among the awakeners of the Polish consciousness in Orava and Spiš. Ferdynand Machay and some other awakeners, who, unlike the Galician Poles, wanted to work for

¹⁴⁴ Machay admitted that Stercula and Matenga (Matonog) scored a huge success in Orava, when the first Hungarian statistics, based on the 1910 census, showed a presence of approximately 17,000 Poles in Orava. Machay claimed Stercula and Matenga (Matonog) did the most to persuade the local Highlanders to declare themselves as Poles. Stercula and Matenga (Matonog) lobbied even Count Andrassy through Głabinski and the outcome was a bombshell. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 67.

¹⁴⁵ Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948*, 120-124. The Slovaks and Slovakophiles believed that the only pro-Polish individuals in Orava and Spiš were imported Polish priests and teachers, plus a few bribed traitors who followed their models: the renegades Ferdinand and Karl Machay, Eugene and Anthony Sukora and the pro-Hungarian renegades Matonga and Stercula. They all, with the exception of Stercula, were natives of Jablonka before being seduced by the Poles for their expansionist schemes. The Slovaks explained their activities by opportunism and thirst for power, rather than the conviction in the Polish cause. *Ibid.* Czecho-Slovak Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš questioned the statistics of 1900 and 1910 at the Paris Peace Conference: "For instance in the case of the town of Richvaldt the Austrian statistics gave as the population in 1900: 4,500 Poles against 11 Czechs; and in 1910, 2,900 Czechs against 3,000 Poles. This gives a clear idea of the manner in which Austrian statistics are compiled." Hankey's Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 29 January 1919, 3:30 P.M., in Arthur S. Link et al., eds., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966-), vol. 54, 344-345.

¹⁴⁶ Machay wrote that Matenga, Stercula and himself proposed to Bednarski the idea of "doing something" ("że trzebaby coś zrobić"), to publish a pamphlet written in Goral, in July of 1911. Bednarski asked them to write the contributions to the pamphlet, he proposed to finance a project. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 49-50. The preparations of the pamphlet *Co my za jedni a kielo nas jest na Węgrzech* started already in 1911, the pamphlet appeared in 1912. Borodovčák argues that the correspondence between of the Magyars and Magyarones with Bednarski demonstrates the motives behind the publication of this pamphlet. The action hoped to gain the acceptance of anti-Slovak oriented Goral movement by the Hungarian government. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 424. Cf. A. Matonog to Bednarski, 7 January 1912, sign. 6436/216, Bibl. Jag. - Kraków.

the emancipation of the Gorals, but refused to be misused against the Slovaks.¹⁴⁷ Machay abandoned the Magyarones and his work on drafting the pamphlet *Co my za jedni a kielo nas jest na Węgrzech*:

...we [the Poles in Galicia and in Slovakia], who care in our hearts for interests of our people, do not have singular spirit. I stand fully on the Slovak platform, my heart is entirely Polish, but I care a little about the Polish-Magyar friendship.... We Poles proclaim that they [Magyars] are our friends, however, they had little in common with us.... [Magyars] could have learned long time ago, that they also have Poles in their country.... Due to the fact that I was brought up in a different environment [than the Galician Poles], I cannot patiently read and listen that Pole should beat Slovak....¹⁴⁸

The doubts and dilemmas articulated here by Ferdynand Machay puzzled many awakeners of the Polish consciousness in Orava and Spiš. The population along the linguistic frontier, the Slovaks and the new-born Poles, shared the similar values, lived in certain spiritual and political harmony and faced the same educational and linguistic obstacles to their national life.¹⁴⁹

The pamphlet *Co my za jedni a kielo nas jest na Węgrzech* appeared in 1912 under a revised

¹⁴⁷ The opinions of Machay and the Magyarophiles differed with regard to the anti-Slovak orientation of the Goral movement and its separation from the Slovak national movement. The Magyarophiles criticized Machay for his section of the pamphlet, which they deemed too anti-Magyar. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 425. Cf. Letter by A. Matonog to Bednarski, 7 January 1912, sign. 6436/216, Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, the Bednarski estate; Matonog to Bednarski, 27 January 1912; *ibid.* Machay ceased cooperating with the Magyarophile Goral activists during the preparatory stage of the pamphlet. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 433. Cf. Letter by A. Matonog to Bednarski, 26 April 1913, sig. 6436/256, Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, The Bednarského estate.

¹⁴⁸ Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 425-426. Cf. Letter by Machay to Bednarski, 12 July 1911, sign. 6436/102, Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, the Bednarski estate; Letter by Machay to Bednarski, 4 April 1913, sign. 6436/137, Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, the Bednarski estate; Letter by A. Matonog to Bednarski, 7 January 1912, sign. 6436/216, Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, the Bednarski estate.

¹⁴⁹ Borodovčák quotes V. Kapuštiak and his letter to Bednarski, dated 26 January 1908. Kapuštiak, identifying himself as a "Polish-feeling Goral," wrote "how the Magyars oppress us, the Slovaks," and compared the situation with the Prussian oppression of the Poles. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 426. Machay, Hric, Kapuščiak and some other Polonophiles objected to engaging the "Goral action" against the Slovak national struggle. In fact, Machay criticized anti-Slovak orientation of the Polish-Magyar friendship and blamed Bednarski, Gwiżdż (the editor of *Gazeta Podhańska*) for their cosiness with the Magyars and Magyarone activists. *Ibid.* Cf. Letter by F. Machay to Bednarski, 4 April 1913, sign. 6436/137, Bibl. Jag. - Krakow, the Bednarski estate. F. Gwiżdż admitted to Bednarski his opposition to the Slavophile orientation of the Goral movement. *Ibid.* Cf. Letter by F. Gwiżdż to Bednarski, 13 December 1913, sign. 6436/246, Bibl. Jag. - Krakow, the Bednarski estate. Machay believed that Polish character of the Poles beyond the borders of Hungary resulted in a particular pan-Slavism, which differentiated them from all other Slavs. *Ibid.*, 427. Cf. Letter by F. Machay to Bednarski, 4 April 1913, Bibl. Jag. - Krakow, the Bednarski estate.

title *Co my za jedni (Polok cy slowiok?)* (Who We Are (Pole or Slovak?)).¹⁵⁰ After Machay's departure,¹⁵¹ the Magyarophiles revised his section of the pamphlet, in order to make it more anti-Slovak.¹⁵² It was of no avail to them, the local representatives of the Hungarian government feared even this controlled and friendly form of national self-awareness campaign and they decided to confiscate the pamphlet.¹⁵³ The pamphlet *Co my za jedni* gave rise to a new round of debate between the Slovaks and the Poles on the nature of Slovak-Polish relations and the so-called Goral question.¹⁵⁴ The Galician Poles and the Slovaks found themselves in the middle of a sort of blame game.¹⁵⁵ While the Slovaks generally acknowledged existence of the Polish-feeling Gorals along the Slovak-Polish linguistic frontier in Orava and Spiš, they tended to deflect the accusations of the

¹⁵⁰ *Co my za jedni (Polok cy slowiok?)* (Kraków: Eug. Stercula v Jablonce, 1912).

¹⁵¹ Machay informed the Slovaks about the pamphlet's anti-Slovak orientation in advance. Machay hoped to bring closer Andrej Hlinka and Bednarski, and the Hlinka's adherents planned to address the Goral question in their electoral platform. Despite of this, the anti-Slovak tone of the pamphlet *Co my za jedni (Polok cy slowiok?)* caught by surprise Hlinka and his collaborators. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 428.

¹⁵² Bednarski, who sponsored publication of the pamphlet, insisted it should criticize the Slovakization of the Gorals, rather than the Magyarization. Accordingly, Stercula and Matonog edited the section written originally by Machay. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 427. Cf. Letter by Matonog to Bednarski, 5 March 1912, Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, the Bednarski estate; Letter by Matonog to Bednarski, 7 April 1912; Bibl. Jag. - Kraków, the Bednarski estate.

¹⁵³ The Hungarian government ignored the so-called Goral question, it ignored also the so-called Orava Memorandum, which was initiated by Stercula in 1913. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 437. Cf. Letter by Matonog to Bednarski, 7 April 1912, Bibl. Jag. Kraków - the Bednarski estate; Stercula, Jenő, Jablonkai, lakós, memorandum a goral kérdés tárgyában, ŚA (State Archives) B.Bystrica, pob. Bytča, Żupa oravská, hl.zup. 1913/307; A goral kérdésre vonatkozó memorandum, Prime Minister's Reply no. 36/1914, *ibid.*; Letter by Stercula to Bednarski, 8 May 1912, sign. 6436/III, Bibl. Jag. Kraków - the Bednarski estate.

¹⁵⁴ Machay observed that when the pamphlet appeared [in 1912]: "our people was divide into two camps: nationalist (Slovaks) and governmental. I wanted to gain [nationally] self-conscious part (although it was question whether they could be called that, given the fact they declared themselves as Slovaks, thus they were not [nationally] self-conscious part [in the sense Machay wanted]." Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 72. Machay wrote that the Slovaks were either shocked or unimpressed [by the pamphlet], because the pamphlet was clear anti-Slovak in its orientation. The Magyarophiles did not receive positively the pamphlet either. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 73.

¹⁵⁵ *Świat Słowiański* and its Slovakophile group (Edm. Kolodziejczyk, J. Magiera, Grzegorzewski, Zawiliński) worked to improve deteriorating Slovak - Polish relations. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 434. Cf. *Świat Słowiański* 1913, XVIII, 475-478. But the Slovakophile *Towarzystwo Słowiańskie* in Cracow adopted in March 1913, on instigation of a Slovak priest in attendance, a resolution, which supported common Slovak-Polish activities in Hungary against the Magyars. The Magyarophiles Stercula and Matenga (Matonog) wrote against this idea in the Galician journals. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 90-91. F. Gwiżdż, the editor of *Gazety Podhalańska*, disagreed with *Świat Słowiański* regarding the Slovak question. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 434. Cf. Letter by F. Gwiżdż to Bednarski, 13 December 1913, sign. 6436/246, Bibl. Jag. Kraków, the Bednarski estate.

Slovaks denationalizing them. Instead, the Slovaks believed the Galician Poles neglected the Goral community, which could only benefit, under these circumstances, from Slovak educational activities among them.¹⁵⁶ The emergence of several mutually exclusive ethnic and linguistic nationalisms along the Slovak - Polish linguistic border added a particular twist to the complex issue of national identity and the answers to the questions “Who is a Slovak?” or “Who is a Pole?” would be an uneasy task.¹⁵⁷

Before World War I, the so-called Goral question carried no territorial implications.¹⁵⁸ Budapest accepted small rectification of the border in the High Tatras around the Morské oko,¹⁵⁹ but elsewhere it resolutely opposed attempts to alter territorial integrity of the country. The Galician movement in northern Slovakia tried to awaken pro-Polish consciousness along the Slovak - Polish linguistic border.¹⁶⁰ The awakeners of the Polish consciousness in Orava and Spiš, found it inconceivable and impossible, to break the territorial integrity of the old Hungary.¹⁶¹ The question

¹⁵⁶ *Národné noviny* (The National News) in Martin argued: “...What is better for them [the Gorals]? Is it better to disappear, to assimilate with the Magyar element, or to remain the Goral element, which speaks and understands Slovak....” Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 433. Cf. *Národné noviny* 1912, no. 3. *Świat Słowiański* concurred with the above assessment of the situation: “...the Goral element, due to sinful negligence by the Poles themselves, did not know at all the standardized Polish.... But the Slovaks could not be blamed for that. ...the Magyar school estrange the Orava and Spiš Goral from his mother language.... He accepted the Slovak language ... without being forced by the Slovak village intellectuals to do that.” Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 435. Cf. *Świat Słowiański* 1913, vol. XVIII, 462-464, 464-474.

¹⁵⁷ Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 135-136.

¹⁵⁸ Machay admitted that the Hungarian government would recognize the Goral nationality - not the Polish one, only in accordance with the dictum *divide et impera*. He learned it from explanations of Stercula, who collaborated in the Goral question with the [Hungarian] government. Stercula had to persuade the Orava county Director that the Polonophile movement in Orava did not target the Magyarization policy, and would not demand any new rights, such as Polish schools or administration. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 61.

¹⁵⁹ See Zofia Nowak, *Władysław Zamoyski a spór o Morskie Oko w latach 1889 - 1909* [Władysław Zamoyski and the Dispute of the Morskie Oko in 1889-1909] (Kraków: Oficyna Podhalańska, 1992). The international arbitration of the dispute took place from 21 August to 13 September 1902 at Graz. See Nowak, *op. cit.*, 68-116. The delegates of Hungary maintained that all Zakopane salient belonged to Hungary, not only the Morské oko. *Ibid.*, 69-70.

¹⁶⁰ Machay wrote to Gwiżdż in 1914, that the Poles in Galicia benefitted from the Polish educational system, Polish churches and priests, Polish mayors, Polish books and journals, Polish national monuments, Polish organizations and associations. Machay noted completely different situation in Hungary. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 109.

¹⁶¹ This situation prevailed despite the evident intensification of Polonophile activities in northern Slovakia. Congress of the Magyar journalists in Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš in Slovakia (Upper Hungary), attended also by Stercula and Gwiżdż, and Magyarization activists, adopted on 18 January 1914 a program of Magyar-Polish cooperation. The congress proposed to set up commissions to prepare a map of the Polish population in Slovakia, to collect information

of the Polish population along the Slovak - Polish linguistic border thus carried no territorial implications for the Slovak - Polish border in Orava and Spiš before 1918.¹⁶²

on their Slovakization and on the Goral presence and to establish contacts with the Polish journals in Galicia. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 103-4. According to Machay, the first Spiš-Orava Day in Zakopane, in Galicia, on 26 July 1914, would be a breakthrough in Polonophile activities if not for the war. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 113-115.

¹⁶² Borodovčák, *Poliaci a slovenský národný zápas v rokoch dualizmu*, 436-438.

3.

TWO STATES AND THREE DISPUTES.

A change in an existing frontier may be demanded for either of two general reasons:

- 1) It is right, from the point of view of the interests of the peoples immediately concerned, to do so;
- 2) It is expedient, from the point of view of the interests of the world at large, to do so.

General Tasker H. Bliss to U.S. Secretary of State Lansing, Paris, 15 December 1918

The aims of the Polish, Slovak and Czech liberation movements towards the end of World War I converged. The early formative stages of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in the immediate aftermath of World War I brought forward issues, which introduced the first cacophonous tones into harmonious relations. The situation in Orava and Spiš in late 1918 and early 1919, and particularly the unfolding of events in Tešín Silesia, where fighting broke out on 23 January 1919, altered the attitudes on both sides. The confrontation in Tešín Silesia in January of 1919 created a major obstacle to the normal relations between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia and cast a shadow over the Slovak - Polish border delimitation in Spiš and Orava. The negotiations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in Cracow in 1919, in fact the Czech - Polish negotiations, merely confirmed irreconcilability of the differences and brought Orava and Spiš into the company of Tešín Silesia. Early contacts between Slovak, Czech and Polish independence activists, imbued with a spirit of support, was seen as a promising sign for the future cooperation and friendship between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.¹ Two states with a projected Slavic majority were perceived as natural allies

¹ Thomas Garrigue Masaryk's quote is self-explanatory: "Without a free Poland there will be no free Bohemia - without a free Bohemia there will be no free Poland." Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, *The New Europe (the Slav Standpoint)* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1972), 155.

against Germany.² Czecho-Slovakia and Poland would become part of a “New Europe.”³ Their leaders planned post-war cooperation in order to demonstrate their ability to assume geopolitical responsibilities and to dissipate views of Central Europe as a source of instability and quarrels.⁴ However, territorial issues created stumbling blocks on the road to normal relations between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia after World War I (see Map 4). The issue of Tešín Silesia cast a shadow upon their relations.

Czech political circles based their claims to Tešín Silesia (*Śląsk Cieszyński*) on historic rights.⁵ Polish political circles, grouped in the Polish National Committee (*Komitet Narodowy*

Thomas Garrigue Masaryk (born Tomáš Vlastimil Masárik) (Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk in Slovak and Czech) (1850-1937) - Czecho-Slovak politician of Slovak origin, President of Czecho-Slovakia and Czechoslovakia (1918-1935), representative of political ‘Czechoslovakism,’ a political union of the Slovaks and Czechs.

For more on ‘Czechoslovakism,’ see Elisabeth Bakke, “Czechoslovakism in Slovak history” in *Slovakia in History*, eds. Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč and Martin D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 247-268.

² Czecho-Slovakia, Czechoslovakia and Poland played a vital role in the French anti-German bloc in East Central Europe.

Ferdinand Peroutka writes that the traditional concept of Slav solidarity implied shared brotherhood and cooperation among the Slavs. Some Slavophiles hoped that the liberated Slav nations could even eliminate violence from international relations. The Czech-Polish conflict over Tešín Silesia in 1919 ran contrary to these tenets of Slav solidarity. Ferdinand Peroutka, *Budování státu: Československá politika v letech popřevratových, 1918* [The Building of the State: Czecho-Slovak Politics After the Revolution] (Praha: Fr. Borový, 1933), 229.

³ Robert William Seton-Watson and Thomas Garrigue Masaryk had founded *The New Europe* in October 1916 mainly to promote the cause of the independence of Czecho-Slovakia. It was published in London through October 1920. See footnote on p.301 in Paul Mantoux, *The Deliberations of the Council of Four (March 24 - June 28, 1919)*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. A. S. Link, with the assistance of M. F. Boemeke (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992). Peroutka criticized, with hindsight, the Polish attitude to the New Europe. Peroutka suggested that, in 1918 the Poles did not talk about the New Europe or anything similar, but tried to expand in each direction, pursuing, without any hesitation, a purely nationalistic policy. Peroutka, *Budování státu, 1918*, 236.

⁴ T. G. Masaryk reminisced on 21 November 1918 about his talks with the Polish leaders during the war: “I believed it would impress the Allies to see two nations [i.e. Czecho-Slovakia and Poland] in Central Europe in accord, because the English and particularly the Americans worried that small nations could not agree and that new states would become a source of troubles in Central Europe. Therefore, I wanted to set an example, in order to demonstrate these worries were exaggerated and that the representatives of two important nations were already negotiating.” Peroutka, *Budování státu, 1918*, 469-470. Peroutka wrote that, as late as in November 1918, T. G. Masaryk sought, during his stay in Paris, for a possible alliance between Yugoslavia, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Romania and Greece. Peroutka, *Budování státu, 1918*, 465. For the first outlines of Czecho-Slovakia, see Dagmar Perman, “First Outlines of the Czechoslovak State,” chap. in *The shaping of the Czechoslovak state: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914 - 1920* (Leiden, NL: E. J. Brill, 1962), 8-27.

⁵ Zbigniew Kazimierz Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów. Kwestie terytorialne w latach 1920-1925. Studium prawnopolityczne* [Poland and the League of Nations. Territorial Questions in 1920-1925. A legal-political study] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1993), 100-101. See also T. G. Masaryk, *Nová Europa*.

Polski, hereafter referred to as the KNP),⁶ planned to create a Poland which included territories with Polish majorities.⁷ Subsequently, the territory of Tešín Silesia, given its population, was expected to be divided between the Czechs and the Poles on an ethnographic basis.⁸ But both sides decided to postpone the sorting out of Tešín Silesia until after the liberation.⁹

The KNP in Paris represented the Polish Question in international politics.¹⁰ The Allies recognized the Committee as the “official Polish organization” in the fall of 1917.¹¹ The Czechoslovak National Council (*Česko-Slovenský Národní Výbor*, hereafter referred to as the Č-SNV) and the KNP in Paris succeeded in becoming political partners of the Allies.¹² Allied political recognition

Stanovisko slovanské [The New Europe the Slav Standpoint] (Praha: Gustav Dubský, Obchod. druž. čes. knihkup., 1920), 215-216; A. Szklarska - Lohmannowa, *Polsko - czechosłowackie stosunki dyplomatyczne w latach 1918 - 1925* [The Polish-Czechoslovak Diplomatic Relations in 1918-1925] (Wrocław - Warszawa - Kraków: Zakł. nar. im. Ossolińskich, 1967), 14 - 15. For more on the Czech claims to Tešín Silesia see also Masaryk's memorandum to the US Secretary of State Lansing from 31 August 1918 in E. Beneš, *Světová válka a naše revoluce*, vol. III [World War and Our Revolution] (Praha: Orbis, 1928), 421. and Beneš's memoranda to the French Foreign Minister Stephen Pichon from 3 June 1918 and from September 1918 (Beneš's request of the recognition of the historical borders of the lands of the Czech Crown), *ibid.*, vol.II, 227; vol. III, 401, 433.

⁶ The Polish National Committee (*Komitet Narodowy Polski* - KNP) was created in August 1917 and during the autumn 1917 was recognized by the Allies and the United States as representing Polish interests in exile.

⁷ The KNP's territorial program was supported by President Wilson's Point XIII (Wilson's Fourteen Points of 8 January 1918): “An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations....” See Mantoux, *The Deliberations of the Council of Four (March 24 - June 28, 1919)*, vol. 2, 284. Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) - U. S. politician, U. S. President (1913-1921).

⁸ The 1910 Austrian statistics for then Austrian Silesia (Teschen Silesia, *Těšínsko, Śląsk Cieszyński*) showed: 2282 km² territory, 430,000 inhabitants of which 54.85 % were Poles, 27.11 % Czechs and 18.04 % Germans.

⁹ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 101. Cesarz points to The memorandum of Roman Dmowski to the British Foreign Minister Arthur James Balfour from the end of March 1917 in R. Dmowski, *Pisma*, vol. VI: *Polityka polska i odbudowania państwa. Druga połowa: Wojna od r. 1917. Pokój* [Letters, vol. VI: Polish Politics and Building of the State. Second Half: The War from 1917. Peace] (Częstochowa, 1937), 263. Roman Stanisław Dmowski (1864-1939) - Polish politician, founder and the Chairman of the *Komitet Narodowy Polski* in Paris (1917-1918). Arthur James Balfour (1848 - 1930) - British politician, Prime Minister (1902-1905), Foreign Secretary (1916-1919).

¹⁰ The three partitioning powers, Germany, Austria and Russia, solemnly agreed in 1797 never to revive the name Poland in any form or fashion. Yet, in later periods, Polish political parties in the parliaments of Germany, Austria and Russia, represented a Polish Question in internal politics. Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795-1918* (Seattle-London: University of Washington Press, 1974), 23.

¹¹ France recognized the Polish National Committee on 10 November 1917, Great Britain on 15 October 1917, Italy on 30 October 1917 and the United States on 10 November 1917. B. E. Schmitt, “The Polish Question During the World War: (B) The Polish Problem in International Politics,” in *The Cambridge History of Poland: From Augustus II to Pilsudski (1697-1935)*, 486.

¹² France, Great Britain, Italy and the United States. Technically, the United States maintained its designation of an Associated Power, whereas France, Great Britain and Italy continued their designation of the Allied Powers. T.G.Masaryk had evaluated the first recognition of the “Czecho-Slovaks” and the mention of the liberation of the

of the *Česko-Slovenský Národní Výbor* and the *Komitet Narodowy Polski* as *de facto* governments of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland encouraged their individual territorial aspirations.¹³

The United States recognized the Č-SNV in Paris as a *de facto* government of the Czecho-Slovaks on 3 September 1918, but with no recognition of the Czecho-Slovak territorial claims.¹⁴ The U. S. government wished to leave all territorial questions to the upcoming Peace Conference in Paris.¹⁵ The French government recognized a Provisional Czecho-Slovak government on 15 October 1918 and all other Allied powers did the same by 24 October 1918.¹⁶

In November 1917, in the wake of the military disaster at Caporetto, the British, French, and Italian governments established the Supreme War Council in order to coordinate the Allied war.¹⁷

Czecho-Slovaks in the Entente statement of 10 January 1917 about its war aims, extremely highly in his letter of 24 February 1917 to E. Beneš: "It is a huge success for us and especially for the Slovaks, which they would never have achieved without our work." Frank Hadler, ed., *Weg von Österreich! Das Weltkriegsexil von Masaryk und Beneš im Spiegel ihrer Briefe und Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1914-1918. Eine Quellensammlung* [Away From Austria! The World War Exile of Masaryk and Beneš in Mirror of Their Letters and Notes From 1914-1918] (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 1995), 428.

¹³ Though it is important to note that a recognition as a *de facto* government did not constitute in itself an automatic recognition of respective territorial claims. For more see Dagmar Perman, "The Quest For Recognition," chap. in *The shaping of the Czechoslovak state: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914 - 1920* (Leiden, NL: E. J. Brill, 1962), 28-47.

¹⁴ The U. S. State Department asked the British Foreign Office about its views on the future boundaries of Czecho-Slovakia on 27 September 1918. The British Foreign Office replied, without a clear stand, only on 13 November 1918. See *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Paris Peace Conference 1919* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1942-1947) 11, 366f. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919* will hereafter be cited as *PPC*, followed by the appropriate volume number.

¹⁵ Victor S. Mamatey notes that the U. S. delegation at the Paris Peace Conference advocated an ethnic boundary for Czecho-Slovakia until 4 April 1919, when during a period of Wilson's illness, Colonel Edward M. House gave in to the French demand for the retention of the historical boundary of Bohemia and Moravia (see the House diary, 4 April 1919). Victor S. Mamatey, *The United States and East Central Europe, 1914-1918: A Study in Wilsonian Diplomacy and Propaganda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957; reprint, Port Washington, NY / London: Kennikat Press, 1972), 310. Edward Mandell House ("Colonel House") (1858 - 1938) - United States politician and diplomat, foreign policy advisor to President Woodrow Wilson.

¹⁶ On 14 October 1918, upon Masaryk's telegraphic instructions from Washington, D.C., and after the consultations with the French government, Beneš notified the Allies of the creation of the Provisional Czecho-Slovak government: Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk - Prime Minister/Minister of Finance, Edvard Beneš - Minister of Foreign Affairs, Milan Rastislav Štefánik - Minister of War.

Milan Rastislav Štefánik (1880 - 1919) - Slovak politician and diplomat, Czecho-Slovak Minister of War (1918-1919).

Edvard (born Eduard) Beneš (1884 - 1948) - Czech politician and diplomat, Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs (1918-1935), Czechoslovak President (1935-1938, 1945-1948).

¹⁷ The Supreme War Council resulted from the Rapallo Agreement signed on 7 November 1917.

The Supreme War Council had military, naval, and political members, and sat at Versailles during World War I as well as during the Paris Peace Conference. The United States joined the military section of the Supreme War Council.¹⁸

Two separate armistices concluded the war in Europe in 1918: the Armistice of Villa Giusti and the Armistice of the Forest of Compiègne. The Allied and Associated Powers and the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary signed the Armistice of Villa Giusti near Padua in Italy on 3 November 1918. The Allied and Associated Powers and Germany signed the Armistice in the Forest of Compiègne on 11 November 1918.¹⁹ The multinational Dual Monarchy disintegrated in October of 1918. The collapse of the German government followed in November of 1918. The German armies started to evacuate Eastern and Central Europe under the armistice terms of 11 November 1918.²⁰ These factors created chaos and a power vacuum in East Central Europe that had started with the decomposition of the Russian Empire in 1917.²¹

Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, two Successor States, were left to fill the void which arose after the collapse of the Dual Monarchy, the German Reich and Russia in Central Europe. Both states benefitted from the temporary power vacuum and they tried to effect their *faits accomplis* before the Peace Conference would begin in January of 1919.²² Czecho-Slovakia and Poland took steps to

¹⁸ The United States appointed General Tasker H. Bliss to the Supreme War Council on 16 November 1917.

¹⁹ Paul Mantoux, *The Deliberations of the Council of Four (March 24 - June 28, 1919)*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. A. S. Link, with the assistance of M. F. Boemeke (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p.xxx.

The Allies signed a separate armistice with Hungary in Belgrade on 13 November 1918.

²⁰ Under the Compiègne Armistice of 11 November 1918, the German armies began to retreat from the former territories of the defunct Russian Empire, which had started to disintegrate a year earlier.

For more see Dagmar Perman, "Armistice," chap. in *The shaping of the Czechoslovak state: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914 - 1920* (Leiden, NL: E. J. Brill, 1962), 48-70.

²¹ Mamatey suggests that the Successor States battled each other in a confused way, a free-for-all, like impassioned men in a darkened room, for advantage or survival. For more see Mamatey, *The United States and East Central Europe, 1914-1918*, 346.

²² See Dagmar Perman, "Faits Accomplis," chap. in *The shaping of the Czechoslovak state: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914 - 1920* (Leiden, NL: E. J. Brill, 1962), 71-96.

create, *via facti*, with or without the support of their allies, conditions reflecting their aspirations. These activities stirred emotions and antagonized both Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.²³ When the Paris Peace Conference started on 18 January 1919, the Allies asserted their control of local disputes.²⁴

Slovak, Czech and Polish exiles agreed on the need to dismantle the Dual Monarchy because its preservation threatened national liberation ambitions. Understandably, all other issues, including border delimitation, remained secondary in importance.²⁵ The question of border delimitation came into the forefront only after the liberation. Polish and Czecho-Slovak representatives, however, did not stop discussing territorial questions.²⁶ Tešín Silesia brought the Czech and Polish delegates together for the first time early in 1918 in Lwów (Lviv).²⁷ While these first consultations on the Tešín question led to no solution, both sides accepted the existing *status quo* and expressed the hope of a mutually acceptable outcome.²⁸ Polish and Czech members of Parliament in Vienna discussed Tešín Silesia on 16 - 17 May 1918 in Prague. The preliminary Czech-Polish talks produced an

²³ Poland announced general elections to its Constitutional Assembly for 26 January 1919. The electoral districts included Tešín Silesia. Czecho-Slovakia tried to seize Tešín Silesia by a force of arms on 23 January 1919, that is prior to the elections in Poland.

²⁴ The Peace Conference intervened after Czecho-Slovakia and Poland began military hostilities in Tešín Silesia on 23 January 1919.

²⁵ This was the main thrust of Masaryk's account of his encounter with Dmowski: "The Russian Polish leader, Roman Dmowski, who came to London in 1916, understood that the preservation of Austria was and would be a continual danger to the Poles. On many points we agreed. Little was then said of the Silesian question, which was very subordinate in comparison with our common aims. I negotiated with Dmowski about it afterwards in Washington." Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, 123. Masaryk dates his stay in Paris and London to the period of September 1915 - May 1917.

²⁶ Peroutka recalled three Czech-Polish talks dealing with Tešín Silesia: the Lwów talks early in 1918, the Prague talks in May 1918 and Masaryk's talks with the Poles during his stay in America (spring-autumn 1918). Peroutka, *Budování státu, 1918*, 230-231.

²⁷ For the Czech account of the Lwów talks see Peroutka, *Budování státu, 1918*, 231.

²⁸ The Lwów talks resulted in the understanding that the existing *status quo* in the region should not be challenged by unilateral *faits accomplis* and that the *status quo* should be maintained until Prague and Warsaw would reach an amiable solution. Eventually the Peace Conference would be called upon to render assistance in solving the question. Both sides agreed that a decision should not be left to the local authorities deemed too partisan and inclined to view only narrow interests.

understanding that the undisputedly Polish or Czech areas would remain under Polish or Czech administration and that the disputed areas would be decided by a joint Polish - Czech commission.²⁹

Meanwhile, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland achieved their independence in the fall of 1918.³⁰

The Dual Monarchy sued for peace on 5 October 1918. The National Committee (*Národní výbor*) in Prague³¹ declared independence on 28 October 1918 and the next day asked the Austrian governor in Prague to transfer his powers to the Committee. The Slovak National Council (*Slovenská národná rada*) in Turčiansky Svätý Martin declared itself in favour of a union between Slovakia and the Czechs Lands on 30 October 1918. The Provisional National Assembly elected Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk the president of Czecho-Slovakia and approved the new Czecho-Slovak government on 13 November 1918.³²

The situation in Poland in October - November 1918 was more complicated.³³ After the Dual Monarchy sued for peace, the Regency Council in Warsaw declared the establishment of an independent Poland on 7 October 1918.³⁴ The Polish deputies in the *Reichsrat* in Vienna declared on 15 October 1918 that they ceased to consider themselves the subjects of Emperor Charles.³⁵ The Duchy of Teschen (Cieszyn) Silesia, in the Austrian part of Poland, was the first Polish territory to

²⁹ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 101; W. Kulski and M. Potulicki, *Współczesna Europa polityczna. Zbiór umów międzynarodowych. 1919 - 1939* [Contemporary Political Europe. Collection of International Treaties] (Warszawa-Krakow: Księgarnia Powszechna, 1939), 268; A. Szklarska - Lohmannowa, *Polsko - czechosłowackie stosunki dyplomatyczne w latach 1918 - 1925*, 16 - 17. Peroutka suggests that the Prague talks in May 1918 set up a precedent for a partition of Tešín Silesia. Peroutka, *Budování státu, 1918*, 230.

³⁰ Detailed accounts of the events in the fall of 1918 see K. A. Medvecký, *Slovenský prevrat* [The Slovak Turmoil], 4 vols. (Trnava: Spolok Sv. Vojtecha, 1930-1931) and Ferdinand Peroutka, *Budování státu: Československá politika v letech popřevratových, 1918* [The Building of the State: Czecho-Slovak Politics After the Revolution] (Praha: Fr. Borový, 1933).

³¹ The National Committee (*Národní výbor*) was constituted in Prague on 13 July 1918.

³² The first general elections in Czecho-Slovakia took place on 18 April 1920.

³³ For a detailed history see, Henryk Wereszycki, "Beck and the Cieszyn Question," in *History of Poland*, 2d ed., eds. Aleksander Gieysztor et al. (Warszawa: PWN - Polish Scientific Publishers, 1979), 538.

³⁴ Since Vienna sued for peace on the basis of President Wilson's Fourteen Points, the Regency Council called for "a Polish state established on indubitably Polish territories and with an access to the sea."

³⁵ Wereszycki, "Beck and the Cieszyn Question," 535.

become free after the Austro-Hungarian army packed and made for home.³⁶ On 28 October 1918 in Cracow the leaders of the 'Polish Circle' of the *Reichsrat* formed a Polish Liquidation Commission (*Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna - PKL*) chaired by Wincenty Witos to administer Galicia.³⁷ On 6-7 November 1918 in Lublin, the former headquarters of the Austrian Zone, socialist leaders proclaimed a left-wing People's Republic, led by Daszyński.³⁸ The Lublin government took a hostile attitude towards the Regency Council in Warsaw.³⁹

The revolution in Germany, the creation of a socialist government in Berlin on 9 November 1918 and the decision of the German garrison to evacuate Warsaw removed the remaining obstacles to Polish independence.⁴⁰ Józef Piłsudski⁴¹ returned to Warsaw from German captivity on 10 November 1918 and the Regency Council appointed him Commander-in-Chief of its armed forces on 11 November 1918.⁴² The Regency Council dissolved itself on 14 November 1918 and handed over all power to Piłsudski.⁴³ The People's Republic in Lublin recognized Piłsudski's authority on 18 November 1918 and he appointed the same day a left-wing government with the socialist Jędrzej Moraczewski as its leader.⁴⁴ Poland, which now consisted of the former Congress Kingdom and

³⁶ The Polish National Council of the Duchy was constituted on 19 October 1918, it declared an independence and its intention of joining the (yet non-existent) Polish Republic on 28 October 1918 and signed an agreement ceding the western part of the Duchy to the local Czech National Council on 5 November 1918. Norman Davis, *God's playground: A History of Poland*, vol. 2, 390; Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 221; Titus Komarnicki, *Rebirth of the Polish Republic. A Study in the Diplomatic History of Europe, 1914-1920* (Melbourne-London-Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1957), 238.

³⁷ Norman Davis, *God's playground: A History of Poland*, vol. 2, 390.

³⁸ Davis, *God's playground*, vol. 2, 390; Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed., 221; Komarnicki, *Rebirth of the Polish Republic*, 238.

³⁹ Komarnicki, *Rebirth of the Polish Republic*, 238.

⁴⁰ Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed., 221.

⁴¹ Józef Klemens Piłsudski (1867 - 1935) - Polish soldier and politician, Marshal, Polish Chief of State (1918-22), leader of the *Sanacja* régime (1926-35).

⁴² Davis, *God's playground*, vol. 2, 391. 11 November is celebrated as Poland's Independence Day.

⁴³ Titus Komarnicki, *Rebirth of the Polish Republic. A Study in the Diplomatic History of Europe, 1914-1920* (Melbourne-London-Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1957), 238.

⁴⁴ Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 222.

western Galicia, faced the difficult issue of frontiers in the borderlands with Russia and the delimitation of the boundary with Germany.⁴⁵

The Polish Republic came into being in November 1918, but the Entente Powers still recognized the Paris-based and the National Democracy-led Polish National Committee in Paris as Poland's official representation and the supreme political authority for the Polish Army in the West.⁴⁶ The Allies exhorted the Poles to form a unified government, but individually the Allies pursued different policies.⁴⁷ Finally, the Poles reached a compromise: Paderewski became Prime Minister and a Polish representative at the Conference at Paris, while Piłsudski remained Chief of State in Warsaw, and Dmowski served as the Chief Polish Delegate to Paris.⁴⁸ The government of Ignace Jan Paderewski⁴⁹ assumed office on 16 January 1919 and the first general elections took place on 26 January 1919.⁵⁰ Prime Minister Paderewski invited foreign governments to recognize Poland

⁴⁵ Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 222-223.

⁴⁶ Davis, *God's playground*, vol. 2, 393; Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 223. Moraczewski's government was never recognized by the Allied Powers, the French government had even recognized the Polish National Committee as the "regular Government of Poland" on 29 December 1918. Great Britain sent a military mission to Warsaw under Colonel H. H Wade to gather information on the situation and invited the Polish pianist, Jan I. Paderewski, to accompany this mission. Paderewski became Prime Minister of a coalition government formed on the eve of the opening of the Peace Conference. Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, 10; Komarnicki, *Rebirth of the Polish Republic*, 239.

⁴⁷ France recognized the Polish National Committee as the "regular Government of Poland" on 29 December 1918. Meanwhile, Great Britain sent a military mission to Warsaw under Colonel H. H Wade to gather information on the domestic situation. The British invited the Polish pianist, Jan I. Paderewski, to accompany their mission. Paderewski became Prime Minister of a coalition government formed on the eve of the opening of the Peace Conference. Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, 10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* The complicated and unclear situation surrounding the central authority in Poland induced criticism by Czecho-Slovak politicians. Masaryk complained about the lack of a credible partner in Poland to negotiate with: "In the case of Poland the Moraczewski Government at Warsaw, which Dmowski's and Paderewski's Polish Committee in Paris did not recognize, was only granted express recognition in February 1919. Meanwhile our Provisional Government had been exercising its functions abroad from the very beginning of the peace negotiations." Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, 345.

⁴⁹ Ignace (Ignacy) Jan Paderewski (1860 - 1941) - Polish pianist and composer, politician and diplomat, Polish Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1919), Polish Ambassador at the League of Nations.

⁵⁰ The elections to the Legislative *Sejm* were conducted only in certain areas of Poland. No elections took place in Tešín Silesia due to the fighting between the Poles and Czechs that broke out 23 January 1919.

as a sovereign state.⁵¹ The nomination of Paderewski as the Prime Minister, who assumed also the portfolio of Foreign Minister, led to international recognition of Poland and establishment of diplomatic relations with the Allies: the United States (30 January 1919), France (24 February 1919), Great Britain (25 February 1919), Italy (27 February 1919) and Japan (23 March 1919).⁵² The differences between Dmowski and Paderewski went deeper and continued at the Paris Peace Conference. Foreign diplomats and their advisers, aware of the friction between Dmowski and Paderewski, exploited it in order to weaken the Polish case.⁵³

The situation in the Slovak regions of Spiš and Orava in the fall of 1918 was turbulent as everywhere.⁵⁴ When the Slovak National Council in Turčiansky Svätý Martin declared itself in favour of Czecho-Slovakia on 30 October 1918, this declaration inspired⁵⁵ and was acclaimed on both sides of the Slovak-Polish borders.⁵⁶ In the northern regions of Slovakia, particularly in Orava

⁵¹ Paderewski wrote to the U. S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing: "At the request of Generalissimo Pilsudski, Chief of the Polish State, I have assumed today the duties of Prime Minister and Secretary for Foreign Affairs, of the Provisional Polish Government.... I cherish the hope that the United States will recognize Poland as a free sovereign state as well as the Polish Government." See Arthur S. Link et al., eds., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966-), vol. 45, 195. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 65 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966-) will hereafter be cited as *PWW*, followed by the appropriate volume number.

⁵² Waldemar Michowicz, "Organizacja polskiego aparatu dyplomatycznego w latach 1918-1939 [Organization of the Polish Diplomatic Apparatus in 1918-1939]," in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [A History of Polish Diplomacy], vol. 4 (1918-1939), ed. Piotr Łossowski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1995), 11.

⁵³ Anita Prazmowska, *Ignacy Paderewski* (London: Haus Publishing Ltd., 2009), 88-89.

⁵⁴ For detailed background see Marián Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920* (Bratislava: Veda, 2001), 222-231; Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 103-104; Ferdinand Machay, *Moja droga do Polski* [My journey to Poland] (Warsaw/Kraków: Nakład Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1923); Fedor Houdek, *Vznik hranic Slovenska* [Genesis of the Boundaries of Slovakia] (Bratislava: Knížnica Prúdiv, 1931), 318; Viktor Borodovčák et al., *Poliaci a my* [The Poles and Us] (Bratislava: Osveta, 1964), 121-122.

⁵⁵ Machay wrote that his seeing the returning delegates from a historical session of the Slovak National Council in Turčiansky Svätý Martin, inspired him to do something similar in his native Orava. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 125-7.

⁵⁶ On 3 November 1918, Dr. Bednarski, a head of the National Council in the Podhale region sent a congratulatory telegram to Matúš Dula, Chair of the Slovak National Council in Turčiansky Svätý Martin, expressing his hope to find an agreement on delimitation of the Polish regions. Dula did not reply. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 149. Borodovčák wrote that the Slovak National Council received congratulations from Polish Slovakophiles and also from the organizations in the border region of Podhale in Poland. See *Národné noviny* 1918, No.133, as quoted in Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 114.

and Spiš, the Highlanders⁵⁷ represented a majority of the population. The Highlanders in the Slovak regions of Spiš and Orava were caught in a dilemma: should they pledge allegiance to Czecho-Slovakia or Poland?⁵⁸

The Magyars and Germans in Spiš and Orava voiced their opposition to Czecho-Slovakia. The unsuccessful attempts in the fall of 1918 to declare a Spiš Republic, an Orava Republic or a Slovak People's Republic, were local attempts to prevent Slovakia's union with the Czech Lands.⁵⁹ Similarly, the Germans in the Czech Lands attempted to secede from Czecho-Slovakia, constituting their separate provinces.⁶⁰

After the war the awakeners of Polish national consciousness in Orava and Spiš renewed their local agitation, but now they agitated for Polish sovereignty over the northern regions of Slovakia.⁶¹ Dr. Ferdinand Machay, a native of Jablonka in the Upper Orava, remained the most well-

⁵⁷ The Slovak Highlander is called *Horál* or Goral in Slovak and *Góral* in Polish. The Highlanders speak a dialect with Polish features and maintained Slovak national consciousness. Some scholars and Polonophile activists in the Slovak regions of Spiš and Orava did not differentiate the Polish roots of *Horál/Góral* dialects from the Slovak national consciousness of their speakers. They deduced automatically from the "Polish dialects" (*gwary polskie*) in the Slovak regions of Spiš and Orava the existence of the "Polish population" (*ludność polska*). See Ivor Ripka, "Mieczysław Małecki (1903 - 1946)," *Slavica Slovaca*, XXXIX, No.2 (2003), 174.

⁵⁸ Machay, inspired by the events in Turčiansky Svätý Martin in October 1918, argued the Poles in Orava were entitled to join Poland if the Slovaks decided to join with the Czechs in their own state - Czecho-Slovakia. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 125-7.

⁵⁹ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 109.

⁶⁰ The Germans in the Czech Lands attempted to secede from Czecho-Slovakia, constituting four separate governments, which announced their existence on 29 October 1918. These provisional governments represented the four regions with German-speaking majorities: Deutschböhmen, Sudetenland, Böhmerwaldgau and Deutschsüdmähren. The provisional government of Deutschböhmen requested inclusion in "German Austria," which was granted on 30 October 1918. Heimann, *Czechoslovakia, The State That Failed*, 40.

⁶¹ Borodovčák wrote that the Polish government officially distanced itself from pro-Polish activities in Upper Orava and Upper Spiš until mid-1919 and the Polish government denied media reports about Polish territorial aspirations in Upper Orava and Upper Spiš. Borodovčák argued that the Polish government unofficially provided financial assistance to the pro-Polish activists, notably to the National Defence Committee for Spiš-Orava, Čadca and Podhalie (*Narodowy Komitet obrony Spisza-Orawy, Czadcy i Podhala*). Borodovčák suggested that the Polish government helped the pro-Polish activists to voice their demands at an international arena. Dr. Ferdynand Machay headed the three-member delegation of Spiš and Orava that came to Paris in April 1919 with the assistance of the French Mission in Posen (*Poznań*). Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 121-122.

known pro-Polish activist after the war.⁶² On 5 November 1918, supporters of Poland set up the National Council of Orava (*Rada Narodowa Orawska*) in Jablonka in Orava and elected Jan Piekarczyk and the Reverend Eugeniusz Sikora its chairman and deputy-chairman.⁶³ The *Rada Narodowa Orawska* stated that “the Poles in Upper Orava” wanted to belong to Poland, as all Polish lands in the Trenčín, Orava and Spiš counties.⁶⁴ The National Council of Orava (*Národná rada Oravy*) set up by the Slovaks supported the pro-Czecho-Slovakia declaration of the Slovak National Council in Turčiansky Svätý Martin of 30 October 1918 and pledged the Orava county to Czecho-Slovakia.⁶⁵ Events in the Spiš region of Slovakia took a course very similar to the region of Orava. The supporters of Poland in Spiš established the National Council of Spiš (*Rada Narodowa Spiska*) in Stará Ľubovňa in mid-November of 1918. The activists elected Bojarski and the Kuczkowski brothers to chair the *Rada Narodowa Spiska*.⁶⁶

When the new Hungarian government made public its readiness to open negotiations with Czecho-Slovakia on eventual cession of the four counties, which included Orava, the Polish authorities received the news with uneasiness.⁶⁷ The Polish authorities, compelled by Budapest’s plans, decided to act resolutely.⁶⁸ The *Rada Narodowa* asked the Polish representatives in Nowy

⁶² Houdek wrote that Machay invited Polish troops to Orava. The troops, coming from Galicia through Suchá Hora, occupied the surroundings of Jablonka, Machay’s native town. Houdek, *Vznik hraníc Slovenska*, 318.

⁶³ “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 174.

⁶⁴ Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 129-139; Józef Zieliński, “Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945,” in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 107.

⁶⁵ Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 121.

⁶⁶ “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 147.

⁶⁷ “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 153. The Polish authorities received the news at the end of October 1918. *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 153-154.

Targ to send Polish troops to Orava to establish a *fait accompli*.⁶⁹ Polish troops started to occupy Orava from 6 November 1918 under the pretext of anti-Semitic violence.⁷⁰ Subsequently, Polish troops occupied the Zamagurie area and Javorina.⁷¹ Polish military intervention in Spiš had to be more careful due to anticipated Polish - Hungarian cooperation. When Budapest protested against Polish occupation of Spiš, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed that occupation had taken place without the authorization of the Polish government.⁷²

When Polish troops appeared in the Upper Orava and the Upper Spiš regions, their presence, although viewed as a temporary security measure pending the border delimitation, set off critical comments in the media of extensive Polish territorial aspirations in Slovakia.⁷³ Warsaw established the Governmental Commission for Galicia and Tešín Silesia, and for the Upper Orava and Spiš (*Komisja Rządząca dla Galicji i Śląska Cieszyńskiego oraz Górnej Orawy i Spisza*) to deal with administration of the territories.⁷⁴ The *Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie* discussed on 23 November 1918 in Cracow maximal and minimal Polish territorial claims in Spiš and Orava.⁷⁵ The situation in the

⁶⁹ Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 107.

⁷⁰ "Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921)," Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 153-154. Zieliński writes that Polish troops entered Orava on 6 November 1918. Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 107. Machay described the events in Polhora, Orava, where Polish troops killed one woman on 17 November 1918. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 158.

⁷¹ Zieliński writes that Polish troops entered Spiš on 6 November 1918. Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 107.

⁷² "Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921)," Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 153-154.

⁷³ Tadeusz Stamirowski, Polish representative in Budapest, informed about Polish occupation of Orava and upcoming occupation of Spiš and Košice by Polish troops. All his statements received wide publicity. The Magyar government in Budapest was concerned for the Hungarian territorial integrity. The Czecho-Slovak government in Prague was also concerned by Polish occupation of northern Slovakia. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 159. *Národné noviny* informed about Polish occupation of northern Slovakia in late December 1918. See *Národné noviny* 1918, No.145; quoted in Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 109-110. Peroutka wrote, ironically, that the Poles occupied Orava and Spiš in the fall of 1918 so "there should not be a single Polish village in the world outside of Warsaw's jurisdiction." Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 236.

⁷⁴ Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 108. The *Komisja Rządząca dla Galicji i Śląska Cieszyńskiego oraz Górnej Orawy i Spisza* was in charge of Orava and Spiš until 13 January 1919. *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 108-109.

northern regions of Spiš and Orava alarmed pro-Czecho-Slovakia activists. The Church Council (*Kňazská rada*) committee, chaired by the Reverend Andrej Hlinka,⁷⁶ discussed on 28 November 1918 in Ružomberok the need for Slovak agitation for the Upper Orava and the Upper Spiš regions at the Peace Conference in Paris.⁷⁷

In December 1918, following the withdrawal of Hungarian troops from Trstená and Suchá Hora, Czecho-Slovak troops started to occupy Orava.⁷⁸ The Supreme Command of Czecho-Slovak Defence in Prague issued on 9 December 1918 a new directive for the occupation of Slovakia. The directive reckoned with the Polish claims to Spiš and the Polish troops already in Slovakia.⁷⁹ Therefore, this stage of the occupation of Slovakia continued with Czecho-Slovak troops reaching Poprad in Spiš on 15 December 1918, in order to halt the advance of the Polish army.⁸⁰ Polish Foreign Minister Leon Wasilewski informed the Military Command on 15 December 1918 that non-occupation of the border regions of “purely Polish character” could result in their loss.⁸¹ The commander of the Czecho-Slovak army in Slovakia stated on 16 December 1918 that the Poles had no right at all to occupy Slovakia. The commander appealed to the Polish army to evacuate the territory of Slovakia and ordered the Czecho-Slovak troops to immediately occupy Podolíneć and

⁷⁶ Andrej Hlinka (1864 - 1938) - Slovak priest and politician, founder and leader of the Slovenská ľudová strana (the Slovak People's Party), later renamed the Hlinkova Slovenská ľudová strana (the Hlinka Slovak People's Party, the HSLS). Hlinka and his party represented the principal political movement for Slovak autonomy in the interwar Czechoslovakia, in opposition to centralizing 'Czechoslovakist' concept of the state. For more on 'Czechoslovakism,' see Elisabeth Bakke, “Czechoslovakism in Slovak history” in *Slovakia in History*, eds. Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč and Martin D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 247-268.

⁷⁷ Viktor Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 122.

⁷⁸ “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 153-154.

⁷⁹ Polish troops re-entered Spiš on 11 December 1918. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 168.

⁸⁰ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 143-145. A battalion of riflemen from Podhale region in Poland, advancing towards Kežmarok, reached Spišská Belá on 17 December 1918. *Ibid.* See also J. Valenta, “Polská politika a Slovensko v roce 1919” [Polish Policy and Slovakia in 1919] *Historický časopis*, 8, 1965, 3, 403-422.

⁸¹ Marek Kazimierz Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918-1921* [The Polish - Czech Conflict 1918 -1921] (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2001), 15.

also sent a unit to Stará Ľubovňa. The Czecho-Slovak units could use force, providing they did suffer defeat, if the Poles refused to listen.⁸²

Trying to prevent a clash, the Czecho-Slovak and Polish commanders concluded a short cease-fire on 17 December 1918 with the towns of Kežmarok and Ľubica remaining neutral. Thereafter the Polish army evacuated northern Slovakia and the Czecho-Slovak army occupied Kežmarok and Podolíneč. However, the Polish units returned on 21 December 1918, but upon reaching Podolíneč encountered a determined resistance, which drove them back to Magurka.⁸³ By the end of 1918 the Czecho-Slovak Army occupied all the important places in the county of Orava and secured the railway to Nowy Targ in Poland.⁸⁴ The Polish Military Command had to cancel any military action in Spiš and Orava, partly due to the difficult military situation in Tešín Silesia, but primarily due to engagements of Polish troops in Eastern Galicia (*Małopolska Wschodnia*), in Volhynia (Wołyńia) and Belarus (Białorus).⁸⁵

In order to prevent unnecessary bloodshed, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland agreed to set up provisional demarcation lines for Spiš and Orava. Major W. Tyszkiewicz, Dr. J. Bednarski and Dr. K. Ruppert for Poland, and Lt.-Col. Arnošt Hebenský and Captain Vladimír Vysušil for Czecho-Slovakia, concluded a local delimitation agreement for Spiš on 24 December 1918 in the city of Poprad.⁸⁶ The provisional demarcation line in Spiš went from Javorina, through elevation point 655,

⁸² Vojenský historický archív [Military Historical Archives] (hereafter VHA) Prague, Fond VS - Schöbl 1918. Carton 1, No.S-353-21/a; quoted in Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 145.

⁸³ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 145-146.

⁸⁴ Minister Šrobár telegraphed the National Committee in Trstená on 20 December 1918: "The villages, which the Poles claim unilaterally, do not need to proclaim their allegiance to Poland, because they are our villages. All Orava, up to the old Hungarian border, belongs to Czechoslovak state." Bielowodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 18; Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 146.

⁸⁵ Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918-1921*, 16.

⁸⁶ "Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921)," Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 156.

Rychvald, elevation point 1086, Kamienka, Jarabiná, Malý Lipník and Andrejovka.⁸⁷ One week later, on 31 December 1918, political and military representatives of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland concluded a local delimitation agreement for Orava in the town of Chyžné.⁸⁸ The Polish side was not satisfied with the demarcation lines, which in their opinion, did not reflect the ethnographic situation.⁸⁹ Dr. J. Bednarski stated for the record on 24 December 1918 in Poprad that the border did not reflect the ethnographic situation and did not constitute any *fait accompli*.⁹⁰ The provisional demarcation lines remained in place until 14 January 1919, when Polish units, under orders from the Warsaw government, withdrew behind the frontier of Polish Galicia.⁹¹ After the signing of the local delimitation agreements, on 24 December 1918, for Spiš, and on 31 December 1918, for Orava, the question of the Slovak - Polish border in Spiš and Orava became an object of diplomatic negotiations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland with assistance of the Allies.⁹²

Czecho-Slovakia wanted to maintain the historic borders between Slovak and Polish lands that would keep Upper Spiš and Upper Orava in Czecho-Slovakia. Poland claimed parts of Orava

⁸⁷ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 146; Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 108; Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 104. For an interim agreement Hronský cites VHA Praha, Fond VS - Schöbl 1918, No.224; Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (hereafter AMZV ČR) Prague, Archiv státních smluv, L 355 - copy.

⁸⁸ Czecho-Slovakia and Poland concluded a local delimitation agreement for Orava on 31 December 1918. Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 108; Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 176-7.

⁸⁹ Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 108; Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 104; A. Szklarska - Lohmannowa, *Polsko - czechosłowackie stosunki dyplomatyczne w latach 1918 - 1925*, 28 - 29; J. Wiechowski, *Spór o Zaolzie 1918 - 1920 i 1938*, Warszawa 1990, 16 - 17. Zieliński writes that the cease-fire lines of 24 December 1918 (Poprad) and 31 December 1918 (Chyžné) set a dangerous precedent for the future Polish territorial claims in northern Slovakia. Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 108. Cesarz writes that very soon the Czecho-Slovak side abandoned both agreements and decided to defend the concept of historic borders. Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 104.

⁹⁰ "Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921)," Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 156.

⁹¹ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 146. Zieliński writes that after 13 January 1919, when Polish troops withdrew, the Committee for Defence of Spiš, Orava, Kysuce and Podhalie (*Narodowy Komitet Obrony Spisza, Orawy, Czadeckiego i Podhala*) was formed in Cracow. Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 108..

⁹² "Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921)," Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 156.

and Spiš as “Polish areas in Slovakia.” A conference in Cracow on 23 November 1918 agreed to submit a memorandum by the *Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie*, claiming “Polish areas in Slovakia,” to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ferdynand Machay came to Warsaw on 9 December 1918.⁹³ Both Czecho-Slovakia and Poland criticized its neighbour and wooed the Allies in Paris to secure their support. When Poland protested that Czecho-Slovakia violated the demarcation line of 24 December, Prague replied that no official agreement existed, only a local temporary one, and that the only binding line would be established by the Allies.⁹⁴ Czecho-Slovak Minister of Defense, Václav Klobáček, informed the French Minister in Prague, Simon-Clément, that on 15 December 1918 the Poles had occupied parts of Orava north of Trstená and Námestovo and on the same day the Poles appeared in Kežmarok in Spiš. Klobáček added that the Poles advanced on 16 December 1918 from Gniazdno toward Podolínec and that Czecho-Slovakia asked Poland to evacuate Slovakia.⁹⁵ Simon-Clément recommended to Paris that Spiš and Orava (in Slovakia) should be immediately occupied by “Czech” troops. He wrote that Prague pretended Maréchal Foch had formally authorized the occupation and it had resulted from a bilateral agreement between the “Czechs” and the Poles. The Poles, who had invaded Slovak territory, had allegedly agreed to its evacuation and “Czech troops” should not encounter any difficulties.⁹⁶

The Polish military organs lobbied the head of the Entente military mission in Budapest,

⁹³ Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 166-67. The *Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie* started to work on a memorandum claiming “Polish areas in Slovakia” in early November 1918. *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 157-158.

⁹⁵ V. Klobáček to Simon-Clément, Prague, tel. no. 401, 8 January 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 50, 65-67.

⁹⁶ Simon-Clément, Prague, tel. no. 75, 8 January 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 50, 52-53.

Lieutenant Colonel Ferdinand Vix,⁹⁷ to intervene with the Czecho-Slovak military organs to respect the Polish territorial claims in Spiš and Orava.⁹⁸ The Polish Government requested the Governments of the Allied Countries and of the United States of America, to use their influence to prevent a war; and to maintain the *status quo* and the political balance between the two countries until the Peace Congress.⁹⁹ In the end, Czecho-Slovakia achieved the withdrawal of Polish troops from the Polish-occupied parts of Spiš and Orava in Slovakia. The Inter-allied mission in Budapest ordered on 13 January 1919 the withdrawal of all Polish military and administrative authorities from Slovak parts of Spiš and Orava behind the so-called Gen. Foch's line, which corresponded with the former Hungarian - Galician border.¹⁰⁰ The Polish media, not familiar with Orava and Spiš, did not publish any information on their evacuation, which contrasted with an avalanche of articles in the Polish journals after 26 January 1919, when Czecho-Slovak troops started to occupy Tešín Silesia. The general unawareness in Poland about Orava and Spiš led to establishment of the Committee for Defence of Orava, Spiš and Kysuce.¹⁰¹

The dispositions of Italian General Luigi Piccione¹⁰² from 8 January 1919 specified responsibility for frontier security on the Galician border and around 10 January 1919 Czecho-

⁹⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Ferdinand Vix (1876 - 1941) - French soldier, head of the Entente military mission in Budapest.

⁹⁸ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 145; VHA Praha, MNO - Hlavný štáb - Oper.odd.1919. Carton 1, no.3-3/3 (copy). See also J. Valenta, "Polská politika a Slovensko v roce 1919," 403-422.

⁹⁹ Cable From Warsaw to Paris. Wireless Telegrams Sent to: the Government of the Allied Countries and of the United States of America. 20 December 1918, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 318, 27.

¹⁰⁰ "Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921)," Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 157-158. See also Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 104; A. Szklarska - Lohmannowa, *Polsko - czechosłowackie stosunki dyplomatyczne w latach 1918 - 1925*, 29. Cesarz argues that the decision to withdraw Polish troops from the Czecho-Slovak parts of Spiš and Orava "seriously affected the future fate of these regions." See Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 104.

¹⁰¹ Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 190-191, 197-8. Machay wrote that the Polish media were not familiar with Orava and Spiš. He observed that Spiš was known to some extent in the media, but Orava was often mistaken for Morava and some media wrote about Oravian Spiš. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 190-191.

¹⁰² Luigi Giuseppe Piccione (1866 - 1942) - Italian General, Head of the Italian Military Mission in Slovakia (Czecho-Slovakia) in 1919.

Slovak troops began to occupy the northern frontier of Slovakia.¹⁰³ General Piccione's situation report stated on 16 January 1919: "Today the northern frontiers of the counties of Orava and Spiš were occupied...." The fact that the historic northern border of Slovakia, as defined by the old frontier between Hungary and Galicia, was occupied had historic importance from the point of view of legally defining Slovakia and its territory.¹⁰⁴ Poland officially protested against the so-called Gen. Foch's line, Polish aide-mémoire of 16 January 1919 claimed the line would affect - leave in Slovakia - more than 150,000 of Poles.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, after 14 January 1919 Poland did not abandon its territorial claims in Orava and Spiš, and from February 1919, the fate of Orava and Spiš was connected with the dispute about the frontier in the Tešín area.¹⁰⁶

In Tešín Silesia both the Poles and the Czechs formed their local representative organs. The Poles set up the National Council of the Duchy of Tešín (*Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*) on 19 October 1918 and the Czechs set up the Land National Committee for Silesia (*Zemský Národní Výbor pro Slezsko*) on 20 October 1918.¹⁰⁷ The two local organs asked Warsaw and Prague to recognize them as their local representatives and pledged Tešín Silesia to them.¹⁰⁸ The local Silesian leaders regarded partition of Tešín Silesia as probable.¹⁰⁹ The Polish troops stationed in town of

¹⁰³ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 151. For the dispositions of General Piccione see Vojenský historický archiv [Military Historical Archives] (hereafter VHA) Trnava. VVVS, přír.č.neg.30, report of General Piccione, op.no.140 from 8 January 1919. Hronský writes that the troops of Colonel Schöbl, mainly the First Regiment of Slovak Freedom and the 30th Rifle Regiment, were responsible for frontier security regarding Galicia. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 151. For more details see Miroslav Čaplovič, "Prvý Pluk Slovenskej Slobody (november 1918 - marec 1919)" [The First Regiment of Slovak Freedom (November 1918 - March 1919)] *Historický časopis*, vol. XXXXIII, No.4 (1995): 665.

¹⁰⁴ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 151-152.

¹⁰⁵ "Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921)," Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 158-159.

¹⁰⁶ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, 146.

¹⁰⁷ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 102.

¹⁰⁸ The *Zemský Národní Výbor pro Slezsko* asked the Prague government to recognize them as their local representatives on 29 October 1918.

¹⁰⁹ Jozef Londzin, the leader of the Silesian Polish Catholics (*Zwizek Śląskich katolików*), stated on 13 October 1918 at the gathering of 20,000 Poles in Orłowa: "... We want to be good neighbours with the Czechs. We will need each other and, therefore, need to maintain the best relations possible. It would be good for there to be an ethnographic border

Tešín assumed control over the local garrison on the night of 31 October to 1 November 1918. This successful maneuver reinforced the authority of the *Rada Narodowa* and its aspiration to assume control over the region. The *Zemský Národní Výbor* viewed anxiously this demonstration of Polish assertiveness in the region.¹¹⁰ Concerned over simmering troubles, the *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego* and the *Zemský Národní Výbor pro Slezsko* concluded on 5 November 1918 a temporary partition of Tešín Silesia into a Polish and Czech area on an ethnic basis.¹¹¹ The partition agreement required the sanction of the central authorities, yet only Warsaw completely backed the agreement, whereas Prague tolerated it without explicit support.¹¹²

Interestingly, the Czechs in Tešín Silesia regarded the agreement as a success. Dr. Ferdinand Pelc perceived the arrangement which accorded three-quarters of Tešín Silesia to the Poles as a

between the Polish and Czech states.” Bogdan Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego (1918-1920)* [The National Council of the Duchy of Tešín] (Opole: Instytut Śląski, 1980), 43.

¹¹⁰ Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 154; Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 236.

¹¹¹ According to the agreement on temporary partition of Tešín Silesia, the Bielski and Cieszyński districts came under the authority of the *Rada Narodowa*, the Frydecki district under the authority of the *Zemský Národní Výbor*. In the Frysztacki district the communities with Polish administration were subjected to the *Rada Narodowa* and the communities with Czech administration were subjected to the *Zemský Národní Výbor*. The following declaration reiterated the temporary nature of the agreement of 5 November 1918: “The current interim agreement does not prejudge the final territorial delimitation, which is left to be decided by appropriate authorities, that is the Polish government in Warsaw and the Czech [Czecho-Slovak] government in Prague. Solely as a temporary measure to maintain peace and order, in order to avoid mutual conflicts of a local and minor character...” Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 237. Peroutka criticized the Czech signers of the 5 November 1918 agreement for their narrow-mindedness. This agreement assigned to the Czechs the smallest share of Tešín Silesia in comparison to all subsequent arrangements. The Czech delegates agreed on a very disadvantageous partition, practically half of the territory that would be accorded to Czecho-Slovakia by the decision at Spa in 1920. Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 237-8.

¹¹² Prague neither rejected the 5 November 1918 agreement unequivocally, nor approved it. This ambiguity fueled later suspicions of foul play by Prague. Wereszycki suggests that the agreement of 5 November was only a tactical move by the Czechs and, therefore, it was shortly broken. The Poles did not know that Masaryk had concluded on 28 September 1918 a secret treaty with the French government which provided for the incorporation of Tešín Silesia in Czecho-Slovakia. Wereszycki, “Beck and the Cieszyn Question,” in *History of Poland*, 2d ed., eds. Aleksander Gieysztor et al. (Warszawa: PWN - Polish Scientific Publishers, 1979), 535. Hronský writes that the agreement of 5 November 1918, based on the ethnographic frontier, did not entirely suit the Prague government, because it interrupted economic connections between the Karviná coal field and the industries of Ostrava, and Polish control of the Bohumín - Košice railway prevented direct communications between the Czech Lands and eastern Slovakia. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon*, 222-223.

success for the Czech cause in the area.¹¹³ The local Czech representatives in Tešín Silesia themselves thus provided a strong argument for the Polish claims. The local Czech representatives, those most familiar with the situation in the region, admitted the Czech claims warranted only one quarter of Tešín Silesia. The local Czech representatives reasoned that the 5 November 1918 agreement simply stated what was widely-known. Dr. Pelc argued: “The agreement reflected the national *status quo*, known or verifiable by everyone. The agreement did not reveal anything new, it put forward the existing *status quo*.”¹¹⁴

The *Zemský Národní Výbor* reported to Prague on 5 November 1918 its agreement with the *Rada Narodowa*.¹¹⁵ The *Rada* informed Warsaw on 6 November 1918 of the agreement but Warsaw made an official declaration on Tešín Silesia only on 25 November 1918.¹¹⁶ The *Národní výbor* in Prague sent a telegram, signed by A. Švehla, A. Rašín, J. Stříbrný and F. Soukup, to Polish Foreign Minister, Dr. Stanisław Głąbiński, recognizing the 5 November 1918 agreement.¹¹⁷ Prague asked Głąbiński to influence the local Polish representatives in Tešín Silesia to abstain from changing the *status quo* and to wait for the Paris Peace Conference.¹¹⁸ The *Národní výbor* in Prague also implicitly took note of the 5 November 1918 agreement. Prague sent a telegram to the *Rada Narodowa* on 15 November 1918 to clarify the article published in the *Národní listy* of Prague. The *Národní listy* stated that the Czecho-Slovak government did not recognize the 5 November 1918 agreement as valid. The *Národní výbor*, in its telegram to the *Rada Narodowa*, declared untrue the story published

¹¹³ Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 238. Pelc described the partition agreement as “our national progress” (“*národní náš pokrok*”). *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 238-9.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 238.

¹¹⁶ This delay could be explained, in part, by confusing the situation surrounding the authority of the central government in Poland.

¹¹⁷ Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918-1921*, 13.

¹¹⁸ Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 47.

in the *Národní listy* and confirmed that the Czecho-Slovak government respected the agreement.¹¹⁹

The *Národní výbor* in Prague maintained a certain ambiguous attitude towards the 5 November 1918 agreement. It sent only one instruction to the *Zemský Národní Výbor* in Tešín Silesia: “Do not negotiate, the government is in Paris. We do not know anything about the delicate issue [Tešín Silesia]!” The *Národní výbor* in Prague also informed the Poles that it could not take a stand on the agreement.¹²⁰ The *Národní výbor* in Prague demonstrated its conscious evasiveness on 16 November 1918 when it issued this proclamation: “The announcement to the effect that the *Národní výbor* decided to cancel the agreement between the Silesian Czechs and the Poles, was untrue.” The very same day the *Národní výbor* published in the *Národní listy* the following denial: “The agreements between the Polish and Czech representatives in Tešín Silesia were concluded without the *Národní výbor*’s approval. The *Národní výbor* did not take a position on those agreements.”¹²¹

When the *Rada Narodowa* reached an agreement on cooperation with the Polish government in Warsaw Czecho-Slovakia viewed this act as a *de facto* extension of Polish sovereignty over Tešín Silesia. On 30 November 1918 Czecho-Slovak consul Dr. Karel Locher presented official protest to the Polish Liquidation Commission in Cracow against the “proclamation of sovereignty of the Polish State over Tešín Silesia.”¹²² The *Rada Narodowa* also dispatched Szura and Warchalowski, as its two delegates, to Paris with an aide-mémoire on Tešín Silesia. The two delegates presented a fifty-two page aide-mémoire to the representatives of the *Komitet Narodowy Polski* in Paris on 25

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 239.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 239. A bizarre episode accompanied the Tešín riddle. Somebody in Prague took the initiative to inform the *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego* in Tešín that the *Národní výbor* in Prague accepted the 5 November 1918 agreement. The Czech side declared the controversial telegram a fake, the Polish side distributed its copy as an authentic document demonstrating Czech faithlessness. Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 240.

¹²² Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 134.

December 1918.¹²³

A special Polish mission came to Prague on 17 December of 1918 to propose an arrangement for Tešín Silesia.¹²⁴ Their instructions were encouraging: “...except the question of the border in Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava, which would not be difficult to settle on ethnographic principles, Poland and Bohemia [Czecho-Slovakia] do not have opposing interests....”¹²⁵ Damian Wandycz, Jan Ptaśnik and Stanisław Gutowski presented Piłsudski’s proposal, in his letter to Masaryk. Piłsudski proposed to create a bilateral commission to deal with all issues arising from the disintegration of the Dual Monarchy. While President Masaryk expressed measured support for the idea of a commission, Prime Minister Karel Kramář¹²⁶ maintained a hostile reticence.¹²⁷ The mission to Prague initiated by Piłsudski failed.¹²⁸

On 18 December 1918 the Polish government (*Rada Ministrów*) approved plans for general elections in Poland on 26 January 1919. This decision was the most important political act of the Polish government for the future of Orava and Spiš.¹²⁹ The government planned the elections to be held in thirty-five electoral districts. One of the electoral districts comprised the territory of Tešín

¹²³ Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 169; also in Archiwum Akt Nowych [Archives of the Foreign Ministry] (hereafter AAN) Warsaw, Arch. Pad., vol. 917, 51; quoted in Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 169.

¹²⁴ Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918-1921*, 20-21.

¹²⁵ See “Instrukcja dla delegacji mającej udać się do Pragi,” 10 December 1918, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

¹²⁶ Karel Kramář (1860 - 1937) - Czech politician, Czecho-Slovak Prime Minister (1918-1919).

¹²⁷ In Wandycz’s description of his conversation with Kramář, Kramář accused the Poles of trying to create their *faits accomplis* in Silesia. Kramář confirmed his government’s refusal to recognize the local agreement on Silesia, arguing that the local National Committee had no authority to conclude this agreement. Damian S. Wandycz, *Zapomniany list Piłsudskiego do Masaryka* [The Forgotten Letter of Piłsudski to Masaryk] (London: Instytut Józefa Piłsudskiego w Ameryce, 1953), 11.

¹²⁸ For the details on the Piłsudski initiative see D. S. Wandycz, *Zapomniany list Piłsudskiego do Masaryka*, 3-20. See also Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 103; M. Safianowska, *Wstęp*, In R. Bierzaniek and J. Kukulka, eds., *Sprawy polskie na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu 1919 r. Dokumenty i materiały*. [The Polish Affairs at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Documents and Materials], vol. II, part 2, Śląsk Cieszyński (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1967), 85 - 86.

¹²⁹ Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 178.

Silesia (*Śląsk Cieszyński*).¹³⁰ The decision of the Polish government was not without mistakes, as the list of electoral townships for Orava contained also the villages, which were not in Orava. The list contained also the Slovak townships, or the villages far beyond Polish claims. These blunders exposed the Polish government's unfamiliarity with the regions it raised claims to.¹³¹ What Poland viewed as legitimate state-building activities, Czecho-Slovakia regarded as an accumulation of Polish policies of *faits accomplis*, asserting Polish sovereignty over Czecho-Slovak territory. The question arose as to whether something should be done about it, sooner rather than later, when it might be too late.

The Polish government approved on 10 January 1919 a statute for the governmental administrative commission for Galicia, Tešín Silesia, Upper Orava and Upper Spiš.¹³² The decision represented a unilateral legal (*de iure*) incorporation of the said territories into Poland, a move which implied later physical (*de facto*) incorporation of these territories.¹³³ The Czecho-Slovak government discussed its course of action at the three meetings, on 17, 20 and 21 January 1919, and decided to occupy Tešín Silesia.¹³⁴ Before the military operations, the Czecho-Slovak government sent a memorandum to the Polish government on 21 January 1919.¹³⁵ On 23 January 1919 Czecho-Slovak

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹³¹ Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 178. Machay believed these were blunders to cast Polish activities as foolish, but the international impact of elections was very helpful. *Ibid.*

¹³² "Statut dla Galicji i Śląska Cieszyńskiego oraz Górnej Orawy i Spizu," Warsaw, 10 January 1919, in Ewa Orlof and Andrzej Pasternak, eds. *Stosunki polsko-czesko-słowackie w latach 1918-1939* [Polish-Czecho-Slovak Relations in 1918-1939] (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1994), Doc. No. 2, 8-10. Ewa Orlof and Andrzej Pasternak, eds. *Stosunki polsko-czesko-słowackie w latach 1918-1939* (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1994) will hereafter be cited as *SPCS 18-39*. See also "Statut dla Galicji i Śląska Cieszyńskiego oraz Górnej Orawy i Spizu," Warsaw, 10 January 1919, *Dziennik Praw Państwa Polskiego*. 1919, No. 7, poz. 106.

¹³³ *Dziennik Praw Państwa Polskiego* 1919, Nr.7, poz.106; AAN Warszawa, Prot. pos. RM Vol.4, kl. 553, 671 and 690; quoted in Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 134.

¹³⁴ Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918-1921*, 30-31.

¹³⁵ "Memorial rządu czechosłowackiego do rządu polskiego w sprawie sytuacji na Śląsku Cieszyńskim," Prague, 21 January 1919, *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 3, 10-15. The Czecho-Slovak government argued that the population in Tešín Silesia, which confirmed the Czech and Polish ethnographers, was not nationally conscious, this population spoke transitional dialect, and the population was so mixed, even in the smallest districts, that any demarcation was impossible. See "Memorjal Rządu czecho-słowackiego w sprawie Śląska," MSZ, D.1893/19/111. Odpis. CAW Warsaw, TB,

troops started to occupy Tešín Silesia under the Polish administration.¹³⁶ Czecho-Slovak military intervention prevented conduct of the parliamentary elections in Poland scheduled for 26 January 1919, to be held also in Tešín Silesia under the Polish administration.¹³⁷ Czecho-Slovakia profited from momentary involvement of a majority of Polish troops in the conflict with the Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia (*Małopolska Wschodnia*).¹³⁸

The Supreme Council of the Peace Conference decided that only the Peace Conference or the body appointed by the Peace Conference could decide the question of territorial delimitation in Tešín Silesia.¹³⁹ On 29 January 1919, the plenipotentiaries of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in Paris were summoned to appear before the Council of Ten¹⁴⁰ and the “seven day war”¹⁴¹ ended on the night of 30 - 31 January 1919. Czecho-Slovakia and Poland agreed on an armistice on 3 February 1919, according to which the Czecho-Slovak Army had to withdraw behind the rivers Vistula and Olše.¹⁴² The Entente determined a demarcation line between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in Tešín Silesia, which was a little more advantageous for Czecho-Slovakia (see Map 5). The main disputed territory

I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy. The Polish government's reply refuted the Czecho-Slovak memorandum as a mere ex-post justification of its armed intervention against Poles. Czecho-Slovakia used the argument of mixed population in order to deny a right of self-determination to the Tešín Silesia Poles. Czecho-Slovakia used economic needs to justify its acquisition of Polish territories: “We need to resolutely oppose horse-trading with our territories for Czech needs...” See “Stanowisko Rządu polskiego przez memorjal [Memorjal Rządu czecho-słowackiego w sprawie Śląska],” Warsaw, 4 February 1919, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

¹³⁶ See Dagmar Perman, “The Teschen Incident,” chap. in *The shaping of the Czechoslovak state: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914 - 1920* (Leiden, NL: E. J. Brill, 1962), 97-120. Paderewski informed the French authorities about the concentration of “Czech” troops at the Silesian border on 23 January 1919. See “Radio de Varsovie No. 184,” 23 January 1919, Berthelot pour Comité National Polonais Paris, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 50, 81-82.

¹³⁷ Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918-1921*, 9.

¹³⁸ Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918-1921*, 13.

¹³⁹ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 104.

¹⁴⁰ The Council of Ten consisted of the heads of governments with their foreign ministers of the five Principal Allied and Associated Powers. Paul Mantoux, *The Deliberations of the Council of Four (March 24 - June 28, 1919)*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. A. S. Link, with the assistance of M. F. Boemeke (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), xxxiii.

¹⁴¹ For more on the “seven-day war,” see Kamiński, *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918-1921*, 9-42.

¹⁴² Olza in Polish. Poles call Tešín Silesia beyond the river Olza the *Zaolzie*.

was placed under international control until the question was resolved.¹⁴³ The *Rada Narodowa* handed its official protest against the agreement of 3 February 1919 to Prime Minister Paderewski on 6 February 1919.¹⁴⁴ Paderewski, Dmowski and the Polish government were criticized for their perceived failure to restore the *status quo ante* in Tešín Silesia.¹⁴⁵ Public opinion and the press, particularly in Tešín Silesia, denounced the Polish delegates in Paris for their acquiescence to the 3 February 1919 agreement on Tešín Silesia.

Over-excitement, self-confidence and a certain *amour-propre* fed on the relatively easy and successful ride of the Czecho-Slovak cause after the war. Czecho-Slovak Prime Minister Kramář alluded on 5 November 1918 to the comments made by French Prime Minister Clemenceau: “When Clemenceau says, *vous êtes la plus grande nation*, you are the greatest nation, that says a lot!”¹⁴⁶ Kramář expressed the spirit of the times in Czecho-Slovakia. It appeared that the Allies would do anything Czecho-Slovakia asked for, for the Allies’ *raison d’être* was the well-being of Czecho-Slovakia.¹⁴⁷ Later disenchantment over the border settlement with Poland surfaced, as Czecho-Slovakia the “darling of the Entente,” and the “greatest nation in the world,” felt betrayed.¹⁴⁸

Czecho-Slovakia and Poland whose leaders spoke of a mutual partnership and friendship during the war, were two countries who, after the war, entered into a bitter beauty contest - who was the more reliable ally, who was more stable, who was more advanced - in order to become the

¹⁴³ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon*, 223.

¹⁴⁴ WAP Katowice, Eksp. Cieszyn, RNKC, Vol.19, 73; quoted in Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 147.

¹⁴⁵ *Śląskie Wiadomości Wojenne* accused Dmowski of being “Czernin No. 2 [Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary, Count Ottokar Czernin] and an admirer of the czardom, hence a practitioner of the same methods.” In *Śląskie Wiadomości Wojenne*, 1919, Nr. 8, 7 February 1919; quoted in Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 170.

¹⁴⁶ Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 222.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

leading Central European ally of France.¹⁴⁹ Three months after the war, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, stood on the brink of a full-scale war, forestalled only by the Allied intervention.¹⁵⁰ Apparently, Prague assigned too low a value to the Spiš and Orava questions and misjudged the Tešín question initially. These attitudes could be understood, though not justified, by the complexity of the situation that faced Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in the aftermath of the war. Warsaw showed considerably higher interest in “Polish areas in Slovakia,” yet the local activist criticized a relative lack of interest in Orava and Spiš in Poland, particularly in comparison with the noisy reactions to 23 January 1919. Ferdynand Machay criticized political materialism, which tended to trade the population for natural resources. Machay believed the population in Orava and Spiš should be treated equally regardless whether it brings coal or mountains.¹⁵¹

Slovak and Czech views, arguing in favour of historical borders in Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia considered all interim partition agreements a serious political mistake. Interim partition agreements manifested the disposition of Czecho-Slovakia to tolerate partition of contested territories. Czecho-Slovakia missed the opportunity to take a firm stand on the concept of historical borders and the inviolability of its territorial integrity in Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia. This political mistake would plague the future negotiations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.¹⁵² Critics

¹⁴⁹ Masaryk wrote: “Now and again a voice from Poland is heard to proclaim that the Polish nation will be the leader of the Slav peoples since, next to Russia, it is the greatest among them, and possesses the needful groundwork of Western civilization. We must wait and see whether Poland can play this role. I myself doubt if she is sufficiently qualified for it. Others again, in sundry Russian and Southern Slav quarters as well as among ourselves, have, since the war, often extolled Prague as the capital of the Slav world. If they mean Prague as a centre of Slav culture, I may agree with them. Geographically, Prague is easily accessible to those of the Slavs who look westwards. In culture, we possess the right foundations and might take the lead, especially as we have gone ahead of the other Slavs, thanks, chiefly, to our Reformation. The fact that we alone among the Slav peoples feel sympathy with all of them, without regard to the ecclesiastical and other differences which divide them so sharply from each other, entitles us, in a sense, to act as leaders. Our policy must above all be Czech, truly Czech, that is to say, truly a world-policy and therefore also Slav.” Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, 384.

¹⁵⁰ Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 229.

¹⁵¹ Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 197-8.

¹⁵² Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 238.

viewed with concern the fact that interim partition agreements in Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia indicated a very negative ethnographic situation for Czecho-Slovakia.¹⁵³ This premise complicated the negotiating position of the Czecho-Slovak delegation over Tešín Silesia at the Peace Conference in Paris because many statesmen preferred solutions based on the ethnographic principle (national self-determination).¹⁵⁴ Polish views, arguing in favour of an ethnographic border in Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia, criticized interim partition agreements in Orava and Spiš as a dangerous precedents for the future Polish territorial claims in northern Slovakia.¹⁵⁵ Poland also did not give up its territorial claims in Spiš and Orava, and from February 1919 onward, the fate of Orava and Spiš was connected with the dispute about the frontier in the Tešín area.

¹⁵³ Peroutka criticizes the *Zemský Národní Výbor pro Slezsko* for drawing a highly unfavorable ethnographic map of Czech interests in Tešín Silesia. The *Zemský Národní Výbor* articulated openly that the map was prepared on an ethnographic basis and that the *Výbor*'s jurisdiction extended over "all Czech districts in Tešín Silesia" ("veškeré české kraje ve Slezsku"). Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 238.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 238-9.

¹⁵⁵ Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 108.

4.

ALL ROADS LEAD TO SPA?

...I am certain that in the end it will be impossible for both parties to solve the dispute by themselves and it will need to be decided by the Powers. The longer current impasse would last the more difficult it would be to find an acceptable solution.

...The Polish delegates had vehemently demanded a decision by plebiscite. The Czechs, to whose cause this method would be detrimental, had discarded it.... They demand to consider economic needs of the [both] countries [underlined in original].

...The following official information inspire my confidence: 1. That the Czechs seek almost entire coal basin of Teschen [Tešín] (at least its three quarters). 2. That the Poles would not be far from ceding it if not entirely [then] (at least) to a significantly large extent, on condition, that they obtain, in exchange, Spiš and Orava (in Slovakia). 3. But the Czech[o-Slovak] delegation did not want to hear, until now, anything about this deal, even though more than one serious politician in Czecho-Slovakia accepts that it is difficult to demand all concessions without making any himself..

F. Simon-Clément, Prague, 27 July 1919

The Paris Peace Conference in 1919 started to deal with the territorial demands of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in the spring of 1919. Initially, the Peace Conference hoped the two states would reconcile their difference of opinions bilaterally. The bilateral settlement brought two sides to negotiating table in Cracow. The Polish side presented its claim to Spiš and Orava in Cracow in July of 1919 and linked the fate of Spiš and Orava with the fate of Tešín Silesia. The bilateral solution reached a dead end and the Peace Conference had to step in and proposed the solution with the largest credibility - a plebiscite in the disputed areas conducted under international control. The preparations for a plebiscite, which was prescribed by the Paris Peace Conference for 27 September 1919 for the Orava, Spiš and Tešín regions, posed serious logistic, security and political challenges. Their cumulative impact and an unexpected opportunity created by the declining Polish fortunes of

war offered an escape route from the Tešín conundrum. The Peace Conference weighed into the dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland once again and this time with conclusive effectiveness. The international arbitration by the Conference of Ambassadors at Spa on 28 July 1920 delimited the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in Spiš and Orava, as well as in Tešín Silesia, with stunning efficiency, but with the lasting consequences for the borderland population.

The Paris Peace Conference began its deliberations on 18 January 1919. By the time the conference began, the United States,¹ Britain² and France³ had already prepared their visions of the post-war world. Britain, France and the United States had already recognized several new states,

¹ The U.S. delegation came to the Peace Conference equipped with approximately 2,000 separate reports and documents for the Peace Conference. Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry, American Preparations for Peace, 1917-1919* (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1963), 317. The United States had worked on its program for peace since April 1917, in the autumn of 1917 organized "The Inquiry," which ceased to exist in January 1919. James Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, eds. Agnes Headlam-Morley, Russell Bryant and Anna Cienciala (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1972), p.xxiv. For more on "The Inquiry" see Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry, American Preparations for Peace, 1917-1919*. The Inquiry's tentative report and recommendations of 21 January 1919 favored an independent Czecho-Slovakia with its frontiers essentially based on ethnic considerations. Gelfand, *The Inquiry*, 204. For the documents of "The Inquiry" see NARA, College Park, MD, RG 256, 256.2 Records of the Inquiry, 1914 - 1919. The American Commission to Negotiate Peace was established after the signing of the Armistice on 11 November 1918, participated in the peace negotiations and was abolished in December 1919. For its documents see NARA, College Park, MD, RG 256, 256.3 Records of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, 1914 - 1931. The Commission sent on 26 December 1918 Prof. Archibald Cary Coolidge to investigate and report on conditions in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and he began to work in Vienna on 5 January 1919. See Arthur S. Link et al., eds., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966-), vol. 56, (Note) 54. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (hereafter *PWW*), 65 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966-); Harold Jefferson Coolidge and Robert Howard Lord, *Archibald Cary Coolidge: Life and Letters* (Boston and New York, 1932), 192-98; and *The Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (hereafter *PPC*), vol. 2 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1922-), 218-37. Coolidge sent on 27 January 1919 his view on the Tešín settlement to the U.S. delegation in Paris. See "Pismo szefa amerykańskiej misji obserwacyjnej na kraje Europy południowo-wschodniej prof. A. C. Coolidge'a do Amerykańskiej komisji Rokowań Pokojowych w Paryżu w sprawie rozważenia przynależności Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Vienna, 27 January 1919," in Ewa Orlof and Andrzej Pasternak, eds. *Stosunki polsko-czesko-słowackie w latach 1918-1939* [Polish-Czecho-Slovak Relations in 1918-1939] (hereafter *SPCS 18-39*) (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1994), Doc. No. 4, 15-16.

² The British delegation arrived to the Conference with 157 volumes of the Handbooks for the Peace Conference. See *Handbooks Prepared under the Direction of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1920).

³ The French delegation to the Paris Peace Conference had at its disposal two large volumes of the *Travaux du Comité d'études*. See Comité d'études, *Travaux du Comité d'études* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1918-19).

including Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, and accepted the dissolution of Austria - Hungary.⁴ Czecho-Slovakia and Poland were viewed as two key elements of anti-German Central Europe,⁵ which would strengthen France and check Germany.⁶ Matters relating to the restoration of Poland were being fought on two fronts, diplomatically in Paris and in Poland, where the Polish army was deployed in the East against the Ukrainian independence movement and the Belorussian and Lithuanian communities for control of disputed areas. In Paris Dmowski and later Paderewski set out to secure international approval for a *fait accompli* on the ground. This created distrust of Polish motives at the Conference.⁷

The Polish territorial program acknowledged that a reconstitution of Poland in its historical frontiers of 1772 would hardly be possible. At the same time, consciousness of Polish nationality and attachment to the Polish cause was not confined within the limits of the Poland of 1772, there were provinces, such as Teschen Silesia, which did not belong to Poland at the time of the Partition.⁸ The

⁴ Victor S. Mamatey suggested that by January 1919, when the Paris Peace Conference began, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania were already well entrenched, and the Paris Peace Conference faced a *fait accompli* in East Central Europe, which it neither desired nor could challenge. Therefore, the Conference contented itself with giving the new situation international sanction and arbitrated the many territorial disputes which had arisen among the Successor States. Victor S. Mamatey, *The United States and East Central Europe, 1914-1918: A Study in Wilsonian Diplomacy and Propaganda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957; reprint, Port Washington, NY / London: Kennikat Press, 1972), x. Lawrence E. Gelfand argued that dissolution of Austria-Hungary was not willed by the peace conference nor was this solution favored particularly by those responsible for the American preparations for peace. Yet when the peace conference convened at Paris in January 1919, there were few informed persons willing to wager that the empire had any future. Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry, American Preparations for Peace, 1917-1919*, 204.

⁵ Anna Cienciala argued that a strong Poland was viewed as the key element in the projected anti-German barrier and therefore as vital to the long-term security of France. Cienciala dated the concept of an alliance between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia to the early 1919. See Anna M. Cienciala and Titus Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno: Keys to Polish Foreign Policy, 1919-25* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 14.

⁶ Central Europe played different roles in the strategic plans of the United States, Great Britain, France and Italy, therefore, their support for Poland and Czecho-Slovakia varied. Cienciala wrote that French support for Poland was limited to German-Polish problems; France and Britain supported Czecho-Slovak claims to the duchy of Tešín and the United States and Italy were, for ethnic reasons, more amenable to Polish claims in Tešín. In Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 15.

⁷ Anita Prazmowska, *Ignacy Paderewski* (London: Hous Publishing Ltd., 2009), 77.

⁸ Roman Dmowski argued that the basis of the strength of Poland was the territory where the mass of the population spoke Polish, was conscious of its Polish nationality, and was attached to the Polish cause. This territory was not confined within the limits of the Poland of 1772. There were Polish provinces in Germany and Austria which did not belong to Poland at the time of the Partition, such as the Principality of Teschen in Austria. In Dmowski's view the most

Baltic Sea and the Carpathians formed the best natural frontiers of Poland. The border in the Carpathians corresponded to the limits of the Poland of 1772, but due to ethnographic and geographic reasons, Poland claimed parts of the Spiš, Orava and Trenčín counties as the enclaves, inhabited by the Polish population, in the natural territory of Poland.⁹

Poland claimed three regions beyond the Carpathian Mountains, beyond the former Hungarian - Galician border: the district of Čadca and the northern parts of the Orava and Spiš counties. Polish experts believed these regions had exclusive and an essentially Polish population.¹⁰ Poland claimed historical right to Spiš.¹¹ The Polish experts admitted that the size of the Polish population in Spiš was not the greatest despite the long-lasting ties between the territory mortgaged in 1412 to Poland.¹² The Polish experts maintained that the language of the people living in the district of Čadca and the northern parts of the Orava and Spiš counties could not, by any means, be considered to be a Slovak dialect, but that it had all the distinguished marks of Polish speech. In consequence of continual intercourse with the Slovak people, in consequence of the use of the

desirable territory of the future Polish State would comprise Austrian Poland - Galicia, and half of Austrian Silesia (Teschen). Dmowski did not mention any Orava, Spiš or any other part of Slovakia (Kingdom of Hungary). See "Note submitted by R. Dmowski to A. J. Balfour in March 1917 regarding the borders of Poland," in *Akty i dokumenty dotyczące sprawy granic Polski na Konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu 1918-1919 zebrane i wydane przez Sekretariat Jeneralny Delegacji Polskiej* [Acts and Documents Related to the Question of Polish Border at the Paris Peace Conference 1918-1919 Collected by the General Secretariat of the Polish Delegation], vol. 1 (Paris: General Secretariat of the Polish Delegation, 1920), 13-19.

⁹ "Note by the Polish Delegation regarding the Western Border of Poland submitted to the Chair of the Polish Affairs Committee on 28 February 1919," in *Akty i dokumenty dotyczące sprawy granic Polski na Konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu 1918-1919 zebrane i wydane przez Sekretariat Jeneralny Delegacji Polskiej* [Acts and Documents Related to the Question of Polish Border at the Paris Peace Conference 1918-1919 Collected by the General Secretariat of the Polish Delegation], vol. 1 (Paris: General Secretariat of the Polish Delegation, 1920), 112-123.

¹⁰ Commission polonaise des travaux préparatoires au congrès de la paix. Le Spisz, l'Orava et le district de Czaca, AAN, Delegacja Polska na Konferencję Pokojową w Paryżu, t. 150, 3.

¹¹ Commission polonaise des travaux préparatoires au congrès de la paix. Le Spisz, l'Orava et le district de Czaca, AAN, Delegacja Polska na Konferencję Pokojową w Paryżu, t. 150, 10.

¹² Roman Zawiliński, "Why the Polish population in Hungary should be joined to Poland. Linguistic and ethnographical reasons," AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 323, 1-8. Zawiliński observed: "...Apparently the largest Polish part of Hungary [Slovakia] is Spiš, but the number of its population is not the greatest. this is the stranger that historically it was the longest connected with Poland, and belongs to her geographically. ...This emigration [to the US] explains the mystery...." *Ibid.*

Slovak language in Church and partially in the schools, very many Slovak words were incorporated into the language of the Carpathian mountaineers. The Carpathian mountaineers in general, and especially those of Zakopane had also many foreign expressions in their language, and nobody looked upon their language as Slovak, but as pure Polish. On the other hand, this population did not count itself as Polish. Interestingly, when they went to Poland they were called Slovaks, and when they went down to Slovakia, they were called Poles.¹³

The Czecho-Slovak territorial program regarded the northern border of Slovakia as a very good natural frontier and discounted the former Polish control of the Spiš enclave as a historical anomaly, which every state had possessed in the past, but from which Poland could not formulate any present claims.¹⁴ From a strategic point of view, the northern border of Slovakia, following the crest of the Carpathian mountains, completely satisfied military requirements and did not require any improvement.¹⁵ The experts advised the border rectification only around the city of Nowy Targ.¹⁶

¹³ Roman Zawiliński, "Why the Polish population in Hungary should be joined to Poland. Linguistic and ethnographical reasons," AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 323, 1-8.

¹⁴ "Proposal for the rectification of the border of the Czechoslovak [Czecho-Slovak] Republic," [by Viktor Dvorský,] AMZV, Pařížský archiv, LVI. Mírova konference. Různe, 5301-5309. Dvorský wrote that Slovakia had the historical border only in the North, the current Galician-Hungarian border with exception of Spiš, where Poland interrupted with a curious strip. Dvorský argued the former Polish control of the Spiš enclave could not be but a historical anomaly which every state possessed in the past in large numbers, the Czech possessions and estates in the Pfalz, Meissen [regions] and elsewhere would be of a similar nature. Interestingly, Dvorský contemplated eventual territorial compensation of Poland for its "historic right to a part of Spiš." Dvorský wrote in a footnote: "Should it prove necessary to compensate Poles for their historic right to a part of Spiš, it would be better to cede the northern tip of the Orava county, but the way that the Babia Hora [Babia gora in original] mountain would all remain on the Slovak territory; rather than to cede the northwestern tip of the Spiš county behind the High Tatra and the Spišská Magura mountains. Military experts insist on unconditional control of this [the northwestern] tip [of the Spiš] by the Czechoslovak [Czecho-Slovak] state, in order to control concentration of Polish troops for invasion of Slovakia at an important railway hub in Nowy Targ. Should the Spišská Magura mountains belong to Poles, the Polish Army would be able to interrupt, at the beginning of the war, the Košice - Bohumín railroad line, and this way effectively isolate Eastern Slovakia." *Ibid.*

¹⁵ "The border of the Czechoslovak state from a strategic perspective," [by . R. Kalhous], Paris, 20 January 1919, AMZV, Pařížský archiv, LVI. Mírova konference. Různe, 5297.

¹⁶ "Delimitation of the border of the Czechoslovak [Czecho-Slovak] state from a strategic point of view," [by Rudolf Kalhous], 26 November 1918, AMZV, Pařížský archiv, LVI. Mírova konference. Různe, 5298. Kalhous, military expert of the Czecho-Slovak delegation at the peace conference, wrote: "The northern border should follow the crest of the Carpathian mountains as it is now. /Only around [the city of] Nowy Targ the border rectification would be advisable. Even if this rectification is of no strategic importance [the town of] Zakopane would be gained for Slovakia./ ...[The city of] Nowy Targ and the road leading from here to the region of [the city of] Poprad allows Poles to invade Slovakia, and

Czecho-Slovakia argued that Poland could raise claim of a strictly ethnographic character to the northern parts of Slovakia only when it accepted ethnographic character as a binding criterion for itself in all other instances.¹⁷ Poland suspected Czecho-Slovakia viewed favourably the idea of its direct territorial link with Russia. Polish intelligence previewed Czecho-Slovakia could play a part in schemes to resurrect Great Russia which would include Eastern Galicia, the so-called Lemkoland (“*Lemkowszczyzna*”) populated by the Rusins, Bukovina and parts of Upper Hungary. Czecho-Slovakia would occupy the Rusin territories of Hungary and enter Galicia to occupy the *Lemkowszczyzna* in order to achieve direct territorial link with Russia. In this way, the Czech lands (“*Czechy*”) would establish a common border with Russia and acquire not only the whole of Slovakia, but also Silesia, the Trenčín district (the Čadca area), Orava, Podhale and Spiš, eventually also Šariš.¹⁸

The Paris Peace Conference vested the main responsibility for the direction of the Conference to the Supreme Council of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers,¹⁹ known informally as the Council of Ten.²⁰ On 24 March 1919, President Wilson invited the Prime Ministers of France, Great

threaten our connection with Košice. Military considerations require that our border, which now surrounds the Zakopane basin, would not be dismantled or moved southward.” *Ibid.*

¹⁷ “Proposal for the rectification of the border of the Czechoslovak [Czecho-Slovak] Republic,” [by Viktor Dvorský,] AMZV, Pařížský archiv, LVI. Mirova konference. Různe, 5301-5309. Dvorský argued the ethnographic character of the population in the regions claimed by Poles (the northern parts of the Orava and Spiš counties) did not justify their characterization as Polish because Poles were not a mountainous nation. Dvorský believed Poles could raise claim of a strictly ethnographic character only when they ceded to the Russians all districts with Russian majority in the Carpathians, particularly an exclusively Russian strip [of territory] reaching to Nowy Sącz. *Ibid.* If fact, a strictly ethnographic character would alter Czecho-Slovakia’s borders as well.

¹⁸ Political Information Report of the Supreme Command of the Polish Army, 24 February 1919, *O niepodległą i granice*, vol. 2, 85-87.

¹⁹ The Principal Allied Powers were France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan. The United States of America manifested its unique position among the Allies by a distinct designation - an Associated Power.

²⁰ The Council of Ten consisted of the heads of governments with their foreign ministers of the five Principal Allied and Associated Powers. Paul Mantoux, *The Deliberations of the Council of Four (March 24 - June 28, 1919)*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. A. S. Link, with the assistance of M. F. Boemeke (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), xxxiii.

Britain, and Italy, to form a smaller council.²¹ The Council of Four met from 24 March through 28 June 1919, usually at Wilson's house.²²

The occupation of Tešín by Czecho-Slovak troops on 23 January 1919²³ and the ensuing hostilities between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland were among the most dramatic events of the early stages of the Peace Conference.²⁴ The Supreme War Council considered the conflict in Tešín on 25 January 1919 and condemned Czecho-Slovak intervention.²⁵ The Council of Ten dealt with the dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in Tešín Silesia on 29 January 1919. The Council heard Polish delegate Roman Dmowski and two Czecho-Slovak delegates, Karel Kramář and Edvard Beneš.²⁶

Roman Dmowski addressed the issues of Germany,²⁷ Tešín Silesia and the boundaries of

²¹ Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, xxxiii. The Polish Question - the disposition of Poland and of its borders - was one of the most politically explosive issues at the Paris Peace Conference. The U. S. experts of the Inquiry completed forty-two reports on the subject of Poland and its fate. Gelfand, *The Inquiry*, 205. The leakage to the French press of the British opposition to the report of the Commission on Polish Affairs markedly changed the procedural structure of the Peace Conference. The Conference's central decision-making body, the Council of Ten, was reduced to a Council of Four. This revamped Council started its deliberations on 24 March 1919. Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, 57.

²² Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, xiv.

²³ See chapter 3, for background also see Piotr S. Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919 - 1925* and Piotr S. Wandycz, *French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from the Paris Peace Conference to Locarno* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1962), 75-89.

²⁴ Headlam-Morley wrote to John Bailey, Foreign Office: "The most interesting thing which has happened so far has been in regard to Poland and the Czechs." See "Extract from letter to Mr John Bailey (F.O.), 3 February 1919," in Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, 19.

²⁵ Beneš informed Masaryk that the occupation of Tešín made a very bad impression in Paris and that the operation should be halted. French Ambassador in Czecho-Slovakia, Clément Simon, telegraphed "unpleasant [to Czecho-Slovakia] information" to the French authorities in Paris. See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 27 January 1919, in Zdeněk Šolle, *Masaryk a Beneš ve svých dopisech z doby pařížských mírových jednání v roce 1919* [Masaryk a Beneš in their correspondence from the Paris Peace Talks period in 1919] (Praha: AV ČR, 1994), 161. Zdeněk Šolle, *Masaryk a Beneš ve svých dopisech z doby pařížských mírových jednání v roce 1919* (Praha: AV ČR, 1994) will hereafter be cited as *MBPPC*, followed by the appropriate page number.

²⁶ See Hankey's Notes of Two Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 29 January 1919, *PWW*, vol. 54, pp.334-341 and pp.341-345.

²⁷ Dmowski compared Germany to the god Janus. He argued Germany had two faces, one faced the West, where Germany made peace, the second faced the East, where Germany was preparing for a war. Hankey's Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 29 January 1919, 11 A.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 337.

Poland in general.²⁸ Dmowski explained that the agreement of 5 November 1918 divided Tešín Silesia into the Polish and Czech parts.²⁹ Dmowski urged withdrawal of Czecho-Slovak troops from the Polish part of Tešín Silesia, pending a settlement by the Peace Conference.³⁰ As regards the frontiers of Poland, Dmowski suggested the pre-partition boundaries of 1772 to be the point of departure with the final boundaries rectified according to the present conditions.³¹ Edvard Beneš and Karel Kramář provided the Czecho-Slovak perspective on the Tešín Silesia dispute.³² Edvard Beneš explained statistical, ethnological, historical and economic details of Tešín Silesia and disputed the veracity of Austrian statistics.³³ Karel Kramář claimed that the Poles invaded Tešín Silesia and emphasized that the Czecho-Slovak Republic could not exist without the large coal area within the disputed area.³⁴ Kramář desired to place the Tešín dispute entirely in the hands of the Peace

²⁸ Hankey's Notes of the Meeting of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 29 January 1919, 11 A.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 334-341; the complete text of these minutes is printed in *PPC*, vol. 3, 772-79.

²⁹ The Czech and Polish authorities in Tešín Silesia concluded a partition agreement on 5 November 1918. This agreement was approved by the Polish government, but not by the Czecho-Slovak government. The agreement partitioned Tešín Silesia into Czech and Polish spheres, based on the ethnic principle. See Hankey's Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 29 January 1919, 11 A.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 339-340.

³⁰ Dmowski demanded that "these Czech troops should be withdrawn to the territory as arranged in the terms of the agreement of the 5th November, pending a settlement by the Peace Conference." Hankey's Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 29 January 1919, 11 A.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 339-340.

³¹ Dmowski suggested the boundaries of 1772 as a point of departure, but stated that in some instances Poland could not be satisfied with these boundaries: "...In settling the boundaries, those territories where the Poles were in a large majority, must not be accepted altogether. In the West, Poland could not be satisfied with the historical boundaries of 1772. For instance, Silesia was lost in the 14th Century, but today 90% of the population, owing to the national revival, had kept its language and was strongly Polish. For instance, 15 years ago, Silesia sent a Polish representative to the Austrian Reichsrat." Hankey's Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 29 January 1919, 11 A.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 341.

³² Hankey's Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 29 January 1919, 3:30 P.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 341-345; the complete text of these minutes is printed in *PPC*, vol. 3, 780-784.

³³ Beneš questioned the Austrian statistics of 1900 and 1910: "...For instance in the case of the town of Richvaldt the Austrian statistics gave as the population in 1900: 4,500 Poles against 11 Czechs; and in 1910, 2,900 Czechs against 3,000 Poles. This gives a clear idea of the manner in which Austrian statistics are compiled." Hankey's Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 29 January 1919, 3:30 P.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 344-345. For statistical, ethnological, historical and economic arguments of the Czecho-Slovak delegation see the brochure "The Problem of Teschen Silesia."

³⁴ Kramář stated that: "...he had always thought that the points of difference between the Poles and the Czecho-Slovaks would be settled by mutual agreement. To his surprise, the Poles invaded this territory, mobilized the male population, and even went so far as to fix an election day." Hankey's Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 29 January 1919, 3:30 P.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 344-345. Dmowski corrected Kramář that it was not the Poles who had invaded Tešín. Dmowski regretted that "apparently the Czecho-Slovak Government had not been fully informed as

Conference.³⁵

The Council of Ten recommended the representatives of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland meet the members of the Committee on Polish Affairs.³⁶ On 31 January 1919, the Council of Ten accepted the recommendation by the Committee on Polish Affairs that Czecho-Slovak and Polish troops should occupy the northern and southern parts of Tešín, and that a Commission should be sent there to find a basis on which the peace conference might fix definitely “the respective frontiers of the Czechs and Poles in the contested area.”³⁷

The Council of Ten adopted the final agreement between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland regarding the conflict in Tešín Silesia on 1 February 1919. The Council took note of the conflict and the subsequent change of *status quo* in the area, but asked Czecho-Slovakia and Poland to refrain from unilateral solutions and reminded them of their commitment to submit territorial issues to the Peace Conference. The Council sent a Commission to the contested area to avoid any conflict and to collect the facts necessary for its final decision.³⁸ The agreement between Czecho-Slovakia and

to what was taking place in Silesia.” Hankey’s Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d’Orsay, 29 January 1919, 3:30 P.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 345.

³⁵ Kramář observed that “...they [the Czecho-Slovaks] had always endeavored to arrive at a private agreement with Poland, but this has failed. Therefore, they [the Czecho-Slovaks] now desired to place themselves entirely in the hands of the Peace Conference.” Hankey’s Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d’Orsay, 29 January 1919, 3:30 P.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 344-345.

³⁶ British Foreign Minister Arthur James Balfour proposed that “the representatives of Poland and of the Czecho-Slovaks should meet the members of the Commission appointed by the Peace Conference to investigate Polish questions the following morning.” Hankey’s Notes of the Meetings of the Council of Ten, Quai d’Orsay, 29 January 1919, 3:30 P.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 345. For a list of the members of the Committee on Polish Affairs see Hankey’s Notes of a Meeting of the Council of Ten, Quai d’Orsay, 23 January 1919, *PWW*, vol. 54, 218. Cf. complete text in *PPC*, vol. 3, 693-703.

³⁷ See “Accord sur la région de Teschen entre les Tchéco-Slovaques et les Polonais sous la médiation des Grandes Puissances,” Paris, 31 January 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 50, 124-125. For the record of this meeting, see *PPC*, vol. 3, 813-34. Headlam-Morley wrote, apparently by mistake, that the Council instructed the Inter-Allied Commission to Moscow [sic!] to negotiate a cease-fire. See Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, (note) 19. For the record see *PPC*, vol. 3, 772-83, 820-2 and 836-7.

³⁸ Hankey’s Notes of a Meeting of the Council of Ten, Quai d’Orsay, 1 February 1919, 3 P.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 415-425. For the record of this meeting, see also *PPC*, vol. 3, 835-55. The final agreement regarding the conflict in Tešín Silesia reads as follows: “The Representatives of the Great Powers, having been informed of the conflict which has arisen between the Czechs and Poles in the Principality of Teschen [Tešín], in consequence of which the mining district of

Poland regarding Tešín Silesia was signed by the United States, France, Britain, Italy and Poland on 1 February 1919, Czecho-Slovakia signed it, after two days of hesitation, on 3 February 1919. Thus ended the first involvement of the Paris Peace Conference in the territorial dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.

The Peace Conference established the Inter-Allied Teschen Commission³⁹ on 3 February 1919 and immediately dispatched it to Tešín Silesia. On 24 March 1919 the Conference made the decisions of the Commission binding upon Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, but the Conference had no means of enforcing its own decisions on the ground.⁴⁰

The military conflict in Tešín Silesia plunged Czecho-Slovakia and Poland into a war of claims and counterclaims.⁴¹ The heavy-handed military operation in Tešín Silesia was carried out

Ostrawa-Karwin and the railway from Oderberg to Teschen and Jablunkau has been occupied by the Czechs, have declared as follows: In the first instance they think it necessary to remind the nationalities who have engaged to submit the territorial questions which concern them to the Peace Conference, that they are, pending its decision, to refrain from taking as a pawn or from occupying the territories to which they lay claim. ...The undersigned consider it indispensable that a Commission of Control should be immediately sent to the spot to avoid any conflict between the Czechs and Poles in the region of Teschen [Tešín]. This Commission ... will proceed to an enquiry on the basis of which the Peace Conference may form its decision in fixing definitely the respective frontiers of the Czechs and Poles in the contested zone. ...It is understood that the local administration will continue to function in accordance with the conditions of the pact of the 5th November, 1918, and that the rights of minorities will be strictly respected. Pending the decision of the Peace Congress, political elections and military conscription will be suspended in the Principality of Teschen [Tešín]. No measure implying annexation of all or of a part of the said Principality either to the territory of Poland or of Czecho-Slovakia taken by interested parties shall have binding force. ...” *Ibid*.

³⁹ For the mandate of the Inter-Allied Teschen [Tešín] Commission of 3 February 1919 see *PPC*, vol. 4, 472.

⁴⁰ Hankey’s Notes of a Meeting of the Council of Ten, Quai d’Orsay, 24 March 1919, *PWW*, vol. 56, 209-222. The complete text is also in *PPC*, vol. 4, 459-475. The decisions of the Inter-Allied Teschen Commission could be revoked only by the Commission itself or by the Conference. For the Council of Ten meeting on 24 March 1919 see Hankey’s Notes of a Meeting of the Council of Ten, Quai d’Orsay, 24 March 1919, *PWW*, vol. 56, 209-222; or *PPC*, vol. 4, 459-475. The Council of Ten discussed a “Proposal for Rendering Effective the Work of the Teschen Commission” and then sent two identical notes to the governments of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia. See “Proposal for Rendering Effective the Work of the Teschen Commission,” 21 March 1919, in *PPC*, vol. 4, 473-75; for the text of the notes to the governments of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia see “Identical note to the Governments of Poland and of Czecho-Slovakia” in *PWW*, vol. 56, 222-223. Mamatey suggested that the Allied statesmen followed the course of least resistance with regard to East Central Europe, contented themselves with giving the new situation in the region international sanction and endeavored to arbitrate the many territorial disputes which had arisen among the Successor States. Mamatey, *The United States and East Central Europe*, 382.

⁴¹ Ignace Jan Paderewski to Edward Mandell House, Warsaw, 4 February 1919, *PWW*, vol. 54, 480-1. Paderewski wrote to House to deny the claims made by Czecho-Slovak Minister Švehla at the Parliament that occupation of Silesia had the approval of the Polish Government and the Entente powers. Paderewski stated that the population in Poland was greatly alarmed and concerned: “People cannot conceive why ... the Tcheques [sic] are allowed to make war

under the guise of Allied authority.⁴² The conflict demonstrated that the Paris Peace Conference was far from omnipotent and had no means of enforcing its decisions.⁴³ The military occupation of Tešín Silesia damaged Czecho-Slovakia's reputation at the Peace Conference and general sympathy shifted in favor of Poland.⁴⁴

In February of 1919 the Council of Ten started to deal with the borders of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland and invited the Czecho-Slovak and Polish delegations to present their territorial demands. Czecho-Slovak Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš appeared at the meeting of the Council of Ten on 5 February 1919.⁴⁵ Beneš claimed the territories of Bohemia, Moravia, Austrian Silesia and Slovakia for a Czecho-Slovak state on ethnographical grounds. He doubted the official statistics for the territories with mixed populations in Austria-Hungary.⁴⁶ The Council of Ten set up the

on us because we possess what they would like to have." *Ibid.*

⁴² As one of the Allied officers involved on the Czecho-Slovak side was a member of the U.S. Army, the U.S. delegation ordered an investigation into the Tešín affair. Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, 19. Cf. the final report in Box 69 of the Tasker Bliss Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Masaryk wrote to Beneš on 21 January 1919: "...our occupation [of Tešín Silesia] by Entente troops and officers does not contradict our plans." See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 21 January 1919, *MBPPC*, 152-157.

⁴³ Mamatey, *The United States and East Central Europe*, 380.

⁴⁴ French Foreign Minister S. Pichon expressed his regret to E. Beneš over a *coup de force* of the Czecho-Slovak government in Tešín Silesia. S. Pichon to F. Simon-Clément, Paris, 27 January 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 50, 96. Headlam-Morley wrote: "...Kenney had come straight from Teschen [Tešín]. ...I have not seen much of him, but from his account the Czechs behaved very badly; curiously enough the Czech army was in its advance accompanied by officers of the Allies, whose position and attitude seems to have been curious and irregular. ...Howard has been occupied during these last few days in trying to bring about a provisional agreement. I do not know the precise arrangement which has been come to, but I understand that the Czechs, and especially Krammarsch [Kramář], were very difficult. They have, I think, lost ground very seriously during the last week or so owing to the excessive nature of their demands, and the rather arrogant manner in which they are put forward. The result is that sympathy seems to be going round to the Poles." See Headlam-Morley to John Bailey, 3 February 1919, in Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, 19.

⁴⁵ Masaryk described to Beneš his talks with Dmowski regarding territorial questions at the end of the war. At that time, Masaryk ignored Dmowski's allusion to Polish claims in Slovakia: "...He [Dmowski] alluded to Slovakia, but I did not react. I riposted briefly that they [Poles] had no business in Slovakia." See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 1 February 1919, *MBPPC*, 171-2. Charles Seymour wrote to his family about "...the secret session of the Premiers and Foreign Ministers at the Quai d'Orsay, where Beneš and Kramarz were to present the Czech case. We had lunch with Beneš before...." Charles Seymour to his Family, 8 February 1919, *PWW*, vol. 55, 34.

⁴⁶ Hankey's Notes of a Meeting of the Council of Ten, Quai d'Orsay, 5 February 1919, 3 P.M., *PWW*, vol. 54, 490-493. The complete text of these minutes is printed in *PPC*, vol. 3, 876-87. Beneš claimed Bohemia, Moravia, Austrian Silesia and Slovakia for ethnographical reasons - "they contained 10 millions of the Nation" - and the first three "had been one State from the sixth Century." He argued that Bohemia, Moravia and Austrian Silesia formed a geographical and ethnographical whole. *Ibid.*

Commission for Czecho-Slovak Affairs to study the territorial demands of the Czecho-Slovak delegation and to propose the Czecho-Slovak borders. The Council of Ten set up the Commission for Polish Affairs to study the Polish territorial demands and borders on 12 February 1919.⁴⁷

The French delegation adopted, with a few modifications, the map of Poland prepared by the KNP.⁴⁸ Dmowski explained Polish demands to Jules Cambon, Chair of the Commission for Polish Affairs, on 25 February 1919: "...we demand a Polish territory in Tešín Silesia, the districts of Spiš and Orava...."⁴⁹ The Polish delegation stated its territorial claims to Jules Cambon on 28 February 1919. Poland claimed a Polish part of Tešín Silesia, where it recognized Czech claims to the Frýdek district, and claimed parts of Spiš, Orava and Kysuce in Slovakia:

...the frontiers of Poland run along the Carpathian Mountains, which form, together with the Baltic Sea, the best natural frontiers of Poland. These frontiers correspond to the 1772 boundaries and only in the west require modifications, for geographic and ethnographic reasons. Poland claims parts of the Spiš, Orava and Trenčín (Kysuce) counties, a wedge between Silesia and Galicia, which belonged to the former Hungarian state and which lay in the natural boundaries of Poland and have Polish population.⁵⁰

Beneš doubted the Austrian official statistics, suggesting they were drawn up with a deliberate political purpose to exaggerate the number of Germans in Bohemia. He explained: "When the Austrian census in 1910 was under preparation, State and Municipal authorities sent to each village in the mixed districts warnings that the census would be established on the lines of spoken language not of mother tongue. If, therefore, a workman conversed in German with his employer, he was set down as a German, under pain of losing his employment and of being evicted from his home. The same method had been employed in the territories of other mixed populations in the Austro-Hungarian Kingdom." *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ For all documents of the two commissions see *Conférence de la Paix 1919-1920, Recueil des Actes de la Conférence, Partie IV: Commissions de la Conférence (Procès-verbaux, Rapports et Documents), (C) Questions Territoriales, (1) Commission des Affaires Tchéco-Slovaques* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1923) and *Conférence de la Paix 1919-1920, Recueil des Actes de la Conférence, Partie IV: Commissions de la Conférence, (C) Questions Territoriales, (2) Commission des Affaires Polonaises, tomes 1-3* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1928).

⁴⁸ "Report of E. Piltz on the French MFA Commission on the Polish borders," Paris, 2 February 1919, In R. Bierzanek and J. Kukulka, *Sprawy polskie na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r., Dokumenty i materiały* [The Polish Affairs at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Documents and Materials], vol. I (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965), Doc. No. 12, 58.

⁴⁹ Dmowski's Note on the Polish boundaries to J. Cambon [Chair of the Polish Affairs Committee], Paris, 25 February 1919, *Sprawy polskie na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r., Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. I., Doc. No. 18, 64-66.

⁵⁰ Note of the Polish delegation to J. Cambon regarding the western Polish boundaries, Paris, 28 February 1919, *Sprawy polskie na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r., Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. I., Doc. No. 21, 72-77. Machay observed that the pride of Polish science, Professor Eugeniusz Romer, unfortunately, forgot to mention any Polish presence in Orava and Spiš in his historic atlas of Poland. This omission caused a lot of problems, because the

The Czecho-Slovak and Polish delegations intensively lobbied the Great Powers to enlist their support for their territorial programs.⁵¹ In February of 1919 a delegation from the University of Cracow presented President Wilson with an honorary degree and a Polish War Relief Committee thanked him for what the United States had done for Poland.⁵² Since the Polish delegation claimed the districts of Orava and Spiš in northern Slovakia as districts inhabited by purely a Polish population, a delegation from Orava and Spiš came in March 1919 to Paris.⁵³

A mission of “two peasants from northern Czecho-Slovakia and a Polish chaplain”⁵⁴ successfully solicited President Wilson’s support for Polish territorial claims in northern Slovakia.⁵⁵

Polish delegation used Romer’s atlas to justify the Western border of Poland. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 217.

⁵¹ Ambassador Noulens, President of the Interallied Commission in Warsaw recommended to French Foreign Minister, S. Pichon, a plebiscite to settle border disputes between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. Noulens forwarded to Pichon a map submitted by the delegates of the Polish population in the districts of Cza-Cza, Spiš and Orava. See Noulens to S. Pichon, Posen, 15 March 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 51, 82-87.

⁵² See the Diary of Dr. Grayson, 8 February 1919, Paris, *PWW*, vol. 55, 3. Grayson wrote that the delegation did not give Wilson a diploma, as they had no parchment. *Ibid.*

⁵³ The idea of a “Delegation du Spisz et d’Orawa” originated in the visit of British Colonel Wade to Zakopane in Poland on 1 March 1919. Wade recommended Machay to seek assistance of Ambassador Noulens in Posen (Poznań). Machay and his companions left Warsaw for Paris on 16 March 1919, with their passports stamped and signed as “Delegation du Spisz et d’Orawa” by Noulens. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 208ff.

⁵⁴ Diary of Ray Stannard Baker, Paris, 31 March 1919, *PWW*, vol. 56, 442-443.

⁵⁵ Pierre Borowy, Adelbert Haboczyn and Ferdynand Machay, “two peasants from northern Czecho-Slovakia and a Polish chaplain” met with Ray Stannard Baker on 31 March 1919. Ray Stannard Baker described this encounter in the following way: “...I came into my office and found it smelling like a sheep-pen - two peasants from northern Czecho-Slovakia in their home-spun natural wool peasants’ clothing - a Polish chaplain was there to interpret. Here is the account - - A quaint petition in boots reached Paris today in the form of a party of Polish peasants from the Orawa [Orava] and Spisz [Spiš] districts of Northern Hungary. They object to the proposed plan of annexing them to Czecho-Slovakia and are seeking an audience with President Wilson in the hope of having one hundred and twenty thousand isolated Poles incorporated into the New Poland. ...Two members of the party, Pierre Borowy and Adelbert Haboczyn, lived in the United States years ago, and remember enough English to make their desires known. Borowy, who lived in Pittsburg twenty-five years ago said: “I read Wilson’s speeches and told my friends we are sure of help. He will not allow us to be annexed to Czecho-Slovakia if we tell him how loyal our Polish colonies are to Poland. We have the same religion as Poland and our priest came with us to help save us from being swallowed up by a people of different blood and religion.” Haboczyn, who once lived in Ironton, Michigan, and has forgotten most of his English said: “We go feet two days, then two weeks train to see your President....” The peasants say they have only small mountain farms and their districts have no big factories or wealth which can attract the Czechs. Some members of the party visited the Allied Commission when it was at Lemberg [Lwów/Łviv] and presented their claims, but got no definite answer, so they are now anxious to make Wilson their referee.” From the Diary of Ray Stannard Baker, Paris, 31 March 1919, *PWW*, vol. 56, 442-443. For the details see Ferdynand Machay, *Moja droga do Polski (Pamiętnik)* (Warszawa: Nakład Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1923), 205-238.

Ferdynand Machay, Piotr Borowy and Albert Halczyn met Wilson. Halczyn informed Wilson of 70,000 Poles living in Spiš and Borowy confirmed 50,000 Poles lived in 24 villages in Orava. Wilson promised Machay, Borowy and Halczyn to “straighten” the unfortunate Zakopane bag and this encounter evidently influenced Wilson’s stand on the Slovak - Polish border.⁵⁶ Wilson admitted at the Council of Four that “this is a case of one of those indentations in the drawing of the borders about which it is so difficult for us to decide.”⁵⁷ Wilson’s flexibility helped the Polish plans for Orava and Spiš.⁵⁸ For both, Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, Orava and Spiš remained of lesser importance.⁵⁹ Neither Czecho-Slovakia, nor Poland, wanted to endanger their prospects in Tešín Silesia. Even the Polish community in Paris showed very modest interest in the Orava and Spiš

⁵⁶ Machay credited Count Ksawery Orlowski for arranging their meeting with President Wilson. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 221-5.

⁵⁷ Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, 233-4. Wilson described his own impression of the said meeting at the Council of Four, on 12 April 1919: “I must tell you how moved I was yesterday by a visit of a group of Polish peasants who came from their country, having traveled sixty kilometers on foot to the nearest station, and whose villages had provided them with the funds required for the trip. They begged me to see to it that the boundary line unites them to Poland - their country - and not to make them subjects of the Czechoslovak Republic [Czecho-Slovakia]. Their simplicity and passion were touching. This is a case of one of those indentations in the drawing of the borders about which it is so difficult for us to decide.” *Ibid.* An alternative description of Wilson’s encounter with “Polish” peasants offers the Diary of Dr. Grayson printed at 11 April 1919, *PWW*, Vol. 57, 237-38. Grayson wrote: “At 10:00 o’clock this morning the President received two Galacian [Galician] Peasants, who were accompanied by a Polish priest and a Polish astronomer, who had taken them in charge. The two men were goat-herds and came from a small mountain community in Galacia [Galicia], south of the Polish borders. They represented two little colonies of Poles, who were desirous of having the boundary line of Galacia changed so that their homes would be in the new Republic of Poland. These two men were picturesquely garbed in a native mountain costume, which had not been washed since they first put it on, and they smelled very strongly of their herds of goats that they had left in their native hills. They deserved a great deal of credit. They had heard that the President was in Paris, so they set out each separately from his own little village and met on the highway. They were walking toward Warsaw and they met the astronomer, who accompanied them and who showed them the way by the stars at night in their long walk. At Warsaw the Polish authorities took them up and arranged for them to come to Paris, but they defrayed the cost of their trip from their own savings. The Bishop [the “priest” mentioned above] interpreted their remarks for the President, and the President thanked them for coming so far to see him. Their meeting with the President was one of the most touching scenes I have ever witnessed. They said they had come to ask the President - the biggest man in all the world - to see that they were turned over to Poland and not Cheko-Slovia [Czecho-Slovakia].” See the Diary of Dr. Grayson, Friday, 11 April 1919, *PWW*, Vol. 57, 237-38.

⁵⁸ Machay believed the Orava and Spiš question would fare even worse if not for their visit to Wilson in April 1919. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 226.

⁵⁹ Machay complained he had to rebel to plead the Orava-Spiš cause because the Polish delegates asked him to keep a low profile (and silence) so as not to disrupt the Polish prospects in the Tešín question (e.g. his meetings with La Roche and Le Grand, and Tardieu). Only after his protest the issue became a topic in the following negotiations. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 219-220.

question.⁶⁰

The Polish delegation at the Peace Conference distributed a memorandum of a “*Comité politique pour le duché de Cieszyn, l’Orava et Spisz*,” which emphasized the need for the Czecho-Slovak - Polish border on ethnic basis. The memorandum demanded the following territories from Slovakia: the district of Čadca in the County of Trenčín; in Orava the following frontier line: Erdudka, Klin, Zakamenné, Chyžné, Hladovka, Suchá Hora; in Spiš the line: Vysoká, Gerlach, Veľká Dolina, Červený Potok, Matejovce and then to the north of Farkašovce and Dvorec.⁶¹ The Polish delegation would later renounce certain exaggerated claims in Slovakia, but the destiny of Orava and Spiš would remain dangerously linked with the destiny of Tešín Silesia.⁶²

The Council of Four struggled to establish principles, which could help to solve wide-ranging and contradicting claims as the Saar, Danzig⁶³ and Tešín Silesia, and should be applicable and workable for a greater as well as a lesser ally.⁶⁴ In the dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, the Council of Four had to balance the excessive nature of territorial demands, the passions of the local populations, economic requirements, lobbying and principles.⁶⁵

President Wilson promised to erect Poland on all territories with an indisputably Polish

⁶⁰ Machay was disappointed to realize his lecture dedicated to the Orava and Spiš question attracted only half of a crowd that came to hear the lecture on the Ukrainian affairs. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 226-227.

⁶¹ Andrej Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska* [The Northern Border of Slovakia] (Bratislava: Ústredná správa Slovenskej ligy [The Central Office of the Slovak League], 1946), 65.

⁶² M. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920* (2001), 223.

⁶³ Gdańsk in Polish.

⁶⁴ At the Council of Four, 28 March 1919, President Wilson: “The question being asked here also applies to other parts of Europe - in the Danzig region, at Teschen [Tešín], where the dispute between the Czechs and Poles recalls in many ways this problem of the Saar. Mr. Lloyd George said the other day: if you try to establish borders according to historical or strategic - and, I will add, economic - considerations, there will be no limit to the claims. We must hold to the principles we have enunciated, and, in that way, we won’t be wronging France.” Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, 61.

⁶⁵ President Wilson earned, sometimes, very ironic comments for his high-sounding rhetoric. Wilson’s advisor House wrote: “...Clemenceau told Steed yesterday that the President Wilson thought himself another Jesus Christ come upon the earth to reform men.” See the Diary of Colonel House, Paris, 1 April 1919, *PWW*, vol. 56, 517.

population.⁶⁶ However, the Slovaks contested the existence of “indisputably Polish population” in Orava and Spiš in northern Slovakia, the Czechs contested it in Tešín Silesia and the Germans in Upper Silesia. The question was not only one of language, but one of the sentiment of these populations as well.⁶⁷ The inability to differentiate roots of local dialects from the national consciousness of their speakers led to misleading conclusions.⁶⁸ Czecho-Slovakia, Poland and other countries presented exaggerated territorial claims in order to receive as much as possible. President Wilson criticized the excessive nature of Polish territorial claims: “...I saw M. Dmowski and M. Paderewski in Washington, and I asked them to define Poland for me, as they understood it, and they presented me with a map in which they claimed a large part of the earth.”⁶⁹ On the other hand, the strict application of ethnographic principles complicated decision-making at the Conference.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ See Point XIII of Wilson’s Fourteen Points: “An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.” Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, 284.

⁶⁷ See Mantoux’s record of the discussions at the Council of Four on 3 June 1919: “...President Wilson: I refer back to the Fourteen Points. Concerning Poland, they say that she must include all territories inhabited by an indisputably Polish population. Mr. Lloyd George: That is precisely what the Germans are contesting about Upper Silesia. M. Clemenceau: German statistics reveal that the great majority of the population in Upper Silesia is Polish. Mr. Lloyd George: The question is not only one of language, but one of the sentiment of these populations. All I ask is that it be made evident in an undeniable fashion.” Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, 284.

⁶⁸ Ivor Ripka, “Mieczysław Małecki (1903 - 1946),” *Slavica Slovaca* XXXIIX, No.2 (2003): 174. Ripka observed that, in the case of Orava and Spiš in northern Slovakia, this inability to differentiate the Polish roots of Goral dialects from the Slovak national consciousness of their speakers and automatic deduction from the “Polish dialects” (*gwary polskie*) of the existence of a “Polish population” (*ludność polska*), led to misleading conclusions. *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, 108. President Wilson referred to his meeting with Roman Dmowski and Ignace Jan Paderewski at the White House on 18 September 1918. For a detailed account of this meeting see Louis L. Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson and the Rebirth of Poland, 1914-1920* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953), 94-6. Wilson commented on Polish territorial claims at the Council of Four on 1 April 1919: “We mustn’t allow ourselves to be influenced too much by the Polish state of mind. I saw M. Dmowski and M. Paderewski in Washington, and I asked them to define Poland for me, as they understood it, and they presented me with a map in which they claimed a large part of the earth.” Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, 108. Wilson returned to Polish territorial claims at the Council of Four on 3 June 1919: “...I beg your pardon; I knew perfectly well what was involved. When I received M. Dmowski and M. Paderewski in Washington, I said to them: “It is necessary for us to agree on the definition of Poland.” They then showed me a map which evidenced immense pretensions in all directions. I then said to them: “As for myself, Poland must include only the whole of the areas inhabited by Polish populations.” Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, 285.

⁷⁰ President Wilson and Prime Minister Lloyd George argued at the Council of Four on 3 June 1919: “President Wilson: We have no doubt about the ethnographic fact. I am completely ready to add something to my earlier statements if it is right or expedient; but what I said in the Fourteen Points does not compel us to order a plebiscite in Upper Silesia. Mr. Lloyd George: If we were to talk exclusively on the basis of ethnography, Alsace should remain with Germany.”

Czecho-Slovakia claimed parts of Tešín Silesia, which were demanded by Poland on ethnographic principles, on economic grounds. The Council of Four hesitated as to which claim it should give its official support. The Council wondered whether to base the settlement on the right of that nation which happened to be the stronger, to take such goods of its neighbours as it coveted.⁷¹ The Czecho-Slovak delegation made the coal of Tešín absolutely essential to Czecho-Slovakia and the Polish delegation acknowledged that, but the local population demonstrated, overwhelmingly, pro-Polish sentiments.⁷² The Council of Four attempted to reconcile Czecho-Slovakia's need for the coal and Polish sovereignty over the Polish population in Tešín Silesia.⁷³ Czecho-Slovakia stressed

Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, 285.

⁷¹ Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, 27-8. Headlam-Morley noted on 11 February 1919: "...It is stated with regard to Western Silesia [the western part of Tešín in Silesia] that 'the Czechs' case on economic grounds, however, is very good. The Poles have already more than adequate supplies of coal which the Czechs lack and to the latter the coalfields of Karvina are essential.' This seems to mean that if in the territory which belongs on ethnographic grounds to one nation, there are mineral resources the use of which would be very convenient to another nation, the latter is justified in pressing for the annexation on this ground. Surely this is quite inadmissible. The only principle on which we can get this frontier question permanently settled is that each nation should occupy in secure possession territory which it inhabits with such natural wealth as is included in it. The Germans claimed Briey and Longwy because the mineral wealth there would be useful to them. The claim was rightly repudiated by everyone. The Czechs are now doing precisely the same thing towards the Poles. If we adopt this principle we shall be laying the foundation of future wars which would be fought not as in the past for strategic, but for economic frontiers. Surely the right principle is, having got the frontiers settled on national grounds, that everything should be done to encourage the greatest amount of free commercial intercourse between the nations. Of course it would be more convenient for the Czechs themselves to own Polish minefields and not to have to buy coal from the Poles, but to give official support to this is in fact simply to base the settlement on the right of that nation which at this moment happens to be the stronger, to take such goods of its neighbours as it covets." See "Extract from a minute to Sir Eyre Crowe, 11 February 1919," Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, 27-8.

⁷² At the Council of Four, on 11 April 1919, Lloyd George stated: "...the Teschen [Tešín] Basin. It would seem to me unjust to take that region from Poland, since the population is Polish, passionately Polish. But the coal is necessary for the industries of Bohemia, which it has always supplied. M. Paderewski makes no objection to a clause like the one suggested by M. Loucheur. He acknowledges that the coal of Teschen is absolutely essential to Bohemia, and he is prepared to accept, without considering it any humiliation, the obligation to provide coal to the Czechoslovak Republic [Czecho-Slovakia], whilst the Polish population of Teschen is not compelled to separate itself from the Polish nation." Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, 229.

⁷³ Lloyd George proposed to guarantee Czecho-Slovakia a right to the use of the coal under terms similar to those provided for France in case the Saar Basin should become German again. Lloyd George mentioned this proposal at the Council of Four on 12 April 1919: "On the question of Teschen [Tešín], I lean towards the side of the Poles. The population of that region seems to be Polish by a large majority. On the other hand, it is fair to insure Bohemia a right to the use of the coal under terms similar to those provided for France in case the Saar Basin should become German again. M. Paderewski understands that and acknowledges the vital importance of those coal mines for the industries of Bohemia." Mantoux, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, 233-4.

the importance of Tešín as a communication link between the Czech lands and Slovakia. The Czecho-Slovak delegation claimed that “communication between Bohemia and Slovakia can only be assured by a line across this territory.”⁷⁴ Czecho-Slovakia wanted to preserve the historical borders in northern Slovakia and of the Kingdom of Bohemia.⁷⁵

The Peace Conference and its commissions relied on the census reports, the official statistics on the minorities, voting tabulations, economic statistics and expert studies.⁷⁶ It must be recalled that the experts never emphasized the power realities in the world. President Wilson and other politicians at the Peace Conference were compelled to take continuous cognizance of the new power alignment and to adjust principles in the face of the new power structure rising out of the war.⁷⁷ The highly tendentious German and Austro-Hungarian statistics of the minorities in the census of 1910

⁷⁴ At the Council of Four, 17 May 1919, President Wilson stated: “Yesterday I received a visit from MM. Kramar [Kramář] and Beneš, who came to talk to me about the question of Teschen [Tešín]. M. Beneš gave an excellent explanation and presented the arguments of the Czechoslovaks [Czecho-Slovaks] with great clarity and moderation. He remarks that the importance of Teschen for Bohemia comes, not only from its coal mines, but also from the fact that communication between Bohemia and Slovakia can only be assured by a line across this territory. Furthermore, the Teschen district is included within the historical borders of the Kingdom of Bohemia. The difficulty, from the Polish side, is that the question of Teschen is a party question, and it has become almost impossible for M. Paderewski to accept a compromise. Mr. Hoover informs me of the uncertainty in which the people find themselves about the fate that is in store for them.” Mantoux, *The Deliberations of the Council of Four (March 24 - June 28, 1919)*, vol. 2, 88.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Louis Gerson analyzed the role of President Wilson and his “Inquiry” in the rebirth of Poland after World War I. See Louis Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson and the Rebirth of Poland* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953). For more on the “Inquiry,” see footnote No. 1 in this chapter. Lawrence E. Gelfand noted: “All of the presumptions - expertness, disinterestedness, and scientific objectivity - which characterized the Inquiry’s efforts should not be construed, however, to imply that the reports and recommendations were concerned exclusively with facts and figures. Inquiry members were often predisposed to favor French and Polish causes or other interests and were at times willing to compromise or even flout the Wilsonian principles. Disinterestedness is not a special trait of scholars; it was never a universal attribute possessed by Inquiry members. In Gelfand, *The Inquiry*, 330-31. Gelfand wrote that the U. S. Inquiry, in its Outline of Tentative Recommendations of January 1919, strongly supported the territorial claims of the Poles in Tešín Silesia and recommended a linguistic line between Czechs and Poles. Czech claims to the whole of Tešín Silesia based on historical rights were thus denied. Gelfand argued that Wilson’s ethnic self-determination was applied wherever the principle could serve to enhance Poland’s territorial interests. When economic, political, or historical arguments tended to support the Polish, these arguments were advanced. *Ibid.*, 206-207. Gerson wrote that “...through Henryk A. Arctowski and S. J. Zowski, two of the most active members of the Polish Division of the Inquiry, for instance, Polish leaders, Roman Dmowski and Ignace Paderewski, learned that the Inquiry had received no instructions to assemble data concerning a Polish corridor. Possessing this knowledge, the two Polish leaders started a campaign in the United States to apply pressure on the President in favor of creating a corridor and establishing Polish sovereignty over the Baltic provinces.” See Gerson, *Woodrow Wilson and the Rebirth of Poland*, 96-97; quoted in *ibid.*, 206.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 328.

complicated the clear-cut application of Wilson's ethnic self-determination by peacemakers. The German and Austro-Hungarian statistics were taken in years when the Magyarization system in Slovakia and the Germanization system in the German (Prussian) part of Poland were implemented.⁷⁸ The Hungarian and German governments discovered new languages or new nationalities in order to divide the local Slovak⁷⁹ and Polish populations.⁸⁰ Elsewhere, the governments artificially encouraged development of an alien, non-Slav, majority.⁸¹ Therefore, it was necessary to use the statistical results with some precaution.⁸²

Throughout a larger part of 1919, the peace treaty with Germany remained the main preoccupation of the Paris Peace Conference. Until the signing of a peace treaty with Germany on

⁷⁸ Robert Machray, *The Polish-German Problem. Poland's Western Provinces are the Condition of her Independence* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1941), 28. Robert Machray wrote that the Prussian [German] census of 1910 was highly tendentious. These statistics were taken in years when the Germanization system in the Prussian part of Poland was in full swing, with a long record of ruthless practice. *Ibid.* The Polish note to the Peace Conference, dated 3 March 1919, criticized anti-Polish measures implemented by the Russian authorities after 1864 in the Russian part of Poland. Strong anti-Polish propaganda among the Russian and Lithuanian speakers caused separatist tendencies among the Lithuanian population after 1880. See "Note by the Polish delegation to J. Cambon regarding the eastern Polish boundaries, Paris, 3 March 1919," *Sprawy polskie na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r., Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. I. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965), Doc. No. 23, 105-107.

⁷⁹ The Hungarian government introduced a new category of population (Poles) in northern Slovakia for the census of 1910. The government artificially encouraged development of an alien, non-Slovak, entity in the Counties of Spiš and Orava. The aim was to divide the local Slovak population into two different "nations," in spite of the fact that the local Highlanders (Gorals/*Horals/Góral*s) had Slovak national consciousness. The Highlanders in parts of Orava and Spiš spoke local dialects with Polish roots, but expressed, overwhelmingly, Slovak national consciousness and pro-Slovak sentiments. They ought to be considered as "Slovaks" and registered as such. Polish scientists and politicians claimed Highlanders as "Poles," which created Polish territorial claims in northern Slovakia, in Orava, Spiš and Kysuce.

⁸⁰ Machray described the tendentious character of the statistics of the minorities in the German census of 1910. The Prussian Government in Germany discovered two entirely new languages "Cashoub" and "Masur" to divide the Polish population in Prussia into three different nations. The Prussian government also created new categories of the population such as "bilinguals" or "others." Machray suggested that the "bilinguals," the "Cashoubs" and the "Mazurs" [in Prussia] ought to be considered as "Poles" and registered as such. See Machray, *The Polish-German Problem. Poland's Western Provinces are the Condition of her Independence*, 29.

⁸¹ The U. S. Inquiry experts studied the justice of Yugoslavia's claims to Fiume. The experts observed that the slight Italian plurality in Fiume was of recent origin (since about 1880-90) and resulted from "artificial encouragement by the Hungarian government which held a comprehensive interest in developing an alien rather than a Slav majority in the city." See Memorandum concerning the Disposition of Fiume by the chiefs of the Italian Division, the Balkan Division, the Austro-Hungarian Division, the Division of Boundary Geography, and the Division of Economics to Wilson, April 4, 1919, Wilson MSS, Series VIII-A, Library of Congress; quoted in Gelfand, *The Inquiry*, 328.

⁸² Machray suggested to precede the statistical tables with some general explanatory notes. Machray, *The Polish-German Problem. Poland's Western Provinces are the Condition of her Independence*, 28.

28 June 1919, all issues deemed “irrelevant” to the Treaty of Versailles, were left pending. But the “German” questions were linked to other issues. While the Committee on Polish Affairs studied the Polish borders, it concentrated primarily on its Polish - German section. The first report of the Committee on Polish Affairs appeared on 12 March 1919.⁸³ The Council of Ten then received, on 22 March 1919, another report concerning the western frontier of East Prussia.⁸⁴ The Council of Ten started to discuss the first report on the Polish-German border on 19 March 1919.⁸⁵ In the spring of 1919, the issue of Danzig⁸⁶ and its relations with Poland and the issue of Tešín were “the two cardinal points of Polish feeling.”⁸⁷ While the issue of Tešín was postponed, as it did not come into the treaty of peace with Germany, the issue of Danzig was of immediate urgency for the Polish government. The Council of Four decided on 1 April 1919 that the city should be a free city united to Poland by a customs union.⁸⁸ The government faced strong domestic political opposition and Paderewski offered his resignation over the issue of Danzig. Ultimately, Paderewski resumed his premiership and secured, on 24 May 1919, the *Sejm*’s approval of the boundaries of Danzig proposed by the Peace Conference.⁸⁹

The Polish *Sejm* also weighed on the border dispute between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia

⁸³ See “Report No.1 of the Commission on Polish Affairs: Frontier Between Poland and Germany, March 12, 1919,” in Miller, *My Diary at the Conference of Paris*, vol. 6, 350-66.

⁸⁴ See Hankey’s Notes of a Meeting of the Council of Ten, Quai d’Orsay, 22 March 1919, *PWW*, vol. 56, 165-169; also *PPC*, vol. 4, 448-458. Report “Note prepared by the Committee on Polish Affairs concerning the western frontier of East Prussia” dated 20 March 1919, is printed in *PPC*, vol. 4, 452-54.

⁸⁵ For the report see *PWW*, vol. 56, 88-95.

⁸⁶ Gdańsk in Polish.

⁸⁷ Paderewski told Headlam-Morley and Philip Kerr, on 17 April 1919, that “the two cardinal points of Polish feeling were Danzig and Teschen [Tešín].” Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, 79. Headlam-Morley wrote: “Together with Mr Philip Kerr I had a long conversation today at luncheon with Monsieur Paderewski; Monsieur Zaleski was the only other person present. ...Monsieur Paderewski said that the two cardinal points of Polish feeling were Danzig (Gdańsk) and Teschen [Tešín]. Teschen could be postponed, as it did not come into the treaty of peace with Germany....” See “Memorandum of interview, 17 April 1919.” *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, (note) 75.

⁸⁹ Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, 80. According to Headlam-Morley, Paderewski strongly defended the treaty on Danzig (Gdańsk) in the Polish parliament as giving Poland all that she needed for a secure existence. *Ibid.*

on several occasions. The *Sejm* adopted its most important decision, a resolution on the status of the disputed territories, on 11 April 1919, in which the *Sejm* proclaimed Tešín Silesia, Orava, Spiš and Kysuce parts of Poland.⁹⁰

Masaryk and Beneš consulted territorial claims against Poland in Tešín Silesia. Masaryk advised Beneš to claim all territory up to the river Visla, eventually to get the widest possible strip of the land, which connected Silesia to Slovakia. As regards Polish claims in Orava and Spiš, Masaryk believed the Highlanders in Slovakia did not wish to live in Poland: “...I hope the Poles would not make claims [to Orava and Spiš], if so, we could cede them something, but only the Polish territory, no Slovak territory.”⁹¹ Masaryk believed a cession of this “Polish” territory would not be detrimental to the Czecho-Slovakia’s strategic border.⁹² Masaryk insisted on reconciliation with Poles. He outlined a possible territorial settlement between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, in which he envisaged Poland would receive the “Polish” villages in Orava and Spiš.⁹³

Masaryk supported the idea of ceding to Poland “Polish” villages in northern Slovakia, as he did not challenge Polish claims, which presented these villages as purely Polish. But Masaryk changed his view after a personal encounter with the representatives of these “Polish” villages, where he discovered that the population was Slovak. On 30 May 1919, the fifty Slovaks from the

⁹⁰ See Biblioteka Sejmowa, Sejm Ustawodawczy, Druki sejmowe, No. 384; quoted in Bogdan Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego (1918-1920)* (Opole: Instytut Śląski, 1980), 138; also “Prezydjum Rady Ministrów, Nr.4376/19,” Warsaw, 22 April 1919, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

⁹¹ See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 12 March 1919, *MBPPC*, 192.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 8 April 1919, *MBPPC*, 219. Masaryk elaborated: “Reconciliation means, for us, the territory with the railroad and the coal..., for the Poles, the River Visla and the left bank territory; in Slovakia, Polish villages in Orava and Spiš. But a commission of experts would delimit the border. Should the Poles be smart, we could make a deal without the control and pressure of the Entente.” *Ibid.* Tešín Poles studied alternative railway connections between Silesia and Slovakia (the Vlára Pass), in order to maintain the Košice - Bohumín railway intact and on Polish territory. See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 31 March 1919, *MBPPC*, 203. Beneš informed Prague on 9 April 1919 that the Council of Four attributed Tešín Silesia to Czecho-Slovakia, except the Bilsko district and the town of Bohumín. This decision was unofficial. See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 9 April 1919, *MBPPC*, 223.

Zamagurie region in Spiš visited Masaryk. The visit had to convince Masaryk that the Slovaks from Spiš spoke Slovak. The delegates asked the President for help to stay within Czecho-Slovakia and he promised to inform the Conference of their wishes. Masaryk started to doubt Polish - linguistically and ethnographically-based - claims to Spiš and Orava and informed Beneš:

Apparently, the Poles cheated a lot with [their claims to] Spiš and Orava. [The delegations of] 28 out of 33 townships in Spiš came to see me, I have listened carefully, how (the farmers) speak - they [sound] definitely more Slovak than Polish. And they wish themselves to stay with us, they are afraid of the Polish economy.⁹⁴

In April of 1919 U. S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing proposed that Czecho-Slovakia and Poland reach a settlement over their border between themselves. Lansing predicted that neither side would be satisfied with the outcome, but a bilateral settlement would not leave the feeling of resentment aroused by international indignation.⁹⁵

Lansing urged Beneš to find a compromise with Paderewski. Lansing stressed that the Conference would decide against both sides and Czecho-Slovakia would not receive all Tešín Silesia and Poland would not receive the frontiers it wished. Beneš spoke with Paderewski, but could not reach a compromise. Nevertheless, Beneš remained optimistic, since the four out of the five Conference commissions favoured Czecho-Slovakia.⁹⁶ Beneš informed Lansing on 22 April 1919 on his unsuccessful discussions with Paderewski. Beneš sounded optimistic, Lansing allegedly

⁹⁴ "Raport o sytuacji w Czechach, 7 July 1919, Podstawy porozumienia polsko-czeskiego," CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

⁹⁵ Robert Lansing to President Wilson, Paris, 13 April 1919, *PWW*, vol. 57, 326-327. Lansing suggested to Paderewski that Poland and Czecho-Slovakia select two commissioners to consider an agreement. If they failed to agree, they could reduce their differences to the smallest compass and then call in a third person, mutually acceptable, to settle the question. Lansing wanted to avoid the feeling of resentment which would be aroused if an international commission dictated the terms. Lansing also hoped this method would remove the impression that France was the ultimate arbiter between the new states of Eastern Europe. He worried if the French learned of this independent settlement, they would attempt to block it as it did not offer them an opportunity to claim credit. *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 18 April 1919, *MBPPC*, 228-230.

supported the Czecho-Slovak position.⁹⁷ The U.S. delegation still insisted on bilateral talks between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland on Tešín Silesia. Beneš spoke with Wilson, Lansing and House on 28 April 1919 and all urged him to continue to discuss Tešín Silesia with Paderewski. The Conference expected Czecho-Slovakia and Poland to find a compromise. Privately, Beneš doubted the Poles would make any concession.⁹⁸ President Masaryk discussed Tešín Silesia with Zygmunt Lasocki,⁹⁹ his former colleague in the Habsburg parliament and the former Austro-Hungarian administrator for Galicia, in Prague on 29 April 1919.¹⁰⁰ President Masaryk, who enjoyed wide-ranging competences not limited by the Constitution, offered wide ranging concessions in Spiš and Orava.¹⁰¹ Masaryk also discussed the border settlement with Paderewski, who arrived to Prague. Simon-Clément, French Minister in Prague, reported to Paris that it seemed a transaction could be made based on a cession of the Orava and Spiš districts. Simon-Clément informed that a commission of experts would negotiate in Cracow.¹⁰² Masaryk believed the settlement in Tešín Silesia should make both Poland and Czecho-Slovakia as strong as possible.¹⁰³ Masaryk understood the strategic importance of the Bohumín - Košice railway and the whole Karviná¹⁰⁴ district for Czecho-Slovakia. In fact, Masaryk argued that the railway and the coal rich district formed one inseparable concept: "...if we have Karvín [district], we need the Bohumín - Jablunkov - Košice railway. How else can we transport

⁹⁷ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 22 April 1919, *MBPPC*, 232-233.

⁹⁸ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 29 April 1919, *MBPPC*, 239.

⁹⁹ Zygmunt Lasocki (1867 - 1948) - Polish politician and diplomat, Envoy in Vienna (1921-1924) and in Prague (1924-1927).

¹⁰⁰ Masaryk informed Beneš: "Yesterday, I have met with Lasocki. Dr. Štěpánek will inform you." See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 30 April 1919, *MBPPC*, 242. For more on the Masaryk - Lasocki meeting see Jaroslav Valenta, "Zásah T. G. Masaryka do sporu o Těšínsko" [The intervention of T. G. Masaryk in the Tešín conflict], *Slezský Sborník* 1990, 88 (3): 161-166.

¹⁰¹ "Posel Lasocki," 18 March 1927, Nr. 23/S/27. Scisle tajne, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 13-14.

¹⁰² See F. Simon-Clément, Prague, tel. no. 241, 27 May 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, *Tchéco-Slovaquie*, vol. 52, 98.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ "Karvín area and city" in original, Karviná in Czech, Karwin in Polish.

coal?”¹⁰⁵

The opinions on a solution to the Tešín Silesia dispute were constantly changing. Although Beneš predicted on 18 April 1919 a clear support for Czecho-Slovakia, opinions were in a state of flux. On 2 May 1919, Paderewski intimated to Beneš that the political position of his government was dramatic. The situation was critical and the government faced its eventual collapse due to the Danzig question.¹⁰⁶ Beneš informed Masaryk, on 6 May 1919, of Paderewski's upcoming visit to Prague. Beneš advised Masaryk: "...here [in Paris] they support our solution, which is to leave the Bílsko district to the Poles, and we could make it adopted, should the Allies decide themselves. This solution keeps the Poles in check. All commissions decided in this sense."¹⁰⁷ On 9 May 1919, Frank Lyon Polk, Lansing's assistant, informed Beneš of the changing situation. The Italian delegation, disappointed by Czecho-Slovakia's favoring Yugoslavia over Italy in their territorial claims, threatened to reevaluate its position on Tešín Silesia. Polk observed: "...we cannot exclude that the Council of Four will change the Commission's decision on Tešín Silesia, which was in your favor."¹⁰⁸ Beneš informed Masaryk that the opinion was really turning against Czecho-Slovakia and a complete reversal was quite possible.¹⁰⁹ Masaryk recommended Beneš to seek Wickham Henry Steed¹¹⁰ in lobbying the U.S. and British delegations. Masaryk instructed Beneš to defend the Košice - Bohumín railway and the Karviná coalmines.¹¹¹

The diplomatic dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in northern Slovakia

¹⁰⁵ See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 5 May 1919, *MBPPC*, 248. Masaryk agreed the Poles could keep the city of Tešín, however not the railway, and he downplayed a Polish proposal to build an alternative railway connection on Czecho-Slovak territory (the Frýdek railway): "The Frydek railway is a music of the future." *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 2 May 1919, *MBPPC*, 245.

¹⁰⁷ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 6 May 1919, *MBPPC*, 249.

¹⁰⁸ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 9 May 1919, *MBPPC*, 252.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Wickham Henry Steed (1871 - 1956) - British publicist..

¹¹¹ See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 12 May 1919, *MBPPC*, 254.

complicated Hungary's war with Czecho-Slovakia.¹¹² The Hungarian military advances in Slovakia in June of 1919 made the danger of Communist expansion in Central Europe a real possibility, which helped to justify the incursion of Polish troops into Spiš and Orava in northern Slovakia.¹¹³ Poland carefully observed the conflict between Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary and some experts proposed Polish occupation of Orava, Spiš and Kysuce at the most opportune moment.¹¹⁴ Experts believed military evacuation of Czecho-Slovak troops from Spiš, left the region open and since Czecho-Slovakia depended totally on Poland's approval of evacuation of Czecho-Slovak troops through Tešín Silesia, the Czechs might be more inclined to make concessions, eventually, even to restore the *status quo* of 5 November 1918 in Tešín Silesia.¹¹⁵ Polish troops eventually reached the

¹¹² Marxist Hungary, led by Béla Kun, declared war on Czecho-Slovakia on 28 March 1919. From March through June of 1919 Czecho-Slovakia fought Hungary in Slovakia. Marxist Hungary fought Czecho-Slovakia and hoped to regain Slovakia and eventually all non-Magyar populations lost after World War I. Headlam-Morley, *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, (note) 154.

¹¹³ Masaryk instructed Beneš to file an official complaint against Polish occupation of northern Slovakia: "...the Poles occupy our parts of Spiš and Orava under the pretext of their own protection against Bolshevism." Masaryk instructed Beneš to submit an official protest to the Council of Four and share this information with Scotus Viator and other reliable friends. See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 14 June 1919, *MBPPC*, 282.

¹¹⁴ On 13 June 1919, Dr. Władysław Guenther, delegate of the Foreign Ministry in Tešín, urged the Ministry in Warsaw, in relation to the ongoing Magyar military offensive in Slovakia, to decide on occupation. Guenther believed everything indicated Czecho-Slovak troops would evacuate Orava, Spiš and Kysuce. In his view, Polish passivity would be sinful, the Poles would not be able to raise their territorial claims vis-à-vis the Magyars. Occupation of Orava, Spiš and Kysuce would be military enterprise and the military would need flexibility to act at the most opportune moment. Gunther demanded an immediate [political] decision [by the Foreign Minister]. See "O sytuacji na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w związku z ofensywą węgierską," Cieszyn, 13 June 1919, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

¹¹⁵ On 7 July 1919, St. Bratkowski reported military evacuation of Czecho-Slovak troops from Spiš, left the region open, and should the Poles not to occupy it, then the Magyars would do. Bratkowski wrote it was a question of honour for Poland to occupy at least Polish part of Spiš, which Poland asked for so many times. Exodus of the local population from Spiš, caused by the Magyars, would help to get rid of anti-Polish elements in Spiš, such as Rev. Moyš and similar Czech agents. See "Raport o sytuacji w Czechach, 7 July 1919, Podstawy porozumienia polsko-czeskiego," CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

On 10 July 1919, Władysław Guenther, suggested to the Foreign Ministry, that since Czecho-Slovakia depended totally on Poland's approval of evacuation of Czecho-Slovak troops through Tešín Silesia, the Czechs might be more inclined to make concessions, eventually, even to restore the *status quo* of 5 November 1918. See Telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cieszyn, 10 July 1919, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

Tatranská Lomnica - Slovenská Ves - Lipník line.¹¹⁶

The Council of Four invited Czecho-Slovakia and Poland on 5 June 1919. Paderewski refrained from commenting on Czecho-Slovak - Polish relations, Edvard Beneš alluded to differences with the Poles: "...Now, we are fighting against the Hungarians; we have differences with the Poles."¹¹⁷ General Maurice Pellé¹¹⁸ and the French Military Mission in Czecho-Slovakia worked to avert a potential conflict between France's two allies in northern Slovakia. On 28 August 1919 Pellé criticized Warsaw for not demonstrating friendly disposition toward Czecho-Slovakia during the Hungarian invasion in June of 1919.¹¹⁹ General Pellé agreed to the neutrality of Poland in the Czecho-Slovak - Hungarian conflict with the head of the French Military Mission in Warsaw and thus relieved some Czecho-Slovak troops on the Czecho-Slovak - Polish border for operations in southern Slovakia.¹²⁰ Prague instructed Beneš to present an official protest in Paris against Poland's occupation of northern Slovakia. Foreign Minister Beneš achieved, without politically embarrassing the Polish delegation, the withdrawal of Polish troops in mid-June of 1919 through military channels and ingratiated himself thus with Paderewski.¹²¹ On 13 June 1919, the Peace Conference confirmed

¹¹⁶ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon*, 189. See also Vojenský historický archiv [Military History Archives] (hereafter VHA) Prague, VKPR. Carton 18, 1919 - report, č.j.146; VHA Prague, MNO - Hlavný štáb, Oper.odd. 1919. Carton 2, no.3 - 70/1; quoted in Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon*, 189.

¹¹⁷ The Council of Four, 5 June 1919, *PPC*, VI, 202ff; quoted in Mantoux, *The Deliberations of the Council of Four (March 24 - June 28, 1919)*, vol. 2, 318.

¹¹⁸ General Maurice Pellé (1863 - 1924) - French General, Head of the French Military Mission in Czecho-Slovakia (since 1919).

¹¹⁹ Gen. Pellé, French Military Mission, to Prime Minister/Minister of Defense, Prague, tel. no. 5006 2/E.M., 28 August 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 53, 36-37. General Pellé complained to the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense about Polish hostility to Czecho-Slovakia. Pellé cited the occupation of disputed Spiš, traffic interruptions on the ligne Bohumín - Jablunkov and the activities of the Čierny Dunajec [*Cerny-Dunazec* in original], armed and coordinated, in his view, by the Poles. *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon*, 200.

¹²¹ Beneš replied to Masaryk: "I have not protested against Polish occupation of Slovakia, nevertheless, I have informed Foch. This is a military, not a political issue. Foch shall immediately order withdrawal. Paderewski thanked me for not making an affair out of this. Please let me know if the Poles fail to withdraw." See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 16 June 1919, *MBPPC*, 288-9.

the permanent border between Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary and Hungarian troops started their withdrawal from Slovakia. All military operations in Slovakia were effectively suspended on 23 June 1919.¹²² The war between Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary in 1919 justified the strengthening of centralizing tendencies in Slovakia and helped to introduce the unitary concept of the state, which curtailed effective representation of Slovak national interests in Czecho-Slovakia. This specific constitutional and political framework was to affect the settlement of the Slovak-Polish border in Orava and Spiš.¹²³ The end of military operations in Slovakia did not restore peace completely, there were sporadic guerilla attacks in northern Slovakia. General Pellé, Head of French Military Mission in Prague, informed Paris in August 1919 of guerilla attacks in northern Slovakia, which originated in Poland.¹²⁴ In the summer of 1919 the French military intelligence in Czecho-Slovakia reported very intensive agitation in northern Slovakia organized by the Committee Spiš - Orava in Nowy Targ. The Committee, chaired by Dr. Bednarski, worked to maintain pro-Polish sympathies in Orava and Spiš.¹²⁵ The French military intelligence in Poland denied accuracy of allegations of Polish

¹²² Francis Deák, *Hungary at the Paris Peace Conference, The Diplomatic History of the Treaty of Trianon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 83-84.

¹²³ Hronský wrote that the development of events in Slovakia in the middle of 1919, the establishment of a military dictatorship and military defeats by the Hungarians brought about a new atmosphere, described by Milan Krajčovič: "The psychosis of a threat to the republic swept from Slovakia the possibility of a dualist solution, even the theoretical introduction of the dual principle in legislation, as demanded by delegations of American Slovaks." Hronský believed the year 1919 was decisive, the centralist regime was really stabilized in Slovakia, and Prague began to fully apply the unitary concept in the new name of the state (from Czecho-Slovakia to Czechoslovakia) and the definitively centralist constitution. The period of pretence concerning the so-called tactical variant of Czechoslovakism towards the international community and internally towards Slovak and Czech society, was over. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon*, 202. For more on 'Czechoslovakism,' see Elisabeth Bakke, "Czechoslovakism in Slovak history" in *Slovakia in History*, eds. Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč and Martin D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 247-268.

¹²⁴ See Gen. Pellé, French Military Mission, to Prime Minister/Minister of Defense, Prague, tel. no. 4844 2/E.M., 24 August 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 53, 26-27. Pellé reported that on 15 July 1919 at 2:00 AM a small detachment of irregulars attacked Czecho-Slovak border post at Podspád near Javorina. The detachment "Spiš and Orava," organized in Nowy Targ, consisted of deserters and irregulars from Spiš and Orava. The detachment planned to liberate by force of arms Spiš and Orava from Czecho-Slovakia and attached it to Poland. *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Report of Capt. Moulet, Košice, 2 August 1919, Groupe oriental de Slovaquie, État-Major 2-me Bureau, AAN, Ambassade RP w Paryżu, t. 384.

propaganda in Orava and Spiš. The local population maintained strong and lasting ties to the Podhale region in Poland, which helped it to survive the Magyarization period before 1918, therefore the population could survive also the current régime.¹²⁶ Poland and Czecho-Slovakia continued to exchange allegations and their denials of mistreatment of the local population by Czecho-Slovak troops.¹²⁷

The Conference apparently ran out of patience and on 6 May 1919, the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference invited Czecho-Slovakia and Poland to settle their differences by bilateral negotiations. The Conference set a deadline, 25 July 1919, for a bilateral compromise between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.¹²⁸ The negotiations took place from 22 to 28 July 1919 in Cracow. The Polish delegation proposed that a plebiscite settle the boundaries in the disputed territories as soon as possible, since it believed a delay worked against Poland's interests.¹²⁹ The Czecho-Slovak delegation proposed the river Visla (Wisła) as the boundary line between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in Tešín Silesia, in order to retain the Košice - Bohumín railway and the Karviná coalmines.¹³⁰ The Polish delegation surprised Czecho-Slovak delegates by stating Polish claims to the districts in northern Slovakia, but the Czecho-Slovak delegation did not stake a categorical claim

¹²⁶ AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 384, Annex A., 2. The report stressed that Dr. Bednarski, known activist in public education in Podhale, lacked training necessary for political activist. *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Radimsky, Délégué du Gouvernement de la République Tschècoslovaque [sic] à Varsovie, Warsaw, 22 August 1919, No. 454/9L P, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 323, 11-32. Radimský, forwarding the results of investigation by French Captain Moulet, denied any substance in charges against the conduct of Czecho-Slovak troops in Spiš and Orava. *Ibid.* The Polish government replied to the above by supplying additional information not known or available at the time to Captain Moulet. See MSZ à la Délégation du Gouvernement de la République Tchéco-Slovaque, Warsaw, 6 September 1919, No. D.9363/III/19, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 323, 34.

¹²⁸ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 16 July 1919, *MBPPC*, 318-319. Beneš doubted the possibility of a compromise with Poland, but he believed the Conference would ultimately grant to Czecho-Slovakia the coal mines and the Košice - Bohumín railroad, which it desired. *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ "Protokol 49, 30 June 1919, Scisle tajne.[Protokol on the situation in Tešín Silesia],"CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy. The Polish government worried that time was not on its side: "...regarding the plebiscite, we need to take into account, that every month of delay works against us [our interests]..." *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 50-51.

to Orava and Spiš.¹³¹ The delegations of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland pondered several alternatives: plebiscite, plebiscite with accompanying economic and financial conventions, plebiscite with the military and economic alliance of both countries. The negotiations failed to settle the differences between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.¹³² Nevertheless, Simon-Clément, French Ambassador in Prague, saw a possibility of compromise, in his view, Czecho-Slovakia objected to Poland's pretensions in Orava and Spiš only mildly.¹³³ Simon-Clément believed the dispute would be settled by the Great Powers. The Ambassador alluded to a possible "deal," the Czechs wanted the entire, or at least three quarters of the Tešín coal basin, the Poles were not opposed, in his view, to ceding a large part of it, providing they obtained Spiš and Orava in exchange. But so far, the Czecho-Slovak delegation did not want to have anything with this "deal."¹³⁴

After the Cracow negotiations events started to move rapidly. The situation remained fluid, the positions of and support for Czecho-Slovakia and Poland were shifting, sometimes in the course of the same day.¹³⁵ Throughout August of 1919 Czecho-Slovakia hesitated to support a plebiscite

¹³¹ Machay argued that the Czechs were surprised to hear Polish claims to Orava, Spiš and Čadca in July 1919 in Cracow, which would confirm that the issues were neglected by the official representatives. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 235. Jozef Klimko observed that the Czecho-Slovak delegation did not stake a categoric claim to Orava and Spiš. In his view, this strategy was influenced by economic interests in Tešín Silesia, which affected Czecho-Slovak position during the negotiations, despite clearly articulated pro-Czecho-Slovak sentiments of the Slovak population in Orava and Spiš. Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 51. The Czecho-Slovak delegation in Cracow consisted solely of the Czech representatives and included no Slovak representative, who would represent Orava and Spiš. The Czecho-Slovak delegation stated its mandate was limited to the talks on Tešín Silesia only.

¹³² Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 105; also M. Safianowska, *Wstęp*, In *Sprawy polskie na Konferencji Pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r., Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. II, part 2, Śląsk Cieszyński, 86; F. Szymiczek, *Walka o Śląsk Cieszyński w latach 1914 - 1920* (Katowice, 1938), 109. Bogdan Cybulski wrote that the Polish-Czech negotiations in Cracow were in April-May 1919: "Jan Zamorski was a head of the Polish delegation at the Polish-Czech negotiations in Cracow in April-May 1919." Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 149-150.

¹³³ See Ambassador to Foreign Minister, Prague, tel. no. 79, 19 July 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 52, 142-144. Simon-Clément wrote that regarding the regions of Spiš and Orava, claimed by Warsaw, there was a feeble "Czech" resistance to Polish rights. *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ See F. Simon-Clément, Prague, tel. no.320, 27 July 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 52, 151-152.

¹³⁵ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 2 August 1919, *MBPPC*, 328-9. Beneš sent two telegrams on 2 August 1919. The first telegram spoke of a firm opposition to Czecho-Slovakia, but the second telegram hailed an almost total change of situation. Telegram No.291: "...the situation here, we must be prepared for a decision on the Tešín issue against us.

proposed by Poland to decide the border in Tešín Silesia, it was believed that the Conference will accord Czecho-Slovakia more than a plebiscite. On the other hand, Poland did not press for a plebiscite in Orava and Spiš.¹³⁶ Beneš sounded optimistic on 2 August 1919: "...there is even a hope of winning everything, except the Bílsko district and small rectifications in Spiš."¹³⁷ Consequently, Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš sent on 5 August 1919 a letter to Georges Clemenceau with a request that the Supreme Council solve the dispute itself. The Council started to discuss the dispute, hear the presentations of both parties, consider various solutions, among them a plebiscite.¹³⁸

"The struggle for Tešín has started...." wrote Edvard Beneš from Paris on 8 August 1919.¹³⁹

The diplomatic duel between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland over the border re-opened in Paris in August of 1919. But the duel was essentially a struggle for Tešín Silesia, as Beneš stated. The Orava and Spiš districts in northern Slovakia remained bargaining chips in this diplomatic struggle.¹⁴⁰ The

This is highly probable outcome now, when Wilson and Lloyd George are away. I cannot guarantee anything." Telegram No.292: "According to the latest information, the [Tešín] issue is not lost for us, there is even a hope to win everything, except the Bílsko district and some corrections in Spiš." *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Beneš wrote to Masaryk on 31 July 1919: "...plebiscite would be, in any case, less favourable. The decision by the Conference, even against us, would be better, we have flexibility, since the Poles show no signs of flexibility at all." See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 31 July 1919, *MBPPC*, 327. Beneš repeated his worries on 2 August 1919: "I find direct solution the best, because the Poles do not make concessions and demand strictly a plebiscite. It is better to let the Conference impose [the decision] upon us, than to accept it voluntarily. ...the Conference will accord us more than a plebiscite. I would support an agreement only in case of [Polish] conceding at least the left bank of the Olsa river and the whole railway. If at least this last condition is not met, send the issue back to Paris. It could not end worse [in Paris] than you could achieve under current circumstances...." See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 2 August 1919, *MBPPC*, 328-9. Masaryk essentially agreed with Beneš: "We do not want a plebiscite [in Tešín Silesia]. ...plebiscite is useless, when the population is exposed to agitation and terror of the Poles. ...On Orava and Spiš: [Polish] program is of a recent date. Polish propaganda itself criticizes Warsaw for forgetting Orava and Spiš. And they [Poles] do not want a plebiscite there! I received [the representatives of] 28 villages from [the Slovak] borderland and they are against being attached to Poland: I spoke with them = the Slovak language with Polish features (transitional)." See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 3 August 1919, *MBPPC*, 330.

¹³⁷ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 2 August 1919, *MBPPC*, 328-9.

¹³⁸ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 105.

¹³⁹ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 8 August 1919, *MBPPC*, 334. Also Dagmar Perman, "The Teschen Dispute," chap. in *The shaping of the Czechoslovak state: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914 - 1920* (Leiden, NL: E. J. Brill, 1962), 228-257.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Beneš informed Masaryk on 8 August 1919: "The struggle for Tešín Silesia has started - I negotiate with various commissions and the situation improves rapidly. I reached an agreement with the French, we shall keep the following line: the Bílsko district, and they would oppose all other [territorial] concessions, except in Slovakia. The situation is as follows, we have already lost a part of Spiš (the watershed line) (the English succeeded in adopting it

Conference heard Beneš on 13 August 1919 and he remained optimistic: “As I wrote, the delegations promised me, I am convinced we shall win, but it is a tough fight - they hesitate, and we need to work hard around the clock.”¹⁴¹

The Czech and Polish delegates from Tešín Silesia and Polonophiles from Orava¹⁴² came to Paris and they lobbied for a plebiscite. The Czecho-Slovak delegation in Paris originally opposed the idea of a plebiscite, but at the request of the Tešín delegates Beneš started to defend it. This complete reversal of position raised suspicions among the Poles and the Polish delegation started to doubt the plebiscite solution.¹⁴³ The Commission for Tešín, Spiš and Orava, invited Czecho-Slovakia and Poland to present their views on 18 August 1919. Stanisław Patek,¹⁴⁴ Polish delegate, observed that the Czecho-Slovak delegates showed more flexibility on the issue of Spiš and Orava than regarding Tešín Silesia. The issue of Spiš and Orava seemed less controversial. The Polish delegates maintained that the population of Spiš and Orava is Polish, that the geographic situation of Spiš and Orava supported their annexation to Poland, that the sentiments of the Spiš and Orava populations and of all Poland made it the national issue of utmost importance.¹⁴⁵

against us) and they [the French] demand small concessions in Orava as well, but they [the French] will intervene for us to win Tešín. I hope to save Orava, but we shall lose Spiš (12,000 population). I succeeded in having the English [British] delegation accept the Bílsko line, and yesterday, for the first time, the Americans promised me to accept it also. But they resist to yield in Orava: I think I can save it as well. Overall, it would be a victory. The struggle is really difficult.... As it looks now, it would not be a defeat. We could have a decision in a week.” See *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 13 August 1919, *MBPPC*, 338.

¹⁴² F. Machay visited Paris the second time in 1919, together with Semkowicz, in September 1919. Machay traveled incognito as Andrzej Zvoleński. But, unlike in the spring of 1919, the Orava and Spiš question was already well established due to the Polish media work back at home. Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 236.

¹⁴³ See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 12 September 1919, *MBPPC*, 343. Beneš informed Masaryk: “The Tešín delegation demanded a plebiscite - Špaček and the rest of them claimed it was better - upon their insistence I succeeded in adopting it, in fact, against the Conference. See Beneš to Masaryk, Paris, 12 August 1919, *MBPPC*, 343.

¹⁴⁴ Stanisław Patek (1866 - 1945) - Polish lawyer and diplomat, Envoy to Japan (1921-1926), Ambassador to the United States (1933-1935).

¹⁴⁵ “Report by Deputy Stanisław Patek on the Proceedings of the Commission for Tešín, Spiš and Orava, 18 August 1919,” in *Akty i dokumenty dotyczące sprawy granic Polski na Konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu 1918-1919 zebrane i wydane przez Sekretariat Jeneralny Delegacji Polskiej* [Acts and Documents Related to the Question of Polish Border at the Paris Peace Conference 1918-1919 Collected by the General Secretariat of the Polish Delegation], vol. 3 (Paris: General Secretariat of the Polish Delegation, 1920), 128-131.

In the fall of 1919, Warsaw helped Andrej Hlinka, the Slovak autonomist leader, to lobby for autonomy in Paris. Andrej Hlinka traveled to the Paris Peace Conference to secure international support and guarantees for the autonomy of Slovakia within Czecho-Slovakia.¹⁴⁶ Andrej Hlinka, František Jehlička, Jozef Rudinský, Štefan Mnoheľ and Jozef Kubala, arrived to Paris on 19 September 1919. The Polish delegation helped to distribute Hlinka's memorandum at the Conference, but Hlinka failed to reach the highest political and diplomatic echelons. Štefan Osuský,¹⁴⁷ the Secretary-General of the Czecho-Slovak delegation, intervened with Georges Clemenceau on 24 September 1919 and the French authorities expelled Hlinka and his companions from France.¹⁴⁸ The Czecho-Slovak government criticized Warsaw for its support of Hlinka and had Hlinka arrested after his return from Paris.¹⁴⁹ Prague cast Hlinka's autonomist activities as a part of Polish anti-Czecho - Slovakia propaganda.¹⁵⁰

The peace treaties with Germany and Austria determined the boundaries of Czecho-Slovakia

¹⁴⁶ The Conference accorded to Czecho-Slovakia the territory of Subcarpathian Rus with autonomous status. Masaryk and the Slovak and Czech Americans signed during the war, on 30 May 1918, the Pittsburgh Agreement, a framework document on the future Czech-Slovak state, which guaranteed Slovakia autonomy within Czecho-Slovakia. When Slovak-Americans brought a copy of the Pittsburgh Agreement to Slovakia in 1919, Hlinka decided to go to the Paris Peace Conference to demand its implementation. Slavomír Michálek, *Diplomat Štefan Osuský. 1889-1973* (Bratislava: Veda, 1999), 46-47.

¹⁴⁷ Štefan Osuský (1889 - 1973) - Slovak politician and diplomat, Czecho-Slovak Envoy to France (1919-1940).

¹⁴⁸ Michálek, *op.cit.*, 46-47. For more on Hlinka's travel to Paris, see Ladislav Deák, "Cesta A. Hlinku do Paríža v roku 1919" [Travel of A. Hlinka to Paris in 1919], in *Andrej Hlinka a jeho miesto v slovenských dejinách (zborník)* [Andrej Hlinka and His Place in Slovak History], eds. František Bielík et al. (Bratislava: Mestský úrad v Ružomberku, 1991); Stephen Bonsal, "Czechs, Slovaks and Father Hlinka," in *Suitors and Suppliants: The Little Nations at Versailles* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1946), 145-166.

¹⁴⁹ Beneš criticized the Poles for their support of Andrej Hlinka. Hlinka and his companions traveled to Paris through Warsaw at the end of August and they received Polish passports with false names. See Beneš's Minutes of Conversations with Sikorski and his *entourage*, in Ivan Štoviček and Jaroslav Valenta, eds., *Československo-polská jednání o konfederaci a spojení 1939-1944: Československé diplomatické dokumenty*. [Czechoslovak - Polish Negotiations of the Establishment of Confederation and Alliance 1939-1944: Czechoslovak Diplomatic Documents] (hereafter *CSPC 39-44*) (Prague: Karolinum and HÚ AV ČR, 1995), Doc. No. 24, 54-5. For more on the Beneš - Sikorski conversation see the chapter 7.

¹⁵⁰ See Masaryk to Beneš, Prague, 31 July 1919, *MBPPC*, 326. Masaryk informed Beneš about Polish [separatist] propaganda in Orava and Spiš: "...Magyars, Magyarones, Jews (see the names) and Hlinka's clericals." *Ibid.*

and Poland. The Versailles Peace Treaty with Germany,¹⁵¹ signed on 28 June 1919, defined the frontiers of Germany with Czecho-Slovakia, Poland and other states. Article 87 of the Versailles Treaty stated that the frontiers of Poland that were not defined in the treaty would be decided by the Allied and Associated Powers.¹⁵² The St. Germain Peace Treaty with Austria, signed on 10 September 1919, separated Austria from Hungary and sanctioned Czecho-Slovakia.¹⁵³ In article 91 of the Treaty, Austria renounced all rights and titles to former territories lying beyond her new frontiers, whose fate had not yet been decided, and transferred sovereignty to the Allied and Associated Powers. Under article 67 Austria agreed to accept frontiers with Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania, and the Serbo-Croat-Slovene state, decided by the Allied and Associated Powers.¹⁵⁴

In September 1919, the Czecho-Slovak delegation accepted a plebiscite solution to the Tešín border settlement with Poland. Czecho-Slovakia compared the importance of Tešín Silesia to the importance of Alsace-Lorraine to France, but resigned to accept a plebiscite, extended also to the districts disputed by Poland in Orava and Spiš.¹⁵⁵ F. Simon-Clément, French Ambassador in Prague viewed the Polish prospects in Orava and Spiš as hopeful. Although, the Czecho-Slovak government did not recognize these districts as Polish, in his view Prague was in fact quite ready to abandon some parts to Poland, if this facilitated a settlement with Warsaw. But it was of utmost importance

¹⁵¹ A Treaty between the Principal Allied and Associated Powers and Germany, signed on 28 June 1919 in Versailles. Edmund Jan Osmańczyk, *The Encyclopedia of The United Nations and International Relations*, 2d ed. (New York/London/Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis, 1990), s.v. "Versailles Peace Treaty, 1919."

¹⁵² Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 164.

¹⁵³ A Treaty between the Principal Allied and Associated Powers and Austria, signed on 10 September 1919 in St. Germain. Osmańczyk, *The Encyclopedia of The United Nations and International Relations*, 2d ed., s.v. "Saint-Germain-en-Laye Austria Peace Treaty, 1919 and Geneva Protocol, 1922."

¹⁵⁴ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 165.

¹⁵⁵ See Déclaration de la délégation tchécoslovaque. 11 September 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 53, 120-122.

as to how the question was presented. If the abandonment of these districts did not constitute a *quid pro quo* yielding some advantage, it would be seen as a violation of rights of the Czecho-Slovak Republic.¹⁵⁶ Stanisław Patek saw Polish prospects in Spiš with optimism. Poland argued that the districts in Spiš, which Poland claimed, were a “post-Hungarian territories” (“ziemie powęgierskie”), which belonged neither to the Czechs, nor to the Poles. The “post-Hungarian territories,” which could be extended all over Slovakia, were literally free for grabbing, where the Czechs and the Poles would be allowed to take what was theirs. Since, from the Polish perspective, there were no Czechs and no Slovaks in the Spiš districts, which were allegedly two-thirds Polish, these districts had to belong to Poland.¹⁵⁷

On 27 September 1919, the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference agreed that a plebiscite should be conducted within three months to decide the fate of the disputed regions of Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia (see Map 6).¹⁵⁸ The Powers thus declined exclusive application of ethnographic and economic-strategic criteria and supported instead a vote of the local population to determine territorial allegiance of the population.¹⁵⁹ The plebiscite territory in Slovakia was smaller than the Polish delegation had demanded and the *Główny Komitet Plebiscytowy* demanded on 30

¹⁵⁶ See F. Simon-Clément to S. Pichon, Prague, tel. no. 75, 8 September 1919, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 53, 109-111. Simon-Clément argued that the Polish pretensions to northern parts of the Trenčín, Orava, Spiš and Šariš were of a rather recent date and the inhabitants considered themselves Slovaks and even the conclusions of the linguists did not modify it. Simon-Clément wrote only few years before the war a Magyarophile priest Machay, originally from northern Orava, started, at an instigation by the Magyar government, to claim to the farmers of his native region that they were Poles and not Slovaks, as they had believed until then. *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ See Report of St. Patek, Paris, 21 September 1919, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy. Patek argued that the plebiscite would allow the local population to decide between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia. *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ See “Decision of the Supreme Council regarding plebiscite in Teschen [Tešín] Silesia, Spiš and Orava,” Paris, 27 September 1919, *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 14, 38-41. Borodovčák, *Poliaci a my*, 120; Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 105. See also M. Safianowska, *Wstęp*, In *Sprawy polskie na Konferencji Pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r., Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. II, part 2, Śląsk Cieszyński, 87; *Ibid.*, *Postanowienie Rady Najwyższej w sprawie plebiscytu na Śląsku Cieszyńskim, Spiszu i Orawie, z 27 maja 1919 r.*, document No. 24, 138 - 140. Foreign Minister Beneš made an exposé on the peace conference negotiations at the National Assembly on 30 September 1919. See CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

¹⁵⁹ Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 51-52.

November 1919 extension of the plebiscite area, and the return of the *Rada Narodowa* to Spiš and Orava.¹⁶⁰ The plebiscite areas in Orava¹⁶¹ and Spiš¹⁶² (as well as Tešín Silesia) became neutral territories administered by the international plebiscite commission.¹⁶³ The Orava and Spiš issues were subsumed under the Tešín dispute. The subordinate position of Orava and Spiš was reflected in the organization of the plebiscite administration. The International Plebiscite Commission had its headquarters in Tešín. French troops occupied the plebiscite areas of Orava and Spiš (see Map 7) after a withdrawal of Czecho-Slovak troops on 5 April 1920. Until 5 April 1920 Poles were not allowed to come to the plebiscite areas to conduct propaganda. After the arrival of French troops Poles started propaganda activities, including strong religious propaganda.¹⁶⁴ The International Plebiscite Commission in Tešín designated on 6 May 1920 the International Subcommittee for Orava and Spiš.¹⁶⁵ The Subcommittee for Orava and Spiš, which consisted of John Maurice Pearson (Great Britain), Captain de la Forest Divonne (France), C. Tornielli (Italy) and Sho Kurihara

¹⁶⁰ “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 162; Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 51. The Polish delegation demanded a larger plebiscite area in the Spiš and Orava counties and asked that Trenčín County be also subject to a plebiscite, but this request was declined. Poland demanded extension of the plebiscite area again on 17 March 1920. See “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 165.

¹⁶¹ Slovenský národný archív [Slovak National Archives] Bratislava, f. Ministerstvo s plnou mocou pre správu Slovenska [Ministry for Slovakia] (hereafter cited as SNA Bratislava, f.MPS), kr.305, pleb.248, quoted in Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 51. The plebiscite area in Orava included the Trstená and Námestovo districts. *Ibid.*

¹⁶² SNA Bratislava, f.MPS, kr.305, pleb.248, quoted in Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 51. The plebiscite area in Spiš included the Spišská Stará Ves district and a part of the Kežmarok district in the Spiš County. *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ The International Plebiscite Commission in Tešín ended its mission on 10 August 1920 and transferred its jurisdiction over the plebiscite areas to the Czecho-Slovak and Polish governments. J. Valenta “Vývrcholení národně osvobozenického hnutí a utvoření samostatných států (1918-1920)” [The Culmination of the National Liberation Movement and Creation of Independent States (1918-1920)] in *Češi a Poláci v minulosti* [Czechs and Poles in the Past], vol. 2, eds. J. Macůrek et al. (Prague: Academia, 1967), 478-479.

¹⁶⁴ Józef Zieliński, “Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945,” in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 109.

¹⁶⁵ “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 164.

(Japan) and administered the plebiscite areas of Orava and Spiš.¹⁶⁶ Czecho-Slovakia and Poland appointed their delegates to the Tešín Commission and to the Orava and Spiš Subcommission.¹⁶⁷

The Czecho-Slovak government discussed organization of the plebiscites on 17 September 1919 and selected the Ministry of Interior and its Permanent Plebiscite Commission to coordinate the plebiscite agenda in Czecho-Slovakia.¹⁶⁸ The government appointed Ján Janček¹⁶⁹ commissioner for plebiscite in Orava (in Trstená) and Msgr. Marián Blaha¹⁷⁰ commissioner for plebiscite in Spiš (in Spišská Belá).¹⁷¹ The government opened in Ružomberok the Central Office for Orava and Spiš, led by Slovak member of parliament Ján Burjan,¹⁷² to coordinate cooperation of the commissions in Orava, Spiš and Tešín. The Central Office in Ružomberok served as a liaison point for all Czecho-

¹⁶⁶ John Maurice Pearson was a former British colonial officer, Captain de la Forest Divonne was an officer with the French Army Chiefs of Staff, C. Tornielli was a former officer of Italian Consulate in Budapest and Kurihara was a Secretary at the Japanese Embassy in Paris. See Erik Dulovič, “Agrárny politik, Orava a Spiš 1919-1922” [Agrarian Politician, Orava a Spiš 1919-1922], in *Juraj Slávik Neresnický, od politiky cez diplomaciu po exil (1890-1969)* [Juraj Slávik Neresnický, From Politics Through Diplomacy to Exile (1890-1969)], ed. Slavomír Michálek and others, with a Foreword by B.Lichardus, M.Bútora and V.Bystrický, (Bratislava: Prodama, 2006), 122. See also SNA Bratislava, f.MPS, kr.305, pleb.1436; quoted in Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 52-53; Report on Arrival of International Plebiscite Commission by Władysław Günther, Delegate of the MSZ in Cieszyn, Cieszyn, 3 February 1920, No.9770/D.1978/VI/20, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 384, 3-4. Günther lobbied the Commission to set up its headquarters in Zakopane. *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ SNA Bratislava, f.MPS, kr.305, pleb.1436; quoted in Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 53. French delegate at the Tešín Commission, De Manneville, filed an official protest against Czecho-Slovak delegate at the Orava and Spiš Subcommission, Msgr. Marián Blaha. De Manneville objected to Blaha's simultaneous position as a vicar at the Spišské Podhradie and a delegate at the Subcommission. See SNA Bratislava, f.MPS, kr. 305, pleb. 1368; quoted in Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 53.

¹⁶⁸ SNA Bratislava, f.MPS, kr. 305, pleb. 52; quoted in Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 58.

¹⁶⁹ Ján Janček (1881 - 1933) - Slovak politician, signer of the T. Sv. Martin Declaration of the Slovak Nation (1918), member of the Czecho-Slovak parliament (1918-1920, 1920-1925, 1929-1933), mayor of Ružomberok (1927-1931), the Czecho-Slovak commissioner for plebiscite in Orava (in Trstená).

¹⁷⁰ Msgr. Marián Blaha (1869 - 1943) - Slovak intellectual, Catholic priest, the Bishop of Spiš (1921-1943), member of the Czecho-Slovak delegation at the Paris Peace Conference (1919), Czecho-Slovak delegate at the International Plebiscite Subcommission for Orava and Spiš (1920), the Czecho-Slovak commissioner for plebiscite in Spiš (in Spišská Belá).

¹⁷¹ For the plebiscite campaign in Spiš, see Milica Majeriková, “Neuskutočnený plebiscit” [Failed Plebiscite], chap. in *Vojna o Spiš. Spiš v politike Poľska v medzivojnovom období v kontexte česko-slovensko-poľských vzťahov* [The War for Spiš. Spiš in Polish Policy of the Interwar Period in the Context of Czech-Slovak-Polish Relations] (Cracow: Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2007), 21-43.

¹⁷² Ján Burjan (1886 - 1945) - Slovak architect and politician, signer of the T. Sv. Martin Declaration of the Slovak Nation (1918), Director of the Central Plebiscite Office for Orava and Spiš in Ružomberok.

Slovak organs.¹⁷³ The delegations of the local Slovak population from the Orava and Spiš plebiscite areas met with President Masaryk to state their determination and unwavering allegiance to Czecho-Slovakia.¹⁷⁴

While the local population in the Orava and Spiš plebiscite areas demonstrated its pro-Czecho-Slovakia leaning, the Czecho-Slovak government had to deal with a politically explosive issue of Slovak autonomy. The so-called Slovak Question had its international implications and attracted attention not only in Prague, but also in the neighbouring countries, in Budapest and Warsaw.¹⁷⁵ The Slovak People's Party, an autonomist movement, pledged loyalty to Czecho-Slovakia, but claimed administrative, ecclesiastical and educational autonomy for Slovakia and respect for Slovakia's particularities.¹⁷⁶ The local plebiscite authorities reported strong autonomist tendencies in Spiš. The population indicated its desire to remain Slovaks and to live neither "under Poles nor under Czechs."¹⁷⁷ The Czecho-Slovak government arrested autonomist leader, Andrej Hlinka, who traveled to the Paris Peace Conference in September 1919 to plead for international

¹⁷³ SNA Bratislava, f.MPS, kr. 305, pleb. 101; quoted in Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 59.

¹⁷⁴ The delegation from the Orava plebiscite area came to Prague in November 1919. See "Opis hughesogramu ze dne 11.listopadu 1919," Malkovsky (Prague) - dr.Pudlač (Bratislava), 11 November 1919, Archiv Kanceláře presidenta republiky [Archives of the President of the Republic Office, hereafter AKPR] Prague, D4087/19; "Opis hughesogramu ze dne 7.listopadu 1919," dr.Dobiáš (Prague) - dr.Pudlač (Bratislava), 7 November 1919, AKPR Prague, D4150/19. The delegation from the Spiš plebiscite area came to Prague in March 1920. See "Opis hughesogramu ze dne 18.brezna 1920," dr.Dobiáš (Prague) - dr.Pudlač (Bratislava), Prague, 18 March 1920, AKPR Prague, D2237/20.

¹⁷⁵ MSZ to Legation London, Warsaw, 5 November 1919, No.D.11844/VI/L.9, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 318, 51-58.

¹⁷⁶ See "Malkovský (Prague) - Dr.Pudlač (Bratislava)," 6 October 1919, AKPR Praha, D3578/19.

¹⁷⁷ "Opis hughesogramu ze dne 16.rijna 1919," Malkovský (Prague) - dr.Pudlač (Bratislava), Prague, 16 October 1919, AKPR Praha, D3520/19. The Ministry for Slovakia, headed by Minister Šrobár, instructed the plebiscite commissioners Janček and Blaha to compile lists of reliable officers in the plebiscite areas, who were "entirely reliable from the Czechoslovak point of view. That is, they were neither [Slovak] autonomists nor separatists. These officers would remain in their positions. The remaining officers would be removed. ..." See "Opis hughesogramu ze dne 10 rijna 1919," Malkovský (Prague) - Pudlač (Bratislava), 10 October 1919, AKPR Praha, D3797/19; "Opis hughesogramu," Malkovský (Praha) - Pudlač (Bratislava), 11 October 1919, AKPR Praha, D3798/19.

guarantees of Slovak autonomy in Czecho-Slovakia.¹⁷⁸ The Czecho-Slovak commission for the plebiscite in Orava urged Prague to send the representatives of the Slovak People's Party for the plebiscite rallies in order to counter the Polish plebiscite propaganda of F. Machay. Foreign Minister Beneš opposed the arrival of A. Hlinka to the plebiscite area and the commission for the plebiscite criticized the Ministry in Prague for vetoing Hlinka's involvement in the plebiscite campaign.¹⁷⁹ Minister for Slovakia, Vavro Šrobár, also opposed talking to Hlinka and to the Slovak People's Party. He worried their influence would change the minds of "Czechoslovak" Slovaks. Šrobár recommended that the Prague clergy would replace Hlinka and the Slovak People's Party in the plebiscite campaign.¹⁸⁰

The question of Slovak autonomy also played an important part in Polish plebiscite activities. Warsaw understood that in the upcoming plebiscite the Slovaks would need to choose between Poland or Czecho-Slovakia. The Foreign Ministry believed the outcome of the plebiscite would be favourable to Poland only when the population could decide between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia and the situation would change fundamentally if a choice confronted Poland and autonomous Slovakia.¹⁸¹ Warsaw tried to portray the government in Prague as anti-Catholic. Polish support to Slovakia's independence could reduce the electorate of potential voters preferring Catholic Poland

¹⁷⁸ The repercussions of Hlinka's arrest, who was a MP in Prague, were numerous. The Slovak printing house in Ružomberok refused to print the newspaper *Naša Orava*, distributed by the Czecho-Slovak plebiscite commission, after Hlinka's arrest. See "Opis hughesogramu ze dne 16.rijna 1919," Malkovský (Prague) - dr.Pudlač (Bratislava), Prague, 16 October 1919, AKPR Praha, D3520/19.

¹⁷⁹ See "Opis hughesogramu ze dne 18.kvetna 1920," Prague, 18 May 1920, AKPR Prague, D3846/20. The plebiscite officers reported disappointment of the local population of Hlinka's absence at the rallies. Dr. Moural proposed to start negotiations with Hlinka, as the Slovaks in Orava demanded Hlinka's participation at the plebiscite agitation. *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ See "Hughesogram Dobiáš (Prague) - Dr.Pudlač (Bratislava)," 29 May 1920, AKPR Prague, D4130/20. The Czechoslovak People's Party, a Czech party in fact, agreed to send its delegates to the Orava and Spiš plebiscite areas, but wanted to clarify the position its delegates would take regarding Slovak autonomy. The party proposed that Hlinka would also be delegated. *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ MSZ to Legation London, 17 October 1919, No. D.11331/VI/19, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 323, 35.

to Czecho-Slovakia. Therefore the Foreign Ministry in Warsaw recommended to put on hold support to Slovak autonomists during the plebiscite campaign.¹⁸² In addition, Warsaw understood that “the Polish population in Spiš and Orava,” which still frequently called itself the Slovaks, would see even less motives to be attached to Poland, if they saw prospects of rapid autonomy or independence success in Slovakia, with Poland’s assistance.¹⁸³

The Polish government established in September 1919 the Central Plebiscite Committee in Tešín (*Główny Komitet Plebiscytowy w Cieszynie*) to conduct plebiscite activities. The Central Plebiscite Committee was formally independent of the National Council of the Duchy of Tešín.¹⁸⁴ The government appointed Jan Zamorski its delegate to the Interallied Plebiscite Commission in Tešín on 8 November 1919.¹⁸⁵ The Foreign Ministry delegate in Tešín, Dr. Władysław Guenther, informed the National Council of the Duchy of Tešín on 24 November 1919 that the government had opened the Office of the Polish Government Commissar at the Interallied Commission in Teschen (*Biuro Komisarza Rządu Polskiego przy Komisji Międzysojuszniczej (Plebiscytowej) w Cieszynie*).¹⁸⁶ Commissioner Walery Goetel chaired the Polish plebiscite committee for Orava and Spiš (*Główny Komitet Plebiscytowy w Nowym Targu*) in Nowy Targ.¹⁸⁷ The Polish campaign in the plebiscite areas of Orava and Spiš anticipated recruitment of plebiscite campaign volunteers, but also to organize two

¹⁸² “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 161.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 149.

¹⁸⁵ AAN Warsaw, Prot. pos. RM, Vol.8, kl.180; quoted in Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 149-150. Jan Zamorski was the governmental delegate in Tešín (*delegat Rządu Polskiego przy Międzynarodowej Komisji Plebiscytowej w Cieszynie*) and head of the Polish delegation at the Polish-Czech negotiations in Cracow in 1919. See WAP Katowice, Eksp. Cieszyn, RNKC, Vol.28, 56; quoted in Cybulski, *op.cit.*, 149-150. Zamorski resigned from his post on 30 March 1920 and was replaced, for a short period, by Gustaw Szura and then by General F.K.Latinik (until 2 June 1920), followed by Dr. F. Bochenski (until 28 July 1920). See Szymiczek, *Walka o Śląsk Cieszyński w latach 1914 - 1920*, 138.

¹⁸⁶ Cybulski, *op. cit.*, 149-150.

¹⁸⁷ “Polish Foreign Policy regarding the question of Tešín Silesia, Spiš and Orava (1918-1921),” Report by Capt. Stanisław Baczyński, AAN, MSZ, t. 5503, B-21772, 161.

military organizations based in Slovakia, the Sp.O.W. (*Spiska Organizacja Wojskowa*)¹⁸⁸ and the S.O.W. (*Słowacka Organizacja Wojskowa*)¹⁸⁹ with headquarters in Nowy Targ. The Sp.O.W. and the S.O.W. would be prepared to disrupt the plebiscite should the outcome seem dangerous for Poland.¹⁹⁰

The Conference of Ambassadors was established in January of 1920 by the chief Allied Powers, France, Italy, Japan and Great Britain, as well as the United States, as their permanent organ for assessment and joint decision-making, composed of ambassadors accredited to Paris. Since the United States did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles, the U. S. Ambassador attended the Conference of Ambassadors as an observer. The Conference of Ambassadors formally ceased its activities in 1935, following the violation of part 5 of the Versailles Treaty by Germany.¹⁹¹

The Czecho-Slovak plebiscite authorities in Orava expressed some doubts about obtaining majority in Jablonka in Orava and decided to immediately invite through the Slovak League in America, the Slovak-Americans with roots in Orava (Jablonka, Podvlk, Pekelník, Lipnica, Šárna, Harkabúz) to assist with the plebiscite campaign.¹⁹² The Slovak League of America appointed an

¹⁸⁸ The Spiš Military Organization.

¹⁸⁹ The Slovak Military Organization.

¹⁹⁰ See "Organizacja wojskowa na terenach plebiscytowych i ter.przyległych," Dowództwo Górskiej brygady Strzelców Podhalańskich to Dowództwo Okręgu Generalnego Oddział Informacyjny w Krakowie, Nowy Targ, 30 October 1919, no.396/SI/5, AAN Warsaw, Ambasada RP w Londynie, f.323, 36-37. The campaign in the plebiscite areas of Orava and Spiš planned to recruit local volunteers but also to organize two military organizations based in Slovakia, the Sp.O.W. (*Spiska Organizacja Wojskowa*) [the Spiš Military Organization] and the S.O.W. (*Słowacka Organizacja Wojskowa*) [the Slovak Military Organization], with headquarters in Nowy Targ. The organizations would be prepared to act on short notice and according to received instructions. The outline of activities explained: "Should the plebiscite [outcome] seem dangerous [for Poland], we could eventually with these organizations [Sp.O.W. and S.O.W.] prevent it through anti-Czech military activities on the plebiscite areas." The Sp.O.W. and the S.O.W., had their command in Nowy Targ (ppor.Gwiżdż, ppor.Bojakowski, ppor.Weiss). The Sp.O.W. had local command in Spišská Belá (the former Magyar por.Gabriel Georgy), the S.O.S. had local command in Ružomberok (Gyuvanna Gejza). *Ibid*.

¹⁹¹ Osmańczyk, *The Encyclopedia of The United Nations and International Relations*, 2d ed., s.v. "Conference of Ambassadors."

¹⁹² See "Hughesogram dr. Dobiáš (Prague) - Dr.Pudlač (Bratislava)," 21 February 1920, AKPR Prague, D1437/20. The Orava plebiscite authorities informed of the arrival of two Slovak-Americans in March 1920. See "Opis hughesogramu ze dne 18.brezna 1920," dr.Dobiáš (Prague) - dr.Pudlač (Bratislava), Prague, 18 March 1920, AKPR Prague, D2237/20.

American Slovak Plebiscite Delegation, led by Jozef B. Maťašovský,¹⁹³ whose members had roots in Orava and Spiš,¹⁹⁴ and which worked for a nearly eight months in the plebiscite areas of Orava and Spiš.¹⁹⁵ Jozef B. Maťašovský admitted that they were sent to be at the disposal of the Spiš Plebiscite Commission, however, there was no campaign organization, so in fact the Spiš Plebiscite Commission was their responsibility.¹⁹⁶ The members of the Slovak League of America mobilized public opinion in the United States and in Slovakia against the transfer of their ancestral lands to Poland.¹⁹⁷ The Slovak-Americans even organized their own plebiscites, the results of which decided in favour of maintaining the Orava and Spiš districts in Czecho-Slovakia.¹⁹⁸ The Slovak-Americans submitted the results to Czecho-Slovak Minister for Slovakia, Dr. Vavro Šrobár.¹⁹⁹ The population in the plebiscite areas of Spiš and Orava expressed its support to Czecho-Slovakia by their petitions

¹⁹³ Jozef B. Maťašovský (also Joseph B. Matasovsky) - native of Nedeca in Spiš, during WWI organized recruitment and transport of Czecho-Slovak legions from the U. S. to France, activist, sponsor of and contributor to the Slovak weekly *Tatry*.

¹⁹⁴ Joseph Matasovsky, Jan Gallik, Frank Gurcak and Jan Martaucik had roots in Spiš, and Karol Stiasny, Joseph Kalis, Joseph Stupendek in Orava. Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948* (S.l.: Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, 2008), 2. Jozef B. Maťašovský summarized his activities in Slovakia in the fall of 1920 in the *Referencia* sent to the Czecho-Slovak Legation in Washington, D.C. See "*Referencia* by Joseph Matasovsky, President of the Committee for Integration of Slovakia, to the Czecho-Slovak Ambassador in Washington," in *ibid.*, 2-5.

¹⁹⁵ The Slovak-Americans Martančík, Gallik, Gurzak and Matasovsky submitted final accounts of their plebiscite expenditures on 19 July 1920 prior to their departure. See "Hughesogram Ministerstvo vnitra, plebisc. oddeleni Prague to Dr. Pudlač (Bratislava)," 19 July 1920, Čís. 988 pleb. Spiš, AKPR Prague, D5634/20.

¹⁹⁶ *Referencia* by J. Matasovsky, in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions*, 3.

¹⁹⁷ Zmátlo, *Dejiny Slovenskej ligy na Spiši*, 9-10. For example, the 45th branch of the League in Pittsburgh, led by two natives of Spiš, Jozef B. Maťašovský, its Chair, and Karol M. Pisarčík, its Secretary, adopted on 5 October 1919 a resolution against the transfer of northern territories of Slovakia to Poland. *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ E. Beneš observed, with satisfaction, at the National Assembly on 11 March 1920 that a majority of the population in Spiš and Orava was against the Poles. See F. Simon-Clément to Millerand, Prague, tel. no. 89, 16 March 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 54, 80-84.

¹⁹⁹ Zmátlo, *Dejiny Slovenskej ligy na Spiši*, 10. See "Americki krajanja za Oravu a Spis" [American Countrymen for Orava and Spiš], *Tatry*, 12 March 1920, vol. II., no. 11, 6; quoted in *ibid.* Zmátlo writes that Ignác Gessay, Press Secretary of the Slovak League of America, collected 1,503 votes in favour of maintaining Upper Orava and Upper Spiš in Czecho-Slovakia. *Ibid.*

and appeals, at public rallies and during their visits of the Czecho-Slovak officials.²⁰⁰ The majority of the highlanders in Orava and Spiš declared themselves Slovaks despite their use of the local dialects with Polish traits. The Poles faced a similar situation in Warmia, Mazuria and Upper Silesia, where the local populations also gravitated towards the non-Polish nationality.²⁰¹ The Czecho-Slovak plebiscite activist observed that 98% of the people [in Spiš] wanted to stay within the Czecho-Slovak Republic.²⁰²

The Czecho-Slovak delegates at the International Subcommittee for Orava and Spiš, Milan Radlinský and Juraj Slávik,²⁰³ cooperated with the Plebiscite Offices in Bratislava and Prague, with the Czecho-Slovak delegate at the International Commission in Tešín, Rudolf Matouš, with the Commissioners Msgr. Marián Blaha and Ján Janček, and with Chair of the Plebiscite Commission at the Ministry for Slovakia (*Predseda plebiscitnej komisie pri MPS*), Antonín Pudlač.²⁰⁴ The Czecho-Slovak and Polish delegates at the International Subcommittee considered the

²⁰⁰ Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 59. Klimko argued that the population of the plebiscite areas in Orava and Spiš was far from being passive and resigned to its fate. Several towns organized successful petition campaigns for their allegiance to Czecho-Slovakia: Skalité, Čierne, Oščadnica, Javorka (Jaworka), Biela Voda (Biała Woda) and Čierna Voda (Czarna Woda). The Spiš towns collected signatures in support of pro-Czecho-Slovakia plebiscite vote. The delegation of Slovaks from Orava visited President Masaryk to demonstrate their sympathies for Czecho-Slovakia. Also the Slovaks from Spiš, led by Msgr. Blaha, visited President Masaryk. Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 59.

²⁰¹ Ferdynand Machay, Polish activist in Orava, wrote that the Slovaks did not have these *bona fide* renegades and the Germans had them even less so. Machay observed he did not meet, during the plebiscite campaign in Orava, any Slovak who disclaimed his nationality. He claimed it easier to find a Slovak who was friendly attuned to Poland, than a “Polish”-speaking Goral! Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 254-255.

²⁰² Jozef Maťašovský wrote: “...we learned through polling that 98% of the people [in Spiš] wanted to stay within the Czecho-Slovak Republic. ...we felt that when the people had proven to be 98% for the Czecho-Slovak Republic, that surely there could be no thought of giving any village to the Poles. We felt certain that the plebiscite would take place and we felt assured, through the 98% result of polled villagers who would vote in favor of Czecho-Slovakia, that victory would be ours. Anticipating good results, our delegation reported to the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, informing them of our findings and advising them that we felt there was no further need for us to remain in Spiš. We were thanked for our efforts, and we began to make preparations to come home to America.” *Referencia* by J. Matasovsky, in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions*, 3.

²⁰³ Juraj Michal Daniel Slávik (1890 - 1969) - Slovak writer and politician, Czechoslovak diplomat, Czechoslovak Envoy in Poland (1936-1939), Czechoslovak Ambassador in the U. S. (1946-1948), Deputy Czecho-Slovak Delegate for Orava and Spiš (1919-1920).

²⁰⁴ Erik Dulovič, “Agrárny politik, Orava a Spis 1919-1922,” 122.

Subcommission incompetent, unfamiliar with the local laws and mentality.²⁰⁵ Certain political events in Czecho-Slovakia would influence the outcome of the plebiscite and complicate Czecho-Slovak foreign policy activities.²⁰⁶ Slávik viewed as detrimental such legislative initiatives as a proposal for the separation of Church and state, which was advocated by the Social Democrats. These initiatives helped the anti-Czech propaganda on the Polish side, therefore, Slávik tried to mitigate the negative effects of the above initiatives.²⁰⁷

Czecho-Slovakia and Poland lobbied the government of the United States to participate at the Plebiscite Commission, both countries believed to have a sympathetic ear of President Wilson.²⁰⁸ Juraj Slávik considered a plebiscite to be in the interest of Czecho-Slovakia.²⁰⁹ The Japanese delegate at the Subcommission for Orava and Spiš, Sho Kurihara, told Slávik that Czecho-Slovakia should insist on a plebiscite in the plebiscite areas of Orava and Spiš.²¹⁰ The Czecho-Slovak local plebiscite authorities expected a positive outcome to the plebiscite and cautiously anticipated the vote in the neighbourhood of the town of Jablonka.²¹¹ Slávik believed that in the plebiscite areas in Orava and

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 123. Cf. SNA Bratislava, f. Pleb. komisar oravsky - Tvrdošín 1919 - 1920, kart 2, J. Slávik - A. Pudlač (MPS), 12 June 1920; AKPR Prague, sig. D 6283/20, inv.no.198, A. Pudlač - B. Tomsa (MZV), 23 June 1920.

²⁰⁶ The plebiscite officers in Prague and Bratislava discussed the critical situation in the village of Vyšné Lapšie in Spiš, which was significantly destroyed by a fire in the summer of 1919 (120 out of 180 houses). Allegedly, the Polish authorities promised financial compensations to those voting for Poland in the planned plebiscite. See "Opis hughesogramu ze dne 22. listopadu 1919," dr. Dobiáš (Prague) - dr. Pudlač (Bratislava), Prague, 22 November 1919, AKPR Prague, D4383/19.

²⁰⁷ Erik Dulovič, "Agrárny politik, Orava a Spiš 1919-1922," 123.

²⁰⁸ "Selection from Political Reports of the Polish Legation in Washington, (16-21 June 1920)," MSZ to Legation London, Warsaw, 21 July 1920, No. 68592/D.13820/VI/20, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 318, 71-74.

²⁰⁹ The airplanes proved effective propaganda tools in the plebiscite campaign. The Czecho-Slovak authorities noted presence of Polish airplanes over the plebiscite territories. See "Opis hughesogramu ze dne 18. března 1920," dr. Dobiáš (Prague) - dr. Pudlač (Bratislava), Prague, 18 March 1920, AKPR Prague, D2237/20.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 122-123. Bohuš Chňoupek writes about Sho Kurihara, Japanese delegate at the Plebiscite Subcommission for Orava and Spiš and the plebiscite in Orava and Spiš. See the chapter "Kurihara" in Bohuš Chňoupek, *Pogrom. Na sny sa nezomiera* [Pogrom. One Does Not Die of Dreaming] (Bratislava: Knižné centrum, 2003), 16-38.

²¹¹ The Czecho-Slovak plebiscite authorities doubted the possibility of obtaining a majority of votes in Jablonka, in Orava. Therefore, they concentrated on obtaining a majority of votes in neighbouring townships in order to isolate Jablonka in order to prevent the border rectification. The Czecho-Slovak government contacted the Slovak League in America to send the Slovak-Americans with roots in Orava to help with the plebiscite, as well as it planned to improve the supply situation in Orava. See "Hughesogram dr. Dobiáš (Prague) - Dr. Pudlač (Bratislava)," 21 February

Spiš Polonophile populations dominated in only five to six townships, which were geographically isolated and, therefore, their attachment to Poland was impossible. Slávik predicted that the plebiscite would disarm both Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, who could dispute the outcome of international arbitration, but could not dispute the popular vote.²¹²

Violence in the plebiscite area in Tešín Silesia, as well as in the plebiscite areas of Orava and Spiš was widespread. In the town of Nedeca, in Spiš, the sympathisers of Czecho-Slovakia drowned the Polish agitator, Wymierski; in retaliation, the sympathisers of Poland attacked the Mayor's house with grenades and killed his daughter. In Pekelník, in Orava, the sympathisers of Poland lynched Karol Šimko.²¹³ The Plebiscite Subcommission had at its disposal only a limited number of troops and feared this would be detrimental to regular conduct of vote.²¹⁴

Political and technical problems further complicated preparations of a vote and security situation in Tešín led to abandoning the plebiscite. In May of 1920 international arbitration seemed a solution to the deadlocked dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, but the idea of arbitration by the King of Belgium led nowhere.²¹⁵ The Conference of Ambassadors adopted the arbitration proposal supported by France and Edvard Beneš. The Czecho-Slovak Foreign Minister believed the dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland was a purely economic problem. In his view, Czecho-Slovakia would accept as a base of an agreement the largest part of the coal deposits in Tešín Silesia

1920, AKPR Prague, D1437/20. See also Dulovič, "Agrárny politik," in *Juraj Slavik Neresnický*. ed. S. Michálek, 124.

²¹² Dulovic, "Agrarny politik," in *Juraj Slavik Neresnický*. ed. S. Michalek, 124. Slávik anticipated the Poles would raise additional territorial claims after international arbitration: "I know the Poles that much." *Ibid*.

²¹³ See Chňoupek, *Pogrom. Na sny sa nezomiera*, 26, 28-29.

²¹⁴ The Plebiscite Subcommission proposed to conduct a vote only in selected villages, so as the voters would not need to travel more than five kilometers. The Czecho-Slovak delegates opposed this idea and insisted on voting in every village in the plebiscite area. See "Opis hughesogramu," Pudlač - Slávik, 12 July 1920, AMZV Bratislava, Juraj Slávik, 2038/pleb.

²¹⁵ Notatka dla pana Ministra Patka w sprawie arbitrazu, No. 14/620, [May 1920,] AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 321, 36-38.

and the border imposed by France and Britain. He believed Prague and Warsaw needed, vis-à-vis their public opinion, a “cover” provided by an imposed decision. Simultaneously, Britain and France would need to offer their public support for the Czecho-Slovak - Polish entente. All this should be prepared in advance for the most opportune moment in order to execute this plan rapidly.²¹⁶ Although the arbitration offered a new opportunity to decide the issue of Spiš and Orava, some believed it better to make a deal regarding Spiš and Orava separately from the arbitration.²¹⁷ In May of 1920, Poland seemed to win the war with Soviet Russia, and therefore Poland procrastinated in accepting the arbitration because it hoped to negotiate from a better position after the victorious war.²¹⁸ The Conference of Ambassadors returned to the Tešín issue again in the summer of 1920.²¹⁹

In the summer of 1920 the military situation on the Polish - Soviet front dramatically changed. The Polish government resigned and transferred its powers to the newly-established Council for the Defence of State (*Rada Obrony Państwa*), the Polish version of the French *Comité de Salut Public* during the French Revolution of 1789. The Council began its work in the evening of 1 July 1920.²²⁰ After the Red Army started a new offensive on 4 July 1920, the Council for the Defence of State decided to seek help from the Allies, whose delegates came to the Spa conference:

²¹⁶ See Gen. Pellé's Note sur la question de Teschen, 20 May 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 55, 132-136.

²¹⁷ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 105 - 106. Erazm Piltz believed the arbitration offered a new opportunity to decide the issue of Spiš and Orava. He pointed to the fact that Beneš had stated repeatedly, in his talks with Patek and Piltz, that Spiš and Orava were for him of secondary importance. However, Piltz thought it better to make a deal with the Czechs, regarding Spiš and Orava, separately from the arbitration. See “Information for Minister Patek Regarding Spiš and Orava,” E. Piltz, AAN Warsaw, Ambasada RP w Londynie, f.323, 36-38.

²¹⁸ E. Beneš wrote to his wife H. Benešová on 17 May 1920: “Piltz wants an agreement in any case - I will see. Here, they are not pleased with what the Poles are doing, but they do not know what to do, neither with Russia, nor with Poland...” E. Beneš to H. Benešová, Paris, 17 May 1920, in Jana Šetřilová and Jaroslav Čechura, eds., *Listy důvěrné. Vzájemná korespondence Hany a Edvarda Benešových* (hereafter *HEB*) (Praha: Česká expedice riopress, 1996), 42.

²¹⁹ E. Beneš wrote to H. Benešová on 7 June 1920: “...I received a telegram from Patek in Warsaw to wait for him here in Paris...” See E. Beneš to H. Benešová, Paris, 7 June 1920, *HEB*, Doc. No. 25. Several days later Beneš wrote: “...here, everything turns on the Tešín arbitration now; I see that, back at home, they are confused. ...” E. Beneš to H. Benešová, Paris, 11 June 1920, *HEB*, Doc. No. 26.

²²⁰ Władysław Grabski, *Wspomnienia ze Spa* [Memories from Spa], with an introduction and comments by Stanisław Kirkor (London: Poets' and Painters' Press, 1973), 9.

The Polish Government asks urgently for immediate and efficacious aid and does not doubt that her appeal will be listened to. Whatever may be the measures which the Supreme Council may think it necessary to take at this decisive moment, the Polish Nation will be willing to accept them, remaining faithful to its duty towards it and towards the Allies.²²¹

The fact that the Polish government committed itself to accept “whatever measures may be necessary,” offered the Allied Powers - and Czecho-Slovakia - a unique diplomatic opportunity to resolve several outstanding issues that involved Poland. The Spa Conference of the Prime Ministers of France, Great Britain and Belgium, which opened on 5 July 1920, dealt with the German disarmament and reparations.²²² The head of the Polish delegation at Spa was S. Patek, the members of the delegation included E. Piltz, K. Olszewski and K. Morawski, and the experts J. Wielowieyski, J. Mrozowski and General T. Rozwadowski.²²³ The Conference coincided with the Russian advance upon Warsaw and the Polish Prime Minister, Władysław Grabski,²²⁴ came to Spa to seek the Allies’ help against Soviet Russia.²²⁵ The Polish delegates were met in Spa with a cold reception, the Allies saw in Poland (and in Soviet Russia) an expansionist warmonger in Central Europe.²²⁶ Lloyd George criticized Poland and blamed it for living in disagreement with its neighbours. Grabski asked

²²¹ Note of the Polish government to the Supreme Council dated 6 July 1920, in Grabski, *Wspomnienia ze Spa*, 9.

²²² The Spa Conference deliberated from 5 to 17 July 1920.

²²³ Grabski, *Wspomnienia ze Spa*, 39.

²²⁴ Władysław Grabski (1874-1938) - Polish politician, economist and historian, Minister of Finance (1919-1920, 1923-1925), Prime Minister (1920, 1923-1925).

²²⁵ Gordon A. Craig, “The British Foreign Office from Grey to Austen Chamberlain,” in *The Diplomats 1919-1939*, eds. Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 30-31. Cesarz proposes that Polish military failures forced the Polish government to seek assistance abroad and make necessary concessions. France, Great Britain and Czecho-Slovakia, through whose territory passed important supply lines, made their assistance subject to Poland’s acceptance of the proposed territorial settlements. Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 106. Władysław Grabski wrote about his experience at Spa. For Grabski’s memories from Spa see Władysław Grabski, *Wspomnienia ze Spa* (London: Poets’ and Painters’ Press, 1973) or “Wspomnienia ze Spa,” AAN Warsaw, Akta Władysława Grabskiego, f.9, 69-83; also “Notes of a meeting held at the Villa Neubois, Spa on July 9th 1920, at 3 o’clock,” AAN Warsaw, Akta Władysława Grabskiego, f.9, 54-61.

²²⁶ Grabski, *Wspomnienia ze Spa*, 42. See also *Documents on British Foreign Policy* (hereafter *DBFP*). 1919-1939, vol. VIII (London, 1958), 592-606.

Millerand and Lloyd George to leave the recriminations behind.²²⁷ Prime Minister Grabski had essentially to accept the Allied conditions in order to receive the necessary assistance against Soviet Russia.²²⁸ However, despite Poland's precarious situation, the Poles succeeded in altering the agreement dealing with Danzig.²²⁹

France and Great Britain attempted at Spa to end antagonism in relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland by solving all their territorial disputes.²³⁰ Czecho-Slovakia expected that Poland, in its difficult position, would be better disposed to accept the border satisfactory to Czecho-Slovakia. Beneš agreed to accept the border, which would satisfy Czecho-Slovakia, imposed by France and Britain, without a plebiscite.²³¹ Grabski, Patek and Piltz negotiated with Beneš at Spa from 8 to 10 July 1920. Czecho-Slovakia and Poland committed themselves to loyally execute the Allied decision.²³² Beneš promised the French and British, and later the Polish delegates at Spa, to

²²⁷ See Grabski, *Wspomnienia ze Spa*, 42.

²²⁸ Lloyd George informed Grabski of British conditions for forwarding Polish plea for a ceasefire to Moscow. J. Valenta "Vyvrcholení národně osvobozenického hnutí a utvoření samostatných států (1918-1920)," 476-477. According to Cienciala, on 9 July 1920, Grabski had to accept Lloyd George's demand that Poland give up all her claims to territories north of Grodno and to leave the ultimate decision on Danzig, Upper Silesia, and East Galicia to the Allied Powers. The Allies subjected their aid to Poland, should Soviet troops enter ethnically Polish territory, to these conditions. See Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 130-1; also *DBFP 1919-1939*, 1st ser., Vol.8, No.57. App. 2c, 158. Cesarz also writes that the Polish delegation at the Spa conference, led by Prime Minister Władysław Grabski, had to accept all presented conditions in order to receive the necessary assistance against Soviet Russia. Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 106.

²²⁹ The Allies modified the text of the agreement dealing with Danzig which had been prepared for signing. In the agreement prepared to be signed by Grabski, the Polish government would agree "To accept the decision of the Supreme Council as to the Lithuanian boundaries, the future of Eastern Galicia, the Teschen [Tešín] question, and the Danzig - Poland Treaty." See *DBFP 1919-1939*, 1st ser., Vol.8, 518. Grabski signed on 10 July 1920 the following text: "To accept the decision of the Supreme Council as to the Lithuanian boundaries, the future of Eastern Galicia, the Teschen question, and the treaty to be negotiated between Danzig and Poland." *DBFP 1919-1939*, 1st ser., Vol.8, 530.

²³⁰ The Polish and Czecho-Slovak governments also worked, for their own reasons and through their own ways, to improve bilateral relations between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia. The Polish Prime Minister informed the Council of Ministers at the 60th meeting of the Council that his government worked to restore friendship between move unfriendly Poland and Czecho-Slovakia. See Protokół 60-go posiedzenia Rady Ministrów RP, 19 and 21 July 1920, AAN, PRM, microfilm No. 20055, t.11 (1.VII-30.IX 1920), 291.

²³¹ See Couget to MFA, Prague, tel. no. 178, 5 July 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 56, 88-89.

²³² See E.Beneš to J. Laroche, Spa, 11 July 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne (Allemagne-Pologne), vol. 102, 128-129.

support friendly relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in exchange for solving the Tešín dispute.²³³ Poland agreed to accept the Conference of Ambassadors' verdict in all its open border questions in exchange for the Allies support against Soviet Russia.²³⁴ The decision adopted by the Conference of Ambassadors on 28 July 1920, had already been prepared in advance by J. Laroche, E. Crowe and E. Beneš at Spa. The Allies profited from Poland's situation and imposed a partition line favourable to the Czechs in Tešín Silesia. Edvard Beneš himself proposed partition lines in Orava and Spiš to Eyre Crowe and Jules Cambon.²³⁵ Beneš informed Prague on 9 July 1920 that the British, French and Italians "fully adopted our position" on the border with Poland.²³⁶

Edvard Beneš and Władysław Grabski signed the so-called Spa agreement on 10 July 1920.²³⁷

²³³ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 171; cf. Erazm Piltz, note for President [of the Polish Delegation] Grabski, Spa, 11 July 1920, in W. Stankiewicz and A. Piber, eds., *Archiwum polityczne Ignacego Paderewskiego* (hereafter *APIP*) (Warszawa-Wrocław, 1973-1974), vol.2, no.332, encl., 425-26. W. Stankiewicz and A. Piber, eds., *Archiwum polityczne Ignacego Paderewskiego*., 3 vols. (Warszawa-Wrocław, 1973-1974). See also Dagmar Perman, *The shaping of the Czechoslovak state: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia, 1914 - 1920* (Leiden, NL: E. J. Brill, 1962), 270-271.

²³⁴ The Allies promised to press for a ceasefire in Moscow, and in the event of its refusal by Soviet Russia, to support Poland. Poland agreed to accept the so-called Curzon line, which was proposed by the Allies on 8 December 1919, as the Polish eastern frontier. J. Valenta "Vývrcholení národně osvobozenického hnutí a utvoření samostatných států (1918-1920)," 477.

²³⁵ See "Note sur la question de Javorzina," 5 March 1923, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 59, 165-175. Cienciala writes that "Edouard Beneš managed to obtain French and British assent for the definitive award of Tešín Silesia to Czechoslovakia [Czecho-Slovakia]." She continues: "It has been known for some time that a deal was struck at Spa between Beneš, Laroche, and Crowe. Its exact terms are to be found in a holograph letter that Beneš wrote to Laroche, dated Spa 11 July 1920. In it he promised that once back in Prague, he would arrange matters so that all hostilities with the Poles would cease immediately. He would speak publicly to inaugurate the new policy. Beneš made the same commitments to the Polish delegates at Spa. In return for these promises, his secret agreements with Laroche and Crowe stipulated that the Conference of Ambassadors - to which the Poles had unwittingly agreed to submit the Teschen [Tešín] dispute - would simply award the territory to Czechoslovakia [Czecho-Slovakia]." Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 171.

²³⁶ J. Valenta "Vývrcholení národně osvobozenického hnutí a utvoření samostatných států (1918-1920)," in *Češi a Poláci v minulosti*, vol. 2, , eds. J. Macůrek et al. (Prague: Academia, 1967), 478.

²³⁷ See AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 321, 165-166; "Engagement signé par M. Grabski le 10 juillet 1920," AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 71, 56-57. Chňoupek writes that Grabski verbally protested against the Spa agreement of 10 July 1920. The Council of the Defence of State endorsed Grabski's commitments from Spa on 13 July 1920, but the *Sejm* refused, on 15 July 1920, to endorse the Spa agreement and criticized the Polish government for giving in to the pressure of the Allies. Valenta "Vývrcholení národně osvobozenického hnutí a utvoření samostatných států (1918-1920)," 477; Chňoupek, *Pogrom. Na sny sa nezomiera*, 32-33. Grabski had to defend later his signing of the arbitration by the Allies without knowing the outcome. He preferred a plebiscite, but the rest of the delegation prevailed. Grabski argued that the Spa agreement of 10 July 1920 favourably influenced Czecho-Slovakia's position and support to Poland in the Upper Silesia dispute. Grabski, *Wspomnienia ze Spa*, 26-27.

Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, in a joint declaration made on 10 July 1920, agreed: “To accept the decision of the Supreme Council as to the Lithuanian boundaries, the future of Eastern Galicia, the Teschen [Tešín] question, and the treaty to be negotiated between Danzig [Gdańsk] and Poland.”²³⁸

The fact that the so-called Spa agreement on 10 July 1920 did not list Spiš and Orava as a separate question on the list of disputed issues confirmed that Spiš and Orava remained deeply associated with and subordinated to the Tešín question. The Allies, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, considered the Spiš and Orava questions as a simple corollary to the solution of the Tešín question. Czecho-Slovakia and Poland agreed in Spa to abandon the plebiscite scheduled for 24 July 1920 and to accept the decision of the Allied countries in the dispute concerning the Tešín Silesia, Orava and Spiš regions. France tried to resolve the dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, but the timing could not have been worse for Poland, which faced an existential threat during the Soviet-Polish war and was willing to accept any conditions.²³⁹

Four Allied Powers sent Czecho-Slovakia and Poland on 11 July 1920 a diplomatic note informing them of their decision to ask the Conference of Ambassadors to resolve the dispute concerning the Tešín Silesia, Orava and Spiš regions.²⁴⁰ The decision to abandon the plebiscite was welcomed with mixed reactions in the plebiscite areas of Orava and Spiš. The government and plebiscite authorities witnessed local protests and reported an uprising behind the Mountains of Magura on 15 July 1920. The local population was signing resolutions to quickly inform the Allies

²³⁸ “Engagement signé par M. Grabski le 10 juillet 1920,” AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 71, 56-57; see also La déclaration du 10 juillet 1920, Spa, 17 July 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 56, 128-130; AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 321, 163-165.

²³⁹ Borodovčák et al., *Poliaci a my*, 125.

²⁴⁰ “Résolution prise le 11 juillet 1920 par le Conseil Suprême à Spa,” AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 56, 103-104.

in Paris of their true preferences.²⁴¹

The Conference of Ambassadors in Paris dealt with the dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland from 17 to 30 July 1920.²⁴² The Supreme Council instructed the Council of Ambassadors in Paris to hear the delegates of Czecho-Slovakia and Poland and then to settle the border disputes. The Polish delegates, Paderewski and Patek, presented their case at the Conference of Ambassadors session on 20 July 1920. They asked the Conference to allocate Orava and Spiš, the Polish regions with the Polish population, to Poland.²⁴³ But the Powers instructed their representatives in Paris on how to settle the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in advance.²⁴⁴ The representatives had to allocate the northeastern part of Orava and northwestern part of Spiš to Poland.²⁴⁵ The Polish delegates at the Conference mobilized remaining diplomatic alternatives in order to avert the looming unfavourable decision, but the military situation in Poland left no room to maneuver.²⁴⁶ The

²⁴¹ Maťašovský wrote: "We learned at 9:00 AM on July 15 that a report came to Spišska Bela that there was an uprising behind Magura, because the Poles came and informed the Slovak villagers that they already belonged to Poland." Jozef B. Maťašovský and Jan Eduard Vaczy visited the U. S. Envoy in Prague, Richard Crane, on 22 July 1920 and informed him that the Spiš population did not want to belong to Poland, but wanted the plebiscite. Maťašovský and Vaczy sent a protest from the U. S. Legation in Prague, in the name of one million Slovak Americans, to Dulles in Paris, in which they appealed for help for the Slovaks in Orava and Spiš. See "Referencia" by J. Matasovsky, in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions*, 4-5.

²⁴² Šetřilová and Čechura, eds., *Listy důvěrné. Vzájemná korespondence Hany a Edvarda Benešových*, 157.

²⁴³ Presentations of the Polish delegates, Paderewski and Patek, at the Conference of Ambassadors session on 20 July 1920, Paris, 21 July 1920, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 321, 167-168.

²⁴⁴ Information that the border has already been decided, started to circulate in Paris after the Conference of Ambassadors opened its deliberations. See J. Valenta "Vývrcholení národně osvobozenického hnutí a utvoření samostatných států (1918-1920)," 478.

²⁴⁵ French President Millerand wrote to the French Ambassador in Washington on 12 July 1920, to lobby the U. S. government. Millerand described the details of the Spa settlement and explained that the instructions were to be kept strictly confidential before the Conference of Ambassadors pronounced its verdict. Millerand believed both Poland and Czecho-Slovakia benefitted from the verdict, Poland would obtain the capital of Tešín Silesia and Orava and Spiš, Czecho-Slovakia would obtain Karviná. See Millerand to Ambassador in Washington, Spa, 12 July 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 56, 105-111.

²⁴⁶ Letter of E. Piltz to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paris, 24 July 1920, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 321, 170-1. Piltz warned the Foreign Minister on 24 July 1920 that the arbitration decision would be "very unfavourable" for Poland. In fact, the Conference had already made the decision, but postponed its publication. Today, Paderewski dispatched the Tešín Silesia delegates to London and insisted on informing Wilson. Piltz admitted, Poland had to do everything necessary to please the Entente, without her Poland could not avert the military catastrophe. For this reason, the Polish representatives would have to formally accept even the worst possible outcome in the Tešín question. It would be a delicate task to balance the Tešín Silesia delegates and responsibility of the Polish government. *Ibid.*

Polish delegates Machay, Semkowicz and Doerman, in a last-minute effort to influence the outcome of the arbitration in Poland's favour, visited Hugh Wallace, U.S. Ambassador in Paris, on 26 July 1920.²⁴⁷ The Conference of Ambassadors merely sanctioned the already agreed upon settlement of the border dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.²⁴⁸

The Conference of Ambassadors announced its decision, which marked out the border line between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, on 28 July 1920.²⁴⁹ The Czecho-Slovak delegation in Paris received the results as a significant diplomatic success for Czecho-Slovakia, its vital interests were successfully defended.²⁵⁰ The Polish delegation in Paris was in a shock and depressed.²⁵¹ The entire

²⁴⁷ "Sprawozdanie A.Doermana z rozmowy z Ambasadorem St.Zjednoczonych Rugh Wallacem," Paris, 26 July 1920, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Slaska Cieszynskiego, Spisza i Orawy. "Sprawozdanie A.Doermana z rozmowy z Ambasadorem St.Zjednoczonych Rugh Wallacem," Paris, 26 July 1920, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Slaska Cieszynskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

²⁴⁸ E. Beneš summarized the outcome of the Conference of Ambassadors to his wife on 22 July 1920: "...today, on Thursday, everything is completed with Tešín. Everything went as I anticipated - we are only waiting for the Americans' approval. I hope, there will be no problem with them." E. Beneš to H. Benešová, Paris, 22 July 1920, *HEB*, 48-49. E. Beneš continued: "Today, in the morning, I was questioned by the Conference of Ambassadors on our case. It goes well. There are no problems so far, they stick to the agreement made at Spa, there should be no problems. I hope to finish by Friday [23 July 1920] and return on Saturday." E. Beneš to H. Benešová, Paris, July 1920, *HEB*, 49. Beneš explained a little delay on 25 July 1920: "...as you see, I must to stay longer than I would have wished. The Americans were without instructions, so we could not complete the Tešín issue by Friday. It will be decided on Tuesday, signed on Wednesday [28 July 1920] and I will depart from here on Thursday." E. Beneš to H. Benešová, Paris, 25 July 1920, *HEB*, 50.

²⁴⁹ The Czecho-Slovak delegation in Paris informed Prague: "The agreement was signed today at 6:30 AM. ...the decision was made on Tuesday in the morning, after a long and difficult [diplomatic] struggle for the largest possible territorial, economic and political advantages for Czecho-Slovakia. The results are satisfactory. ...the current solution is a significant diplomatic success for Czecho-Slovakia. The Republic acquired ... the Karviná coal deposits and all Košice-Bohumín railway. ...Unfortunately, we have to inform, that our concept of historic border was not accepted and we had to bring painful sacrifices, in the name of peace in Europe and good mutual relations with Poland, in Tešín Silesia and in Orava and Spiš. ...For the public, the Czecho-Slovak government must stress the fact that its vital interests were, until the last moment, in danger, but they were successfully defended...." Chňoupek, *op. cit.*, 34-35; also "Decyzja Konferencji Ambasadorów w sprawie Cieszyna, Spisza i Orawy, Paryż 28 lipca 1920 r.," in W. Kulski and M. Potulicki, *Współczesna Europa polityczna. Zbiór umów międzynarodowych. 1919 - 1939* [Contemporary Political Europe. Collection of International Treaties] (Warszawa-Krakow: Księgarnia Powszechna, 1939), 267ff.

²⁵⁰ Chňoupek, *op. cit.*, 34-35.

²⁵¹ E. Beneš wrote on 22 July 1920: "...today, on Thursday, everything is completed with Tešín. ... Piltz visited me yesterday: he already knew, the decision will be against them, he is desperate; he regrets they agreed with the Supreme Council's [N.B. Beneš meant the Conference of Ambassadors - the author's note] verdict, he said, he would resign, in short [he is] desperate. I felt sorry for him. He acknowledges my position, but he is attacked for his alleged loss of Tešín. Paderewski defended the Poles at the Conference: they told me his speech was "insensée" [confused], he learned nothing, he asked even more than before. Today, he is allegedly greatly depressed, because he realized that he lost against me. The decision was made on Wednesday [21 July 1920] in the morning, now they are nailing down the

plebiscite areas in Orava and Spiš were on the Slovak territory, no Polish territory was subjected to the plebiscite. From the Polish perspective: “Poland received from the Spiš territory of 3,500 km² incomplete 200 [km²] and 400 [km²] from the Orava territory of 2,000 km². Thus Poland received only 27 villages from the plebiscite area while 44 of them were awarded to Czechoslovakia. More than 45,000 of the Polish population remained in Czechoslovakia.”²⁵² From the Slovak perspective, 12 townships in Orava and 13 townships in Spiš were incorporated into Poland and Czecho-Slovakia received 9 townships in Orava and 16 townships in Spiš, with 25,000 inhabitants.²⁵³ In the plebiscite area of Tešín Silesia, Czecho-Slovakia received 1,269 km² with 283,000 inhabitants and Poland 1,013 km² with 142,000 inhabitants. Edvard Beneš signed the arbitration decision on 28 July 1920, but Ignace Jan Paderewski, who tried to change the decision in London, added his signature and official protest only on 31 July 1920.²⁵⁴ Paderewski wrote to the President of the Supreme Council, A. Millerand, that the adopted decision took into consideration “neither the wishes of the population, nor the principle of nationality.”²⁵⁵ He complained that 24,043 Poles in Spiš and Orava would be assigned to Poland and more than 45,000 Poles would remain under Czecho-Slovakia.²⁵⁶ Paderewski stated that the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors “created an unsurmountable chasm”

details. Tomorrow, they will announce the results and the signing will be on Saturday in the morning. I guess, the issue would be in the Sunday newspapers. ...My reputation tremendously grew, as a result of the events at Spa, in Poland and now with Tešín - you can see it everywhere. It appears, that only back at home, they do not see it or they do not want to see it.” E. Beneš to H. Benešová, Paris, 22 July 1920, *HEB*, 48-49.

²⁵² Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 107.

²⁵³ The districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland comprised the following communes - in Spiš: Jurgov, Repiska, Čierna Hora, Tribš, Vyšné Lapše, Nižné Lapše, Lapšanka, Nedeca, Kacvín, Fridman with its settlement of Falštín, Krempachy, Durštín, and Nová Belá; and in Orava: Chyžné, Jablonka, Nižná Lipnica, Vyšná Lipnica, Nižná Zubrica, Horná Zubrica, Harkabúz, Srnie, Bukovina-Podsklie, Pekelník, Podvlnk, and Orávka. Fedor Houdek estimated that 9,000 Slovaks remained in Poland. Houdek, *op. cit.*, (note on p.) 303.

²⁵⁴ J. Valenta “Vyvrcholení národně osvobozenického hnutí a utvoření samostatných států (1918-1920),” in *Češi a Poláci v minulosti*, vol. 2, , eds. J. Macůrek et al. (Prague: Academia, 1967), 478.

²⁵⁵ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 107. See also Kulski and Potulicki, *Współczesna Europa polityczna*, 278 - 279.

²⁵⁶ Deklaration of Paderewski to the President of the Conference, Paris, 30 July 1920, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.102, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.²⁵⁷

The towns of the incorporated districts in Orava and Spiš were the most faithful electorate of Slovak candidates in general elections in pre-war Hungary and the 1910 population census showed a very limited presence of Poles in the Spišská Stará Ves district, of which almost 50% was incorporated into Poland.²⁵⁸ The townships of Orávka, Harkabúz and Bukovina-Podsklie in the incorporated districts worked tirelessly to remain within Czecho-Slovakia, in fact, the lost townships were the most faithful electorate of Slovak parliamentary candidates.²⁵⁹ But Poland was also disappointed by the outcome of the arbitrage in Orava and Spiš and Slovakia mourned the loss of the incorporated districts.²⁶⁰

The decision of 28 July 1920, which settled the disputed sections of the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, formally solved all territorial disputes between these two countries. The main sections of the 28 July 1920 decision became part of the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920.²⁶¹ The physical delimitation of the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland vested with

²⁵⁷ J. Valenta "Vyvrcholení národně osvobozenického hnutí a utvoření samostatných států (1918-1920)," 488.

²⁵⁸ Klimko, *Politické a právne dejiny*, 56; Houdek, *op. cit.*, 321. The Czecho-Slovak local authorities estimated that all the population or its overwhelming majority in Spiš would vote for Czecho-Slovakia, whereas in Orava, in the village of Jablonka it seemed impossible to expect a majority of votes. See "Hughesogram dr. Dobiáš (Prague) - Dr. Pudlač (Bratislava)," 21 February 1920, AKPR Prague, D1437/20. The population statistics from the fall of 1919 indicated the following composition in the Orava and Spiš counties: "The Orava County: total 72,825; Slovaks and Czechs 69,459; Ruthenes 4; Magyars 421; Germans 154; Others (incl. Poles) 2787. The Spiš County: total 167,550; Slovaks and Czechs 99,640; Ruthenes 18,438; Magyars 11,911; Germans 37,150; Others (incl. Poles) 6,411." See "Malkovský (Prague) - Dr. Pudlač (Bratislava)," 6 October 1919, AKPR Prague, D3578/19.

²⁵⁹ Houdek, *op. cit.*, 321.

²⁶⁰ Juraj Slávik criticized his Polish colleague: "Why does the great Polish nation take away from us thousands of the Slovak population in Orava and Spiš?" See "Opis hughesogramu s Bratislavou, ze dne 31. cervence 1920," Prague, 31 July 1920, AKPR Prague, D6028/20. Fedor Houdek wrote that Poland did not gain anything by incorporating the districts in Orava and Spiš, but Slovakia was weakened. Houdek, *op. cit.*, 321.

²⁶¹ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 107. The Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920 was a Treaty between the Allied Powers (France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan and Armenia, Belgium, Czecho-Slovakia, Greece, the Hedjaz [Saudi Arabia], Poland, Portugal, Romania and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State) and Turkey. For the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920 see Osmańczyk, *op. cit.*, s. v. "Sèvres Peace Treaty, 1920."

the Delimitation commission²⁶² created in accordance with the Article 2 of the decision of 28 July 1920. Article 2 of the 28 July 1920 decision authorized the Delimitation commission to bring about modifications of the adopted border line that would take into account local conditions and the interests of the local population.²⁶³

Those who believed in the plebiscite as the only legitimate solution to the disputed sections of the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland questioned the reasons for its cancellation. Although the U. S. government did not protest officially, it expressed its reservations to the faits accomplis at Spa.²⁶⁴ The United States maintained that the disposition of the territory in dispute should be settled by arbitration, by impartial judges or by a fairly conducted plebiscite, and has opposed arbitrary boundaries being imposed by the Great Powers. Nevertheless, the United States was disposed to accept temporarily as a basis for future examination and rectification, the lines of demarcation in the Duchy of Teschen, in Orava and in Spiš and consented to the decision of the Conference upon condition that the question will be submitted to an impartial commission for such rectification as may be deemed fair and expedient.²⁶⁵ In fact, the plebiscites were logistically complicated, politically sensitive and certainly not a one-size-fits-all solution.²⁶⁶ Poland had seen the

²⁶² The Delimitation commission was composed of the representatives of the Great Powers (France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan), Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. The Commission adopted its decisions by a majority vote and its decisions were binding upon the two parties to the dispute.

²⁶³ For the exact wording of Article 2 see Kulski and Potulicki, *Współczesna Europa polityczna*, 273.

²⁶⁴ See "Analyse. Question de Teschen." Minister to London, Washington, Rome, etc., Paris, 28 July 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 56, 220.

²⁶⁵ On 13 July 1920 the French government invited the United States to associate itself with the Spa settlement, to which U. S. Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby, replied officially on 27 July 1920. See Bainbridge Colby, State Secretary, to Béarn, Chargé d'affaires a.i., Washington, 23 July 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 56, 212-214.

²⁶⁶ Cienciala wrote that the Polish government was determined to prevent a plebiscite in Vilna [Vilnius] in the fall of 1920, not because it feared to lose it, but because a plebiscite there would be a dangerous precedent for settling the Polish claim to East Galicia. Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 141.

disappointing outcomes of the plebiscite in Marienwerder, Rosenberg, Stuhm and in Marienberg.²⁶⁷

Some observers doubted the correct plebiscite strategy and timing,²⁶⁸ some doubted the reliability of the pre-plebiscite polling.²⁶⁹ In the case of Vilna [Vilnius], in the fall of 1920, Poland abandoned a plebiscite completely.²⁷⁰

The protests against the decision of 28 July 1920 were numerous. Paderewski first tried to persuade Lloyd George to have the decision changed.²⁷¹ Paderewski then wrote to French President, A. Millerand, on 30 July 1920, to protest officially against the decision of the Council of Ambassadors.²⁷² The National Council of the Duchy of Tešín protested against the decision, which left 190,000 Poles in Czecho-Slovakia, regretted that the Polish representatives had signed the Spa

²⁶⁷ In Marienwerder, Germans received 25,606 votes to 1,779 for Poland; in Rosenberg, Germans received 33,498 to 1,073 for Poland; in Stuhm, Germans received 19,984 to 4,904 for Poland and in Marienberg, Germans received 17,805 to 191 for Poland. Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions*, 10.

²⁶⁸ Panafieu, French Ambassador in Warsaw, observed Polish delaying tactics in the plebiscites. Foreign Minister Sapieha personally regretted that the Polish agents, with or without inspiration from Warsaw, agitated in Allenstein and in Teschen Silesia for boycott of the plebiscite. Panafieu argued that if the arbitration verdict failed to satisfy Warsaw, it should blame first of all itself for a delaying tactic, the situation was now less favourable than four months ago. See "A/s de la politique polonaise dans les territoires plébiscitaires," A. de Panafieu, Warsaw, tel. no. 203, 16 July 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 71, 59-60.

²⁶⁹ Grabski observed that the representatives of Tešín Silesia also doubted the outcome of the plebiscite in this plebiscite area. He wrote that the Polish delegates Wielowiejski, Piltz and Kiedroń argued against a plebiscite in Tešín Silesia and he had to accept their views. Władysław Grabski, *Wspomnienia ze Spa* (London: Poets' and Painters' Press, 1973), 27. Matuschak pointed to disastrous results for Poland in pre-plebiscite polling in the Spiš plebiscite area, in which 98% of votes were for Czecho-Slovakia. Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions*, 10.

²⁷⁰ Poland seized Vilna [Vilnius] in October 1920, which Britain and France viewed contrary to the Spa agreements. Poland formally accepted the plebiscite proposal, but the Polish note of 7 November 1920 was clearly designed to be unacceptable to Lithuania. Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 141. Cf. Sapieha to Paderewski, 17 October 1920, *APIP*, vol. 2, no. 389, 522-23.

²⁷¹ Paderewski asked Lloyd George's assistance in changing the arbitration decision on 28 July 1920. Lloyd George criticized Poland's conduct claiming that "...Poland, instead of cultivating foreign public opinion persons, like the Czechs did, embarked upon its eastern policy of grandeur, neglecting its western interests." See Grabski, *Wspomnienia ze Spa*, 50.

²⁷² See I.J. Paderewski to A. Millerand, Paris, 30 July 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 56, 238-241. For Paderewski's statement upon signing the partition, Paris, 30 July 1920 see also AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 321, 202-204; "Paris, 30 July 1920. Pismo delegata rządu RP przy Konferencji Ambasadorów I. Paderewskiego do prezydenta Francji A. Milleranda w związku z decyzją Konferencji Ambasadorów w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego," *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 17, 49-51.

agreement, and asked the *Sejm* not to ratify the decision.²⁷³ Foreign Minister Sapięha defended the decision of the Council of Ambassadors at the Sejm.²⁷⁴ The official Czecho-Slovak representatives did not react to the Spa decision. Czecho-Slovakia did not officially protest against the decision of 28 July 1920, against loss of its territory and population in Orava and Spiš with a significant number of Slovaks transferred to Poland, given the outcome in Tešín Silesia where even a more significant number of Poles was accorded to Czecho-Slovakia.²⁷⁵ Some media expressed surprise on the outcome and the cancellation of the plebiscite: "...The plebiscite should have been held at least in Spiš and Orava, there were no obstacles in this regard."²⁷⁶ Political opposition in Czecho-Slovakia used the arbitration decision against its opponents and, especially, against Edvard Beneš.²⁷⁷ The

²⁷³ Cybulski, *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego*, 207. *Rada Narodowa Księstwa Cieszyńskiego* adopted its protest at its last plenary session on 4 August 1920. The *Rada* expressed regret that the Polish government abandoned the plebiscite in Tešín Silesia and that the Polish representatives signed the Spa agreement. The Council protested against the decision, which left 190,000 Poles in Czecho-Slovakia, and asked the Parliament (*Sejm*) not to ratify the decision. *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ Reply of the Foreign Minister Sapięha to the interpellation of 28 October 1920 by Mesrs. Kunicki, Reger et al., MPs, regarding the decision of the Council of Ambassadors in Paris dealing with Tešín Silesia, Warsaw, 1 December 1920, *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 18, 51-54.

²⁷⁵ Jozef B. Maťašovský and other activists continued their activities in favour of the arbitrarily lost Slovak territories, but met with little interest and due to the indifference of official circles and the press in Czecho-Slovakia towards the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš. See "Letter of Joseph Matasovsky to the Slovak League in Pittsburgh, Permanent Committee for Integration of Slovakia, 25 February 1922, Spišská Nová Ves," in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948*, 20. President Masaryk defended the territorial integrity of Czecho-Slovakia at parliament on 22 November 1918 and he referred to the example of the American Civil War: "The American republic resorted to a civil war, rather than accept the secession of the South. We shall never accept the secession of our mixed North." Peroutka, *Budování státu*, 1918, 475. In November of 1918, Masaryk spoke against a secession of the districts with mixed Czech-German population of Czecho-Slovakia. In July of 1920, Masaryk did not react to the transfer of the Orava and Spiš districts with predominantly Slovak population to Poland.

²⁷⁶ Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 16-17. Miškovič quoted the Slovak Prague journal *Slovenská politika* (Slovak Politics) after the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors of 28 July 1920. The analysis of the Javorina question by the French Foreign Ministry seemed to concur with the fact that the conditions in the Orava and Spiš plebiscite areas allowed conducting the plebiscite. "See "Note sur la question de Javorzina," 5 March 1923, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 59, 165-175.

²⁷⁷ The Foreign Affairs Committee of the [Czecho-Slovak] National Assembly approved the report on the arbitration submitted by Foreign Minister Beneš by a margin of one vote (11:10). The National Democratic Party, in opposition, blamed the government for abandoning the historical border in Tešín Silesia. See Valenta "Vyrcholení národně osvobozenického hnutí a utvoření samostatných států (1918-1920)" [The Culmination of the National Liberation Movement and Creation of Independent States (1918-1920)], 479; also Jean Pozzi, Chargé d'affaires a.i., Prague, tel. no. 149, 6 August 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 57, 39-41. Edvard Beneš defended his conduct at Spa at the Parliament on 4 August 1920. See F. Couget, Prague, tel. no. 163, 16 August 1920, AD/MAE, Z-

Slovak People's Party criticized Edvard Beneš for losing the incorporated districts in Orava and Spiš and accused him of trading the districts in Orava and Spiš for Tešín Silesia.²⁷⁸ Polish territorial claims to northern Slovakia and the decision at Spa in 1920 also affected individual lives. The long-lasting friendship of Slovak poet Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav and Polish writer Roman Zawiliński ended. Hviezdoslav was deeply touched by the Polish claim to his native Orava and protested against the Spa decision in his poem *28. júla 1920* (28 July 1920).²⁷⁹

The local population in Orava and Spiš reacted angrily to the Spa decision. The rumours about the outcome circulated already on 23 July 1920 caused a tense situation and the local Czecho-Slovak plebiscite authorities contemplated sending a delegation from Orava and Spiš to Paris, which the central authorities declined.²⁸⁰ The Subcommittee for Orava and Spiš informed dr. Radlinský, Czecho-Slovak Commissioner, on 25 July 1920 of the final border in Orava and Spiš.²⁸¹ Radlinský observed that the city of Jablonka was dead silent (*“ako zarezaná”*), in the town of Lipnica the local population cried and in the town of Podvln there was absolutely no enthusiasm for Poland.²⁸²

The Czecho-Slovak and Polish delegates, Juraj Slávik and Józef Diehl, witnessed violent protests

Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 57, 45-63.

²⁷⁸ Dulovič, “Agrárny politik,” 125. Juraj Slávik defended Edvard Beneš against the accusations in the Slovak weekly *Naša Orava* (Our Orava). Cf. J. Slávik, “Či Česi predali Spiš a Oravu za Tešínsko?” [Whether the Czechs Sold Spiš and Orava for Tešínsko [Tešín Silesia]] *Naša Orava*, 17 November 1920. *Ibid.* The analysis of the Javorina question by the French Foreign Ministry observed that the delimitation lines in Orava and Spiš, adopted by the Conference of Ambassadors on 28 July 1920, had been proposed by E. Beneš at Spa. See “Note sur la question de Javorzina,” 5 March 1923, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 59, 165-175.

²⁷⁹ Júlia Dudášová-Kriššáková, “Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav (1849 - 1921) a Roman Zawiliński (1855 - 1932)” [P. O. Hviezdoslav and R. Zawiliński], *Slavica Slovaca* XL no.2 (2005), 97-103.

²⁸⁰ See “Opis hughesogramu s Bratislavou, ze dne 23. cervence 1920,” 23 July 1920, AKPR Prague, D5801/20.

²⁸¹ Radlinský argued with the Subcommittee that the decision would allocate to Poland the townships with a totally, or predominately Slovak population. He believed the Poles would not receive even 10 % of the votes in Hladovka, which was allocated to Poland, the same being true of Bukovina and Oravka. Slovakophiles were very strong in Dolná Lipnica, Zubrice and Pekelník. The British and French members of the Subcommittee were surprised. The French delegate wondered why Czecho-Slovakia was not more aggressive in these townships against the Poles. Chňoupek, *op. cit.*, 36.

²⁸² “Hughesogram for dr. Slávik, 26 July 1920,” Bohuš Chňoupek, *Pogrom. Na sny sa nezomiera*, 36-37. See also “Opis hughesogramu, Odesila: Ministerstvo pre spravu Slovenska - Plebiscitni oddeleni (dr. Pudlač), Prijima: Praha, min. zahr. veci (dr. Locher),” 26 July 1920, AKPR Prague, D5869/20.

of Slovakophile and Polonophile citizens in Jablonka, who reacted to the Spa decision. French troops, which maintained security and order in the plebiscite area, separated two agitated groups with great difficulty.²⁸³ The Spiš villages conducted their own “plebiscite” after the arbitrage decision and 86% votes were cast for Czecho-Slovakia.²⁸⁴ The Slovak population in the villages ceded to Poland believed that they had been sold for Tešín.²⁸⁵ Tendency to trade the population for natural resources, a certain political materialism, was also criticized by the local activist in Poland. Ferdynand Machay who criticized the neglectful *désintéressment* of the Orava and Spiš issues by the Polish government and the lack of interest in Orava and Spiš in the media. He believed the population in Orava and Spiš should be treated equally with the Tešín population regardless of whether it would bring coal or mountains to Poland.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ SNA Bratislava, f. Pleb. komisar oravsky - Tvrdošín 1919 - 1920, c. kart.2, J.Slávík-A.Pudlač (MPS), 28 July 1920; quoted in Dulovič, “Agrárny politik,” 125. Slávík promised, with tears in his eyes, the full support of the Czecho-Slovak government to all Slovaks who wanted to “emigrate” to Slovakia, and to remember those remaining to live “under foreign rule.” *Ibid.* Slávík questioned his Polish counterpart, asking why a bigger brother grabbed territory with a significant Slovak population, but Józef Diehl explained that Poland’s decision failed to meet even its basic [territorial] demands (Polhora and the river Oravica in Orava, Smierdzonka and Javorina in Spiš). AKPR Prague, sig. D 6282/20, inv. c. 198, rozhovor A.Pudlač (MPS) - B.Tomsa (MZV), 31 July 1920; quoted in Dulović, “Agrárny politik,” 125. See also V.Varinsky, “Vytvaranie severnej hranice Slovenska na Orave a Spiši v r.1918-20,” *Slezsky sborník*, 98, 2000, nos. 1-2, 135.

²⁸⁴ “Opis hughesogramu s Bratislavou, ze dne 30.cervence 1920,” Prague, 30 July 1920, AKPR Praha, D6018/20. The villages of Nedeca, Lapšanka, Fridman, Tribš and Čierna Hora in Spiš voted 100% in favour of Czecho-Slovakia. In Orava Suchá Hora and Hladovka started the registration of those wishing to leave. In the village of Orávka 250 out of 350 voters voted for Czecho-Slovakia. Chňoupek, *Pogrom. Na sny sa nezomiera*, 25; Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 25. As soon as the local Slovak population realized the outcome of the arbitrage, some communities started to ponder their future. The citizens of Hladovka in Orava and Nedeca in Spiš indicated their intentions to emigrate *en bloc*, which prompted plans to resettle them and rebuild their villages in southern Slovakia (“New” Hladovka and “New” Nedeca in Žitný ostrov). See “Hughesogram Malkovský (Prague) - Dr.Pudlač (Bratislava),” 29 July 1920, Čís. 1009 pleb. Spiš, AKPR Praha.

²⁸⁵ See “Opis hughesogramu, Odesila: Ministerstvo pre spravu Slovenska - Plebiscitni oddeleni (dr.Pudlač), Prijima: Praha, min. zahr. veci (dr. Tomsa),” 27 July 1920, AKPR Praha, D5898/20. Dr. Pudlač (Ministry for Slovakia, the Plebiscite Division) informed Dr. Tomsa in Prague (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) on 27 July 1920: “...Everywhere is chaos and cries. They are criticizing the Czechs and there are statements against Minister Beneš. As I have already said in Prague, the Slovak population in the villages ceded to Poland would always believe that they had been sold for Tešín. ...” *Ibid.* The Slovak-Americans from Spiš and Orava believed Czecho-Slovakia could obtain the coal without the sacrifice of thirty thousand Slovaks. Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions*, 10.

²⁸⁶ Machay, *Moja droga do Polski*, 197-8.

The Slovak-Americans, many with ties to their ancestral territories, experienced the loss of Orava and Spiš to Poland as a betrayal of the Slovaks by Czecho-Slovakia and created a Permanent Committee for Integration of Slovakia (*Stály výbor pre celok Slovenska*), which worked for the return of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš.²⁸⁷ The Committee published an account of the transfer of the incorporated districts to Poland and the situation of the local Slovaks.²⁸⁸ The Slovak League of America and the Slovak-Americans remained the most vocal advocates of the territories incorporated into Poland and its population.²⁸⁹

The Conference of Ambassadors cut the proverbial Gordian knot on 28 July 1920 and ended one protracted dispute between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.²⁹⁰ The package solution adopted by the Conference dealt with three distinct regions, Orava and Spiš in Slovakia, and Tešín Silesia between Poland and the Czech lands. The dispute over Tešín Silesia, owing to its economic importance to Czecho-Slovakia, overshadowed the existence of two accompanying quarrels in Orava

²⁸⁷ Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions*, 6.

²⁸⁸ František Bury, *Jako Prišiel Horný Spiš a Orava Pod Poľsko* [How Upper Spiš and Orava Came Under the Domination of Poland] (S.l.: Stály výbor pre celok Slovenska, 1920); quoted in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions*, 2.

²⁸⁹ The Slovak League of America and the *Stály výbor pre celok Slovenska* submitted on 15 July 1923 a memorandum to the Czecho-Slovak government demanding the return of Orava and Spiš. Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 26. Miškovič cites a Promemoria and an Appeal by the Permanent Committee for Integration of Slovakia, in Slovak, English and French and the Slovak League of America Memorandum to President Wilson, dated 16 September 1920, as examples. Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 26. The Slovak League of America sent a letter to President Wilson on 18 September 1920, in which it informed the President that the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš had at no time formed a part of Poland, but were “since times immemorial an integral part of Slovakia....” See “Slovak League of America to Woodrow Wilson, President, September 18, 1920, Pittsburg, PA,” in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions*, 15-16. The members of the Slovak League of America protested against the 28 July 1920 decision collectively and in their respective chapters. Zmätlo, *Dejiny Slovenskej ligy na Spiši*, 10-11.

²⁹⁰ Miškovič argued the Conference of Ambassadors by its decision of 28 July 1920 to divide Orava and Spiš, did not solve, but in fact created a problem, which has been waiting for its rectification since. Andrej Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska* [The Northern Boundaries of Slovakia] (Bratislava: Ústredná správa Slovenskej ligy, 1946), 164. Miškovič questioned the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors of 28 July 1920 to modify the border, which served well its purpose for over 700 years. The adopted change would necessarily disrupt old economic and cultural structures and this sociological error would not disappear over time. Andrej Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 16.

and Spiš and minimized their input into the final decision. By July of 1920 the dispute over Tešín Silesia resembled squaring the circle and headed for a certain collision when the Polish-Soviet war offered an unexpected opportunity. France, Great Britain and Czecho-Slovakia seized the opportunity. Poland and Czecho-Slovakia agreed to accept an arbitrary solution to their protracted border quarrel, but the solution contained the seeds of the quarrels to come.

5.

RAPPROCHEMENT THROUGH JAVORINA?

In strict confidentiality: the Commissioner of Poland stated that the Polish Government would be intransigent on a cession of Jaworzyna [Javorina] to Poland; that only this cession would make disappear tension between the two states caused by the Teschen [Tešín] question, and that if Poland cannot receive it, a chasm remain between the two states.

In the same strict confidentiality: the Commissioner of the Czechoslovak State stated that the Czechoslovak Government, from a military point of view, as well as from a moral point view, cannot cede Jaworzyna [Javorina] to Poland.¹

Lt.-Col. Uffler, Chairman of the Delimitation Commission, 3 May 1921

The dispute between Czechoslovakia and Poland over the valley of Javorina,² a small area in the Slovak High Tatra mountains, tested the strained relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland in the first half of the 1920s. Official relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland remained uneasy throughout the period between the wars and suffered from a lack of understanding on both sides. Czechoslovak and Polish inter-war foreign policy concepts were at odds from the beginning and the territorial disputes intensified their rivalry.³ France needed a strong Poland, a barrier against communism and extremism.⁴ Prague and Warsaw competed for a '*principe organisateur*' in the east of Europe and desired to deny its antagonist a leading role in the region.⁵ Poland, as with many other

¹ Lt.-Col. Uffler à Quai d'Orsay, le 3 Mai 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 54-57.

² *Jaworzyna* in Polish.

³ Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances, 1926-1936* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 3.

⁴ "Politique du Chef de l'État," A. de Panafieu, Warsaw, tel. no. 280, 15 November 1920, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 71, 234-235.

⁵ M. B. Biskupski wrote that Polish historian Handelsman had posited Poland as the historical '*principe organisateur*' in the east of Europe before the partitions, a position to which it was returning after 1918. Biskupski mentioned the traditional Polish desire to deny Prague a leading role in the region, if only in historical conceptualization. See M. B. Biskupski, "Marceli Handelsman (1882-1945)," in Peter Brock, John D. Stanley and Piotr J. Wróbel, eds. *Nation and History. Polish Historians from the Enlightenment to the Second World War* (Toronto-London-Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 368.

countries in East Central Europe, benefitted, beyond a doubt, from the Versailles system *status quo*. Czechoslovakia and Poland could only profit from permanence of peace, which allowed their unhindered development.⁶ Germany, Hungary and the Soviet Union favoured political and territorial revision of the Versailles system. Czechoslovakia countered a threat of Hungarian territorial revisionism by the Little Entente, but Poland, which did not share a common border with Hungary, looked upon it as a friendly country. Poland felt threatened by Germany and the Soviet Union, states which favoured a revision of their borders with Poland. Czechoslovakia, until 1938, did not anticipate a threat of German territorial revisionism and increasingly looked upon the Soviet Union, with whom it did not share a common border, as a possible ally against hostile Germany. Czechoslovakia adopted a pro-Polish position in the dispute between Poland and Germany over Upper Silesia in 1920 - 1923 but failed to earn Poland's acceptance of the Spa verdict on Tešín Silesia. Czechoslovakia and Poland tried to patch up their mutual differences and improve their uneasy coexistence. In 1921 Czechoslovakia and Poland attempted a rapprochement and signed the Beneš - Skirmunt Pact, but the long-drawn, hard-fought and irrational dispute over Javorina undermined official relations and paralyzed the attempted rapprochement.⁶ Prague reproached Warsaw its hospitality vis-à-vis the Slovak exiles, headquartered in Cracow, who worked for independence of Slovakia. Warsaw negatively viewed Prague's cosiness with the Ukrainian exiles

⁶ Marek K. Kamiński and Michał J. Zacharias, *Polityka zagraniczna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1918 - 1939* [Foreign Policy of the Polish Republic 1918 - 1939] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo LTW, 1998), 57.

⁶ Ewa Orlof described the dispute over Javorina as "przewlekły, zacięty i irracjonalny spór." In Ewa Orlof, *Dyplomacja polska wobec sprawy słowackiej w latach 1938-39* [Polish Diplomacy and the Slovak Question in 1938-39] (Kraków: Wydawn. Literackie, 1980), 34; as quoted in Ewa Orlof and Andrzej Pasternak, eds. *Stosunki polsko-czesko-słowackie w latach 1918-1939* [Polish-Czecho-Slovak Relations in 1918-1939] (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1994), 1. Ewa Orlof and Andrzej Pasternak, eds. *Stosunki polsko-czesko-słowackie w latach 1918-1939* (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1994) will hereafter be cited as *SPCS 18-39*.

who worked for independence of Ukraine.⁷ Relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland were also affected by Warsaw's attitude to the Slovak - Czech issue. The so-called Slovak Question, the position of Slovakia within Czechoslovakia and Slovak - Czech relations represented an internal issue that Warsaw could exploit, which was perceived in Prague as interference in its internal affairs.⁸ After 1925 France tried to reconcile its eastern alliances with a policy of rapprochement with Berlin and this further complicated relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁹

The dispute between Czechoslovakia and Poland over Javorina was a typical border dispute but its importance was much greater than the geographical size of the disputed region would indicate.¹⁰ The dispute led to a diplomatic war, blocked for two years the normalization of relations, excited public opinion and made the outcome a question of prestige.¹¹ The early 1920s presented several opportunities to bring Czechoslovakia and Poland together. However, French mediation between its two Central European allies, as well as bilateral Czechoslovak - Polish efforts failed.

In order to forestall a revision of their borders, Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia signed on 14 August 1920 an alliance against Hungary. After the accession of Rumania, the alliance between

⁷ See "Relations polono-tchéco-slovaques," F. Couger to A. Briand, Prague, tél. no. (Europe) 25, le 22 janvier 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 21-22.

⁸ Piotr S. Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 387. Wandycz wrote that the Slovak-Czech issue was connected with constitutional problems of the state and the Poles were prone to exploit existing differences. *Ibid.* Andrej Hlinka's trip to Paris in 1919 with a Polish passport was often recalled by the Czecho-Slovak representatives as an example of Polish exploitation of Slovak - Czech differences. See the chapter 7 for more.

⁹ Piotr Wandycz suggested in his study of French eastern alliances that reconciling the eastern alliances with a policy of rapprochement with Berlin was comparable to the squaring of a circle. Wandycz, *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances*, 157.

¹⁰ Zbigniew Kazimierz Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów. Kwestie terytorialne w latach 1920-1925. Studium prawnopolityczne* [Poland and the League of Nations. Territorial Questions in 1920-1925. A legal-political study], (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1993), 130-131. In the past, the border disputes usually involved mountainous regions (the French-Spanish dispute in the Pyrenees, the French-Italian dispute in the Alps and the Galician-Hungarian dispute over the *Morské oko* in the Tatras in 1902. *Ibid.* The Polish delegate at the Delimitation Commission observed and studied analogies of the border disputes in the Pyrenees and the High Tatras. See "Jaworzina et les Pyrénées," MFA - Note pour M. Laroche, Paris, 19 March 1924, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 61, 141.

¹¹ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 130.

Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia turned into the triple alliance, the so-called Little Entente.¹² After some initial hesitation, France embraced the Little Entente and sought to have Poland join this regional grouping, but Poland decided to stay outside the Little Entente.¹³

Franco-Polish negotiations on the political agreement and military convention in February 1921 came as another missed opportunity to bring Czechoslovakia and Poland closer together.¹⁴ A Czechoslovak - Polish alliance was logical for both sides, but extremely difficult to attain for complex reasons.¹⁵ Czechoslovakia and Poland vied for leadership in Central Europe. Czechoslovakia did not wish to underwrite the Polish borders with Germany and Russia for several

¹² The Little Entente was a system of alliances made in 1920-1921 in central and south Europe and supported by France. These alliances included Czecho-Slovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania, and maintained the *status quo* established by peace treaties negotiated at Trianon with Hungary and in Neuilly-sur-Seine with Bulgaria. Edmund Jan Osmańczyk, *Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Agreements*, 1990 ed. (New York/Philadelphia/London: Taylor and Francis, 1990), s. v. "Entente, Little."

¹³ Anna M. Cienciala and Titus Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno: Keys to Polish Foreign Policy, 1919-25* (University Press of Kansas, 1984), 19-20. Polish Foreign Minister Eustachy Sapieha explained that bad Czechoslovak - Polish relations and Poland's traditional friendship with Hungary made Poland's accession to the Little Entente impossible in 1920. *Ibid.* Wandycz wrote that political geography, the postwar situation on the continent of Europe, and fear of German revenge provided the foundations for the [French] eastern barrier. Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies*, 387. Poland, endangered from both the west and east, believed in the necessity of a bloc comprised of all the major states in this area and connected with France by ties of partnership. Czechoslovakia believed that full cooperation with Poland was inopportune because it would unnecessarily expose the country to German antagonism and offend Russia, whom Prague, like Paris, saw as a possible future ally against Germany. Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies*, 387-8. Wandycz explained that Warsaw wanted to collaborate with and transform the Little Entente into a regional grouping against Germany and Russia, but this was exactly what Prague did not want the Little Entente to become. Wandycz, *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances*, 159. Prague's aspiration to a dominant role in East Central Europe, justified by its strong economy and political stability, ran counter to Warsaw's ambitions of leadership. Czechoslovakia and Poland were rivals, and each regarded itself as *the* ally of France east of Germany. Wandycz wrote that the key word for France was *securité*, for Czechoslovakia the stress was on multilateralism, whereas the Polish watchword was independence (*niepodleglosc*). *Ibid.*, 450-451.

¹⁴ French - Polish negotiations started in Paris after Józef Piłsudski's departure on 6 February 1921. Philippe Berthelot, the secretary general of the Political and Commercial Affairs Department at the Quai d'Orsay, was a lifelong friend of Štefan Osuský, Czechoslovak Minister to France. Berthelot gave a copy of his conversation with Eustachy Sapieha, Polish Foreign Minister, to Osuský and he also asked Osuský to invite Beneš to Paris for talks with Sapieha. Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Beneš arrived in Paris on 11 February 1921, but Sapieha already departed for London. In Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 26.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39-40. Poland considered Czecho-Slovakia's behaviour and neutrality during the Polish - Soviet war in the 1920s as unfriendly and disloyal. Czecho-Slovakia and Poland substantially differed in their attitudes toward Soviet Russia. Czecho-Slovakia saw the main danger to its security in Hungarian revisionism and in the restoration of the Habsburgs to the Austrian or/and Hungarian thrones. The Czecho-Slovak government believed that Czecho-Slovakia, not Poland, should be recognized as the dominant power in East-Central Europe. *Ibid.*

reasons. It did not see any border issue with Germany, and did not even border on Russia. French and Czechoslovak officials were interested in a trilateral form of cooperation, but poor Czechoslovak - Polish relations left Czechoslovakia outside the alliance.¹⁶

An alliance between Czechoslovakia and Poland could have lessened French influence in Poland¹⁷ and decreased Poland's reliance on French assistance. Czechoslovak - Polish relations were traumatized by the 1920 Spa decision over Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia and by small irritants supported by both sides.¹⁸ Warsaw believed that Czechoslovakia needed Poland more than Poland needed Czechoslovakia. Poland believed she was wronged by the Spa decision in Tešín Silesia and claimed at least symbolical compensation by Czechoslovakia so as to normalize bilateral relations.¹⁹ Paris believed Poland needed Czechoslovakia's friendship and, therefore, should accept

¹⁶ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 28. Poland and France signed a political agreement on 19 February 1921 and a secret military convention on 21 February 1921. *Ibid.* France made the ratification of the Franco-Polish alliance of February 1921 conditional on extensive Polish economic concessions. *Ibid.*, 14. French Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré signed the Franco-Polish commercial agreements after he assumed the premiership on 15 January 1922. The agreements had been ready since June 1921, but Aristide Briand feared their signature would compromise his attempts to obtain an alliance with Britain. The alliance and military convention came into force with the signature of the Franco-Polish commercial agreements on 6 February 1922. *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁷ Polish critics of French - Polish cooperation pointed to examples where the relationship was clearly to the advantage of France: "Indeed, in May 1922, the rapporteur of the *Sejm* Commission on Foreign Affairs, Stanisław Grabski, stated that the commercial agreements - signed on 6 February - gave France much more than the latter gave to Poland and that the oil convention was totally to France's advantage. Nevertheless, he recommended that the treaties be accepted since Poland had already been compensated by the *facto* alliance of February 1921." *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁸ General Mittelhauser, Head of the French Military Mission in Czecho-Slovakia, noted the existence of a revisionist organization in Poland oriented against Czecho-Slovakia's integrity, which burdened the relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. The French military missions in Prague and Warsaw worked on a rapprochement between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia. Prague complained about a Magyar revisionist organization in Cracow, Warsaw criticized an exiled Ukrainian brigade in Czecho-Slovakia. These points of friction complicated French plans for the alliance between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. See "Chef de la Mission militaire française Général Mittelhauser à M. Ministre de la Guerre," Prague, tel. no. 290/2, 18 janvier 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 58, 19-20.

¹⁹ Stanisław Kutrzeba argued that Czechoslovakia needed Poland more than Poland needed Czechoslovakia. After the Upper Silesia plebiscite, the German-Polish relations relaxed, German economic boycott of Poland was gone and the Paris-Berlin rapprochement progressed. Kutrzeba found a rapprochement between Poland and Czechoslovakia advantageous for both countries. See Stanisław Kutrzeba, *Nasza polityka zagraniczna* (Kraków: Gebethner i Wolf, 1923), 70-71.

unconditionally the 28 July 1920 decision.²⁰ Political situation and a desire of France pressed for a *rapprochement* between Czechoslovakia and Poland.²¹ The valley of Javorina in Slovakia, viewed as a symbolic “compensation” for the 1920 Spa decision on Tešín Silesia, became a test of goodwill and assumed disproportionate sentimental value.²² Javorina stood for a very symptomatic issue in relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland.²³

After the peace of Riga of 18 March 1921²⁴ Poland tried to obtain recognition of its borders in Upper Silesia.²⁵ The allocation of Upper Silesia between Poland and Germany was a very complex issue.²⁶ The League of Nations decided to conduct a plebiscite in Upper Silesia to determine the Polish - German borders. The plebiscite, supervised by the League of Nations, took place on 20 March 1921 and did not yield decisive outcome. Poland obtained 40.4 percent and Germany 59.5 percent of a total votes (479,418 votes were cast for Poland and 706,820 votes for Germany).²⁷ The results of the plebiscite made partition of Upper Silesia a delicate issue; the issue divided the Allies

²⁰ See “Question de Teschen,” Ministre à M. de Barante, Chargé d’affaires à Varsovie, Paris, tel. no. 24, 15 janvier 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 16-17.

²¹ Poland presented two conditions for a *rapprochement*: situation of Polish minority in Tešín and the Javorina question. Kutrzeba, *Nasza polityka zagraniczna*, 66-67.

²² Kutrzeba wrote that the activists from the Tatra region - “lovers of the Tatras” - pressed the Javorina issue: “The second condition [for a *rapprochement*] was articulated and presented to the Polish public by a group of people, who loved the Tatras....” See Kutrzeba, *Nasza polityka zagraniczna*, 67-68.

²³ Piotr Łossowski, “Kształtowanie się państwa polskiego i walka o granice (listopad 1918 - czerwiec 1921) [Forming the Polish state and a war for the borders (November 1918 - June 1921)],” in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [A History of Polish Diplomacy], vol. 4 (1918-1939), ed. Piotr Łossowski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1995), 173.

²⁴ The Peace of Riga of 18 March 1921 ended the Polish-Soviet war and established the Polish-Soviet border.

²⁵ *Górny Śląsk* in Polish.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 41. Upper Silesia had strong economic potential and whoever owned it could play an important role in East Central Europe. Poland expected to receive Upper Silesia, which would help its economic recovery and strengthen its capacity to withstand German economic domination. On the other hand, it was feared that allocation of Upper Silesia to Germany would help to restore its pre-war economic potential and restore its economic domination of Central and Eastern Europe. *Ibid.*

²⁷ Piotr Łossowski, “Kształtowanie się państwa polskiego i walka o granice (listopad 1918 - czerwiec 1921) [Forming the Polish state and a war for the borders (November 1918 - June 1921)],” in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [A History of Polish Diplomacy], vol. 4 (1918-1939), ed. Piotr Łossowski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1995), 173.

and, as a consequence, on 28 April 1921 the Interallied Plebiscite Commission submitted two partition proposals to the Supreme Council. The uneasiness about the outcome of partition sparked on the night from 2 to 3 May 1921 the third uprising in Upper Silesia. Poland distanced itself from the uprising, which ended on 6 June 1921, but rationalized it diplomatically.²⁸

In 1921 Czechoslovakia adopted a friendlier attitude towards Poland and on 27 January 1921 Foreign Minister Beneš openly supported the Polish side in Upper Silesia: “we wish that what is Slav, would remain Slav.”²⁹ Although Czechoslovakia criticized the Polish uprising in Upper Silesia, which forced Poland to protest officially on 25 May 1921, diplomatically Beneš solicited solution a favourable to Poland.³⁰ The Supreme Council of the League of Nations appointed Professor Herald of Switzerland and František Hodač of Czechoslovakia to propose a boundary between Poland and Germany in Upper Silesia. The selection was subject to criticism as it was suspected that Hodač would side with Poland.³¹ The decision adopted by the League of Nations’ commission of experts

²⁸ Łossowski, “Kształtowanie się państwa polskiego i walka o granice (listopad 1918 - czerwiec 1921),” 173-174.

²⁹ Marek K. Kamiński and Michał J. Zacharias, *Polityka zagraniczna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1918 - 1939* [Foreign Policy of the Polish Republic 1918 - 1939] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo LTW, 1998), 65.

³⁰ Kamiński and Zacharias, *Polityka zagraniczna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1918 - 1939*, 66. Beneš thus improved, to some extent, his very negative image in Poland. The report by the Polish Legation in Vienna, date 13 February 1921, characterized E. Beneš, one of the three eventual candidates to succeed T. G. Masaryk as a President, as “leader of Czech chauvinists and a spirit of legionnaires.” MSZ to Legation Berlin, Warsaw, 26 February 1921, AAN, Ambasada RP w Berlinie, t. 49, 14.

³¹ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 80. The Germans suspected the Czechoslovak government of supporting Polish claims. Cienciala concluded that “Beneš did so although he did not influence the final decision.” France also had a stake in the outcome of the Upper Silesia question. Cienciala wrote that “the French had kept all Czech experts under close surveillance.” The report had been drawn up by Jean Monnet, a French professor, who had close ties to Czechoslovakia. Cienciala and Komarnicki, *op. cit.*, 80-81. Beneš thought the chances of a lasting peace would be greater if Poland, and not Germany, were to receive the industrial area. See F. G. Campbell, “Struggle for Upper Silesia, 1919-1922,” *Journal of Modern History* 42, No.3 (September 1970): 384 n.65. Beneš was, however, more explicit in his conversation with Balfour. Beneš then said that he thought the area should be divided on ethnic lines as far as possible. He said that the frontier problem in Tešín was rather similar, and claimed that he had pressed for an ethnic, rather than an industrial, frontier there. See Balfour to Léon Bourgeois, head of the French Delegation, Geneva, 10 September 1921, League of Nations Archives (hereafter LNA), IIA/15257/14724; quoted in Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 80.

on the borders in Upper Silesia favoured Poland.³² The League of Nations divided Upper Silesia between Poland and Germany on 12 October 1921 and the Council of Ambassadors sanctioned it on 20 October 1921.³³ Poland and Germany signed the Upper Silesia Convention on 15 May 1922, which created a special regime for Upper Silesia for a period of fifteen years.³⁴

France and Czechoslovakia supported Poland, and by their diplomatic activities and their expertise, influenced the final outcome. The diplomatic activities of Edvard Beneš on behalf of Poland and strong pressures from France brought about the award of 29 percent of the territory, 46 percent of the population, 75 percent of coal mines and 59 percent of ironworks in Upper Silesia to Poland.³⁵ Czechoslovakia expected that its pro-Polish activities would ease the tense Czechoslovak - Polish bilateral relations. Czechoslovakia hoped that the award of Upper Silesia to Poland could compensate Poland for the loss of Tešín Silesia.³⁶

³² Alina Szklarska-Lohmannowa, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki dyplomatyczne w latach 1918-1925* [The Polish-Czechoslovak Diplomatic Relations in 1918-1925] (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Zakł. Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1967), 77. The experts adopted their decision by a margin of one vote, which was believed to be the vote of Czechoslovakia. The Polish legation in Paris informed Warsaw that Beneš greatly contributed to the adopted solution in Geneva. *Ibid.*

³³ Łossowski, "Kształtowanie się państwa polskiego i walka o granice (listopad 1918 - czerwiec 1921)," 174. The decision was clearly in Poland's favour, despite the fact that half a million Poles were left under German administration. Polish Foreign Minister, Konstanty Skirmunt, advised all Polish diplomats to abstain from voicing criticism of the League of Nations' decision. The German government was shocked by the League of Nations' decision, did not accept it and German Chancellor Wirth declared on 26 October 1921 in the Reichstag that the decision of the League of Nations was illegal. In the coming years, Germany would do everything to make public opinion believe that Germany had been wronged and that international law had been violated. See Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 31, 89.

³⁴ Łossowski, "Kształtowanie się państwa polskiego i walka o granice (listopad 1918 - czerwiec 1921)," 175. The Upper Silesia Convention of May 1922 was also known as the Geneva Convention of May 1922.

³⁵ The French Mission to the League of Nations in Geneva proposed Paris could discreetly inform Warsaw that Edvard Beneš supported the interest of Poland in the Upper Silesia question. See Clauzel to A. Briand, Geneva, tel. no. 25, le 24 Septembre 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 154. Accordingly, the French Foreign Ministry instructed its ministers in Warsaw and Prague to convey this information to the Polish government. See Berthelot to Warsaw/Prague, Paris, tel. no. 1486-1487-1488, le 26 septembre 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 155. For more on Czechoslovak foreign policy and the Upper Silesia borders in 1921 see Eduard Kubu, "Československá zahraniční politika a problém rozhraničení Horního Slezska v roce 1921" [Czecho-Slovak foreign policy regarding the problem of Upper Silesia's frontier in 1921], *Slovanský přehled*, 1992, 78 (1): 22-31.

³⁶ Kamiński and Zacharias, *Polityka zagraniczna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1918 - 1939*, 66. Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Beneš stated to the Polish Minister in Rome, Skirmunt, he believed and desired that Upper Silesia belong to Poland. Skirmunt viewed behind Beneš's words hope that Upper Silesia would make Poland forget the loss

The decision of the Conference of Ambassadors settled on 28 July 1920 the three remaining territorial disputes between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia in Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia.³⁷ The 28 July 1920 decision became part of the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920.³⁸ The Conference of Ambassadors authorized the Delimitation commission³⁹ to conduct the physical delimitation of the borders between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland.⁴⁰ The commission could make modifications of the adopted border that would take into account local conditions and the interests of the local population.⁴¹

While the Polish representatives protested against the arbitration decision in Tešín Silesia, Poland seemed to accept the arbitration outcome in Orava and Spiš. Poland did not expect to receive more from the plebiscite areas in Orava and Spiš, entirely on the Slovak territory, and, therefore, Poland wished to establish permanent control over the newly acquired territories. Dr.Bochenski, Polish Delegate at the Delimitation Commission for Tešín Silesia, Orava and Spiš, advised the

of Tešín Silesia. See Barrère to Briand, Rome, tel. no. 255, le 11 février 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 28-29.

³⁷ Edvard Beneš stated on 27 January 1921 at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament that the Tešín decision was the most difficult for Czechoslovakia, but the decision was according to its interests. It was in the interest of Czechoslovakia to accept it; gains, for Czechoslovakia and for Poland, surpassed losses. Ratification of the border treaty was Magna Charta for Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak government considered the Tešín issue settled. Exposé of the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister on relations with Poland at the Foreign Affairs Committee, 27 January 1921, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 106, 4-10. Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 106.

³⁸ The Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920 or The Treaty between the Principal Allied and Associated Powers and Poland, Roumania, the Serb-Croat-Slovene State and Czecho-Slovakia, in regard to certain frontiers of these States, signed at Sèvres on 10 August 1920.

³⁹ The Delimitation commission, created in accordance with Article 2 of the decision of 28 July 1920, was composed of the representatives of the Great Powers (France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan), Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. The Commission adopted its decisions by a majority vote and its decisions were binding upon the two parties to the dispute. For the exact wording of Article 2 see W. Kulski and M. Potulicki, *Współczesna Europa polityczna. Zbiór umów międzynarodowych. 1919 - 1939* [Contemporary Political Europe. Collection of International Treaties] (Warszawa - Krakow: Księgarnia Powszechna, 1939), 273. On the Delimitation Commission see also Bohuslav Chňoupek, *Pogrom - Na sny sa nezomiera* [One Dies Not Of Dreams] (Žilina: Knižné centrum, 2003).

⁴⁰ For the delimitation of the border in Spiš, see Milica Majeriková, "Delimitácia - obdobie nádeje a beznádeje" [Delimitation - Period of Expectations and Disillusions], chap. in *Vojna o Spiš. Spiš v politike Poľska v medzivojnovom období v kontexte česko-slovensko-poľských vzťahov* [The War for Spiš. Spiš in Polish Policy of the Interwar Period in the Context of Czech-Slovak-Polish Relations] (Cracow: Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2007), 45-57.

⁴¹ Article 2 of the 28 July 1920 decision authorized the Delimitation commission to modify the adopted border line. W. Kulski and M. Potulicki, *Współczesna Europa polityczna*, 273.

Foreign Minister on 29 August 1920: "...the Delimitation Commission can generally carry out the delimitation of the border in Orava and Spiš, where we cannot get more [territory] and therefore the border must be set up permanently."⁴² Bochenski argued: "...the delimitation in Orava and Spiš would require several months, eventually a full year, to complete, and during this time anything could happen to change the situation in Tešín Silesia, which would be, at least, very difficult with the border posts already erected."⁴³ Hence, Bochenski proposed to request the Delimitation Commission to start its work first in Orava and Spiš ("*najpierw na Spiszu i Orawie*"), in Slovakia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs approved Bochenski's proposal and instructed him to request the Delimitation Commission to start the delimitation of the border in Orava and Spiš.⁴⁴

Still, Poland invoked Article 2 of the 28 July 1920 decision and proposed modifications of the adopted Czechoslovak - Polish border, which would significantly alter the adopted border in Poland's favour. Czechoslovakia replied in kind and obstructed prospect of an agreement.⁴⁵ The Conference of Ambassadors, despite a flexibility of the United States, rejected a substantial review of the 28 July 1920 decision.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Article 2 of the Spa decision allowed the opening of a proverbial Pandora's box and initiate a dispute that would last for the next three years.⁴⁷ On 8 March

⁴² See Bochenski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cieszyn, 29 August 1920, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.103, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ MFA Telegram to Bochenski, Warsaw, 6 September 1920, CAW Warsaw, TB, I.476.1.103, Polska polityka zagraniczna w sprawie Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy.

⁴⁵ "Analyse - Question de Teschen," MAE, Paris, Tel. Nos. 25, 26 and 27, 7 janvier 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 5-6.

⁴⁶ See "C.A. 100 (VII) - Résolution. Question de Teschen," 7 janvier 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 7.

⁴⁷ The Javorina dispute was not the first one in the High Tatras mountains. Several Polish-Hungarian commissions had tried since the 16th century to delineate the border. The last border dispute in the High Tatras, concerning the *Morské oko* (*Morskie Oko*), ended in 1902 with the decision of the international tribunal in Graz in favour of Galicia. This dispute foreshadowed in a sense the dispute over Javorina between Czechoslovakia and Poland. In fact, Oswald Balzer who represented Galicia at the tribunal stated for the record that the decision did not completely satisfy Polish territorial claims. See Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 131. For the 1902 dispute, see Oswald Balzer, *O Morskie Oko. Wywód praw polskich przed sądem polubownym w Gradcu, Z planem sytuacyjnym* [Over the Morskie Oko. Explanation of the Polish rights before the Tribunal in Graz] (Lwów: By the author, 1906).

1921 Poland submitted a proposal to modify the border in Orava and Spiš.⁴⁸ Poland argued by a will of the local population and their economic reasons and interests.⁴⁹ In Orava, Poland proposed to return two villages, Suchá Hora⁵⁰ and Hladovka,⁵¹ in exchange for the territory in the Veľká Lipnica⁵² commune. In Spiš, Poland proposed to return two villages, Kacvín⁵³ and Nedzeca⁵⁴ for the valley of Javorina. The Polish Delimitation Commissioner explained that Poland hoped to obtain its natural frontiers by means of an exchange of territories.

The proposal submitted by Poland on 8 March 1921 cast some doubt on the authenticity of previous claims to integrate the Polish population, as the proposal supposed the return to Czechoslovakia of four villages (Suchá Hora, Hladovka, Kacvín and Nedeca) in exchange for almost uninhabited territory (see Map 8).⁵⁵ The Polish side argued that the interests of the local population in Spiš made the modification of the Czechoslovak - Polish border in the Javorina valley necessary

⁴⁸ Zieliński writes that 8 March 1921 was the first time Poland raised a claim to Javorina. Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 110.

⁴⁹ "Projet de modification de la ligne frontière dans la région d'Orawa et Spisz," Commission polonaise pour la délimitation de la frontière polono-tchécoslovaque, Cieszyn, le 8 mars 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 60-67.

⁵⁰ *Sucha Góra* in Polish.

⁵¹ *Głodówka* in Polish.

⁵² *Lipnica Wielka* in Polish.

⁵³ *Kacvín* in Polish.

⁵⁴ Nedzeca, *Niedzica* in Polish, had a population of 1,019 in 1910. The population census of 1910 showed the following breakdown of the population for Nedzeca: 909 Slovak, 74 German. See National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), Maryland, RG 256, Records of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, Records of the Inquiry, Card Records Containing Religious and Language Statistics for the Central Powers, Austria - Hungary: Religious and Language Statistics, Box No. 4, I-9, E-5. According to the Polish Central Statistical Office the community (*gmina*) of Nedzeca (Niedźwiedź) had a population of 5,924 as of 31 December 1993. See *Rocznik Statystyczny Demografii 1994* [Statistical Yearbook of Demography 1994] (Warsaw: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1994), 34.

⁵⁵ In fact, the territorial swap in Spiš, that is two villages of Kacvín a Nedeca for the Javorina valley, would imply to exchange 2,000 inhabitants of Kacvín a Nedeca for 600 inhabitants in the Javorina valley. See Kutrzeba, *Nasza polityka zagraniczna* (Kraków: Gebethner i Wolf, 1923), 68. Poland claimed the entire population of these villages was Polish. For example, Kutrzeba wrote about 2,000 inhabitants of the Polish population ("*z ludności polską*") in Kacvín a Nedeca. See Kutrzeba, *Nasza polityka zagraniczna* (Kraków: Gebethner i Wolf, 1923), 68. Polish Prime Minister Ignace Jan Paderewski protested on 30 July 1920 against the Spa decision which would leave several thousands of Poles in Orava and Spiš in Czechoslovakia. See the Chapter IV for more details.

“to enable the inhabitants of these frontier communes to lead a normal existence.”⁵⁶ The argument was that the modifications would be easy due to the clear ethnological situation in the area, since many scholars confirmed the purely Polish character of the local population. The problem with the scholarly sources resided in their inconclusive or contradictory observations⁵⁷ and in the methodology they employed, which relied heavily on the linguistic aspect of national self-determination, neglecting the complexity of the problem.⁵⁸ The interests of the local population regarding the modification of the existing border varied and were affected by the local situation.⁵⁹

Linguistic and economic arguments led the Polish government to formulate a proposal to cede to Czechoslovakia the two communities of Kacvín (Kacwin) and Nedzeca (Niedzica) in exchange, for the same reasons, for the allocation to Poland of the southern part of Jurgov (Jurgow)

⁵⁶ Appendix 2 to the Letter from M. Skirmunt, Delegate to the League of Nations to the Secretary-General, 12 September 1923, Permanent Court of International Justice, The Hague, *Documents relating to advisory opinion No.8 (Jaworzina). Acts and documents relating to judgments and advisory opinions given by the Court, Series C, No.4 Fourth Session (Extraordinary) (November 13th - December 6th 1923)* (hereafter PCIJ, *Documents (Jaworzina)*) (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff's Publishing Company, 1923), 307-308.

⁵⁷ Appendix 2, 308. The Polish arguments stressed that even the Czech and Slovak scholars themselves admitted that the population of Spiš in the neighbourhood of the frontier was purely Polish and also that a great number of villages in the interior of the Slovak portion of Spiš were inhabited by Poles. But the sources referred to often provided very inconclusive observations. Professor Lubor Niederle, in his work *An ethnological map of the Slovaks of Hungary*, observed that the Hungarian Government inscribed the inhabitants of Spisz [Spiš] as Slovaks without regard to the wishes of the people themselves. But, he added that it was difficult to say how far these villages were still Polish at the present time. *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Appendix 2 referred to Professor Mišík's observation that Spiš was a Polish country, speaking the Polish language, and no ethnologist will have the temerity to regard this language as Slovak. See Appendix 2, 308. The difficulties encountered in deriving the national character of the population from exclusively linguistic factors. Purely linguistic factors would lead, in the English-speaking or German-speaking world, to misleading results in characterizing a substantial part of the world's population as English or as German.

⁵⁹ The Conference of Ambassadors assigned, by its decision of 28 July 1920, the Slovak villages of Kacvín and Nedzeca to Poland. When the Delimitation Commission decided on 25 September 1922 to return them to Czechoslovakia, in exchange for the southern part of the commune of Jurgov (Jurgow) and the western part of the commune of Javorina (Jaworzina), the President of the Polish - Czecho-Slovak frontier Delimitation Commission commented on 26 September 1922: "...Lastly, the communes of Kacwin and Niedzica which have expressed the desire to be attached to Czechoslovakia are allotted to that State." See Appendix 2, 309. Czechoslovak Delimitation Commissioner urged Lt.-Col. Uffler, President of the Delimitation Commission, on humanitarian reasons, to expedite the border delimitation, as some inhabitants from Hladovka and Suchá Hora in Orava camped under the open skies. See "Occupation des territoires attribués à la Tchécoslovaquie à Orava et Tesin," V. Roubik to Lt.-Col. Uffler, Mor.Ostrava, tel. no. 2977, le 28 Août 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 167-168.

and the commune of Javorina (Jaworzina). This proposal would maintain intact the economic units in question.⁶⁰ Political opposition to the border modification in the Javorina valley steadily grew in Czechoslovakia.⁶¹

The Delimitation commission adopted on 23 April 1921 the proposal to modify the borders between Czechoslovakia and Poland in Orava.⁶² The proposal was adopted by consensus. Czechoslovakia agreed to exchange the territory in the Veľká Lipnica⁶³ commune for two returned villages, Suchá Hora and Hladovka. The proposal to modify the borders of Spiš was not carried out because Czechoslovakia declined to accept the return of two villages, Kacvín and Nedzeca, in exchange for the valley of Javorina. The remaining five members of the Delimitation commission, including Poland, voted for an exchange.⁶⁴ Czechoslovakia, thus rejected the opportunity of acquiring two villages assigned to Poland in 1920.⁶⁵ The position of Czechoslovakia cast some doubt on the sincerity of its government's efforts to defend the interests of the population that wished to belong to Czechoslovakia. Javorina became an obstacle, even to the successful delimitation of the

⁶⁰ Appendix 2 to the Letter from M. Skirmunt, Delegate to the League of Nations to the Secretary-General, 12 September 1923, PCIJ, *Documents (Jaworzina)*, 308-309.

⁶¹ Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš informed the Polish Envoy in Prague on 26 July 1922 that one of his governmental coalition partners was opposed to the Delimitation commission resuming its work. See Procès-verbal No.20. Séance du 25 septembre 1922. Extrait du procès-verbal de la Commission de délimitation polono-tchécoslovaque, PCIJ, *Documents (Jaworzina)*, 402.

⁶² For the official text of the decision of the Delimitation Commission, in English and French, see *Publications of the Permanent Court of International Justice (CPJI)*, Series C, Nos 4, 8 and 114, 275ff. See also "Memorial prawny dla Ligy Narodów" (Projekt z 6 IX 1923) Archiwum Akt Nowych [Archives of the Foreign Ministry] (hereafter AAN) Warsaw, Zespół akt Delegacji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej przy Lidze Narodów (No. 37, 202). See also St. Schimitzek "Stan prawny sprawy Jaworzyny" from 11 May 1923, AAN, Zespół akt Delegacji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej przy Lidze Narodów, 40, 48-49; W. Goetel, "Spór o Jaworzynę a Park Narodowy Tatrzański," [The Javorina and the Tatra National Park Dispute] *Wiechy* III (1925): 13 - 14.

⁶³ *Lipnica Wielka* in Polish.

⁶⁴ See *Publications of the Permanent Court of International Justice (CPJI)*, Series C, Nos 4, 8 and 114, 275ff; "Memorial prawny dla Ligy Narodów" (Projekt z 6 IX 1923) AAN, Zespół akt Delegacji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej przy Lidze Narodów (No. 37, 202); St. Schimitzek "Stan prawny sprawy Jaworzyny" from 11 May 1923, AAN, Zespół akt Delegacji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej przy Lidze Narodów, 40, 48-49; W. Goetel, "Spór o Jaworzynę a Park Narodowy Tatrzański," *Wiechy* III (1925): 13 - 14; A. Szklarska - Lohmannowa, *op. cit.*, 76.

⁶⁵ See Lt.-Col. Uffler à la Conférence des Ambassadeurs, Brno, no. 8 CP/A, le 10 Octobre 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 164-166.

border in Tešín Silesia and Orava.⁶⁶ Poland threatened to block all delimitation work, should Czechoslovakia oppose the territorial swap proposed by Poland.⁶⁷

The proposal to modify the Czechoslovak - Polish border in Spiš was a prelude to the diplomatic dispute between Czechoslovakia and Poland over the valley of Javorina, known also as the question of Javorina (see Map 9).⁶⁸ This dispute assumed a disproportionate importance in relation to the size of the territory at issue. The question of Javorina involved the League of Nations and the Permanent Court of International Justice in the Hague and kept Czechoslovak and Polish diplomats busy until May of 1924. Since Czechoslovakia and Poland advanced military and political reasons over economic considerations in the dispute, the President of the Delimitation Commission identified the possession of the northern slope of the Tatras as the true subject of the dispute: "...in the minds of the interested parties, military and political reasons appear to take precedence of the economic considerations advanced on both sides, and ... the true subject of the dispute [over Javorina] is in reality the possession of the northern slope of the eastern part of the Tatra...."⁶⁹

The question of Javorina remained open and complicated relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁷⁰ Poland and Czechoslovakia nonetheless attempted to improve their bilateral relations. New Polish Foreign Minister Konstanty Skirmunt⁷¹ supported rapprochement with Czechoslovakia

⁶⁶ "Commission de Délimitation" Lt.-Col. Uffler à Monsieur le Directeur Politique des Affaires Etrangères, Quai d'Orsay, Moravská Ostrava, le 23 Avril 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 43-46.

⁶⁷ See Lt.-Col. Uffler à la Conférence des Ambassadeurs, Brno, no. 8 CP/A, le 10 Octobre 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 164-166.

⁶⁸ There were protests against not assigning Javorina to Poland and W. Goetel and Zamoyski came to Paris to ask for postponing decision in the summer of 1921. See Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 111.

⁶⁹ See the letter of the President of the Delimitation Commission written on 5 July 1921, to the Conference of Ambassadors, The Permanent Court of International Justice, *Question of Jaworzina, Advisory Opinion, 1923 P.C.I.J. (ser. B) No. 8 (Dec. 6)* (Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff's Publishing Company, 1923), 55.

⁷⁰ "...I have heard Javorina everywhere,..." reported A. Černý about his goodwill mission to Poland in December 1921. See "Zpráva A. Černého o cestě do Polska," A. Černý, Prague, c.j. 3198/9/c/VI/2, 14 December 1921, AKPR Prague, T11.21. c.II.

⁷¹ Konstanty Skirmunt (1866 - 1951) - Polish diplomat, member of the *Komitet Narodowy Polski* in Paris, Envoy in Rome (1919-1921), Minister of Foreign Affairs (1921-1922), Ambassador in London (1922-1934).

as a part of further strengthening of Poland's political agreements after the war.⁷² Between July and October of 1921, Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš and Polish Minister to Czechoslovakia Erazm Piltz⁷³ negotiated a bilateral commercial and political agreements in Prague. Piltz believed that geographic situation, common dangers and reciprocal economic interests, justified a rapprochement between Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁷⁴ Piltz argued Czechoslovakia was the only neighbour Poland could reach political and economic understanding with, a rapprochement between Czechoslovakia and Poland served mutual interests. Piltz believed Poland committed a *faux pas* in the Tešín dispute and, in his view, at least three times refused a possibly more advantageous outcome.⁷⁵ Piltz, who personally witnessed all three *faux pas*, Polish misunderstanding of the international situation, warned Poland could not repeat them to face complete isolation.⁷⁶ Piltz wanted Poland to abandon isolation, catastrophic results in the Upper Silesia plebiscite and the importance of Eastern Galicia and demanded it left a vicious circle and find a rapprochement with Czechoslovakia.⁷⁷

Warsaw conditioned *entente* with Prague by amicable rectification of the border, an exchange

⁷² Kamiński and Zacharias, *Polityka zagraniczna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1918 - 1939*, 66-67.

⁷³ Erazm Piltz (1851 - 1929) - Polish journalist, politician and diplomat. Member of the *Komitet Narodowy Polski* in Paris, delegated of the Polish government in Paris (1919), Envoy in Belgrade (1919-1920) and in Prague (1920).

⁷⁴ Piltz made it known during his introductory audience, as the Polish Envoy, to President Masaryk, he would work for a rapprochement between Czechoslovakia and Poland. See "Remise des lettres de créance de M. Piltz, "F. Couget to A. Briand, Prague, Europe no. 274, 23 novembre 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 205-212.

⁷⁵ Envoy E. Piltz to MSZ, Marienbad, 5 September 1921, No. 662/T, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 106, 28-34. In Piltz's view Poland refused, at least three times, a possibly more advantageous decision in the Tešín dispute. The first time, at the opening of the Peace Conference, when Poland refused the 5 November 1918 lines, expecting a more advantageous partition. The second time, when Poland refused the arbitration by the King of Belgium, proposed by France and accepted by Beneš. The third time, when Poland refused the plebiscite. *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Envoy E. Piltz to MSZ, Marienbad, 5 September 1921, No. 662/T, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 106, 28-34. Piltz recalled that on 28 July 1920 when I. J. Paderewski signed the Spa decision, Jules Cambon, a friend of Poland allegedly stated: "...just a few more days of [Polish] delay and all Tešín Silesia would be attributed to the Czechs." *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Envoy E. Piltz to MSZ, Marienbad, 5 September 1921, No. 662/T, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 106, 28-34.

of the Javorina commune for Nedzeca and Kacvín.⁷⁸ The small Slovak mountain resort of Javorina became a symbol of Czechoslovak - Polish rapprochement.⁷⁹ The outcome of the Beneš - Piltz talks was the so-called Beneš - Skirmunt Pact, signed on 6 November 1921 by Edvard Beneš and Konstanty Skirmunt, Foreign Ministers of Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁸⁰ The pact contained mutual territorial guarantees, an agreement on implementing treaties signed in common, and provided for benevolent neutrality in wartime, including transit of war material.⁸¹ In the Appendix to the Pact, Czechoslovakia and Poland agreed to create a mixed delegation to deal with problems in the former plebiscite areas of Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia.⁸² Most importantly, Czechoslovakia and Poland committed themselves to settling the fate of Javorina within six months - by 6 May 1922 at the latest.⁸³ In fact, Czechoslovakia and Poland failed to bridge their divergent positions and to fulfill their commitment. Czechoslovak opposition parties opposed Foreign Minister Beneš over the

⁷⁸ See "Aide - mémoire," MAE, Paris, le 10 août 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 133.

⁷⁹ General Weygand wondered why Javorina clouded the larger picture of the relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia. See Weygand to E. Piltz, Ministre de Pologne a Prague, Prague, 26 October 1921, AAN, Ambasad RP w Paryżu, t. 106, 55. Piltz explained to Weygand that a state of mind reigning in Poland did not allow a failure [of Poland's claim]. E. Piltz to Gen. Weygand [Armée Tchecoslovaque, Le Général Chef d'état-major Général], Prague, 24 October 1921, AAN, Ambasad RP w Paryżu, t. 106, 56-60.

⁸⁰ Kamiński and Zacharias, *Polityka zagraniczna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 1918 - 1939*, 66; for more on the Beneš - Skirmunt Pact see Wandycz, *France*, 248-49; Alina Szklarska-Lohmannowa, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki dyplomatyczne w latach 1918-1925*, chap. 3 passim; Pavol Jakubec, "Československo-poľský spor o Javorinu v kontexte bilaterálnych vzťahov medzivojnového obdobia (1921-1939)" [Czechoslovak-Polish Dispute Over Javorina in the Context of Bilateral Relations of the Interwar Period (1921-1939)] (Ph.D. diss., Charles University Prague, 2009), 119ff. For a text of the agreement (in Polish) between Poland and Czechoslovakia of 6 November 1921, with Appendix, see *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 20, 60-62.

⁸¹ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 176. In paragraph three of the Pact, Czechoslovakia expressed her *désintéressement* regardin East Galicia, promised to dissolve Ukrainian units interned in Czechoslovakia and agreed to stop all irredentist propaganda against Poland. See Political agreement between Poland and Czechoslovakia with Annex, Prague, 6 November 1921, *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 20, 60-62. The pact contained also a *secret* protocol, in which Czechoslovakia promised to support Poland "within the limits of her possibilities" on the issue of East Galicia and not to harm the Polish-Soviet settlement signed at Riga. Poland, in return, promised not to recognize any Habsburg attempts to regain Austria or Hungary. Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 176.

⁸² *Ibid.* See *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 20, 60-62.

⁸³ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 176. See *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 20, 60-62. Cienciala wrote that Czechoslovakia and Poland committed themselves to settling "the fate of Javorina and Orava" within six months, which is incorrect. In fact, both sides committed themselves only to resolving the fate of Javorina, Orava not being mentioned in the Appendix. In Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 176.

Javorina issue and successfully stalled bilateral negotiations.⁸⁴ Czechoslovakia and Poland pondered a third party arbitration over the Javorina issue, however Warsaw worried this could set a precedent for East Galicia.⁸⁵ The Conference of Ambassadors postponed the deadline several times, in order to facilitate the bilateral efforts of Czechoslovakia and Poland, but this had no effect on the deadlock.⁸⁶ The Polish government declined to accede to the Sèvres Treaty of 10 August 1920 regulating the borders in Central Europe without Javorina.⁸⁷ Due to the deadlock over Javorina, the Beneš - Skirmunt Pact remained a dead letter.⁸⁸

Czechoslovakia and Poland decided to break the bilateral deadlock and entrusted the Delimitation Commission with the task of resolving the issue of Javorina. The Delimitation Commission was unable to reach a consensus and on 25 September 1922 adopted the original Polish proposal by five concurring votes against the dissenting of Czechoslovakia.⁸⁹ The Delimitation Commission decided on 25 September 1922 to allot to Poland the southern part of the commune of

⁸⁴ Envoy E. Piltz to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prague, 17 March 1922, No. 599/22/T, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 106, 75-78. Piltz reported that “fatal turnaround” in the Javorina issue came with recognition of competence of the Parliament into the affair. Beneš claimed Javorina became the most important national and political issue in Czechoslovakia. *Ibid.* The Czechoslovak parliament ratified the Spa decision and the Czechoslovak constitution made any border rectification subject to parliamentary ratification. K. Bader, Chargé d’affaires a.i. in Prague, to MSZ, Prague, 17 November 1922, No. 2610/22/T, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 324, 40-42.

⁸⁵ Envoy E. Piltz to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prague, 14 March 1922, No. 596/22/T, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 106, 79-85. Piltz advised Foreign Minister to postpone an idea of arbitration until after the Genoa conference, which could decide the question of Eastern Galicia. *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ The Conference of Ambassadors approved extending the original deadline several times, 21 December 1921, 15 January 1922, 6 May 1922, 6 August 1922 and 29 December 1922. See C.A. 158 (III), 21 décembre 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 229. See also Letter by Maurice Zamoyski, Délégation polonaise à la Conférence de la Paix, to Jules Cambon, Président de la Conférence des Ambassadeurs, Paris, le 17 décembre 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 226-7; St. Schimitzek, *op. cit.*, 49.

⁸⁷ M. Zamoyski to the President of the Conference of Ambassadors, Paris, 9 May 1922, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 326, 5.

⁸⁸ The Polish *Sejm* conditioned the ratification of the Beneš - Skirmunt Pact by a symbolic gesture of Czechoslovakia, cession of Javorina to Poland. St. Grabski, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, emphatically informed Czechoslovak Envoy in Warsaw, Maxa, that he could not guarantee the ratification of the Beneš - Skirmunt Pact without Javorina. See “Politická situace v Polsku - intervence posl. St. Grabského,” Maxa, Envoy, Warsaw, c.j. T155/22, 17 January 1922, AKPR Prague, T11.21. c.III.

⁸⁹ S. Schimitzek, *op. cit.*, 51.

Jurgov and the western part of the commune of Javorina, and to Czechoslovakia the villages of Kacvín and Nedzeca.⁹⁰ The President of the Polish - Czechoslovak frontier Delimitation Commission submitted on 26 September 1922 this proposal to the Conference of Ambassadors: "...Lastly, the communes of Kacwin [Kacvín] and Niedzica [Nedzeca] which have expressed the desire to be attached to Czechoslovakia are allotted to that State."⁹¹ Czechoslovakia and Poland lobbied France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan with a view to assure or prevent the final settlement, a partition of the Javorina district, by the Conference of Ambassadors in accordance with the Commission's proposal of 25 September 1922.⁹² Poland voted for a partition in the Delimitation Commission and hoped to attain the required votes for the final settlement at the Conference of Ambassadors.⁹³

In the spring of 1923 Poland raised the question of Allied recognition of Polish sovereignty over Spiš and Orava and demanded that the Allies recognize Polish sovereignty over Eastern Galicia.⁹⁴ The question of Eastern Galicia and its autonomy was a sensitive issue for Poland.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Dabrowski, Polish Delegation at the Peace Conference, Paris, 13 January 1923, No. 37/23, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 325, 7-8. Conversation with Colonel Uffler confirmed to the Polish delegate at the Peace Conference that E. Beneš knew and agreed with a delimitation proposal adopted by the Delimitation Commission. Uffler stated that President Masaryk and Karel Kramář categorically opposed partition of Javorina. *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Appendix 2 to the Letter from M. Skirmunt, Delegate to the League of Nations to the Secretary-General, 12 September 1923, PCIJ, *Documents (Jaworzina)*, 309.

⁹² Envoy Sapieha to the [British] Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 29 September 1922, No. P. 1165, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 324, 22. Sapieha wrote to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: "Acting under instructions from my Government I have the honour to request Your Lordship kindly to exert your influence with a view to assuring the final settlement of this matter at the next meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors and in accordance with the Commission's proposals." *Ibid.*

⁹³ Aide-Mémoire. Polish Legation, 26 October 1922, No. P.1295, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 324, 25. The Aide-Mémoire of the Polish Legation argued: "The Jaworzyna question having now entered into a decisive stage, the Polish Government desire to repeat their request, that His Majesty's Government may issue instructions to the representative of Great Britain at the Conference of Ambassadors to vote in favour of an immediate settlement of this question in accordance with the decision of the Boundary Commission." *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 219. On 10 March 1923, the Political Committee of the Polish Council of Ministers, instructed Foreign Minister Aleksander Skrzyński to lobby Paris in an attempt to get the Allies to recognize Polish sovereignty over Eastern Galicia and over Spiš and Orava. Polish Premier Władysław Sikorski demanded Allied recognition of Polish sovereignty over Eastern Galicia and over Spiš and Orava at the *Sejm* on 12 March 1923. Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 219.

⁹⁵ The question of Eastern Galicia and its autonomy within Poland was a sensitive issue in Polish - Soviet relations. Some Allies viewed the question of Eastern Galicia as a potential bargaining chip for a more cooperative Soviet government. Cienciala believed British Prime Minister Lloyd George insisted on East Galician autonomy as a carrot for

Czechoslovakia bordered the territory of Eastern Galicia and considered Spiš and Orava parts of its natural frontiers. The demand for recognition of Polish sovereignty over Spiš and Orava seemed to increase the pressure on recalcitrant Czechoslovakia to adopt a more flexible position on the question of Javorina. Poland made Czechoslovakia's cession of Javorina a condition for the *Sejm*'s ratification of the Skirmunt - Beneš Pact and the improvement of bilateral relations.⁹⁶ In March 1923 the Conference of Ambassadors in Paris, acting as the executive organ of the Allied Powers, recognized Poland's eastern borders; however, calls for Allied recognition of Polish sovereignty over Spiš and Orava remained unanswered.⁹⁷ Warsaw believed Prague profited from the open question of its eastern borders and suspected E. Beneš of prolonging *status quo*.⁹⁸

In March of 1923 the dispute between Czechoslovakia and Poland over the small valley of Javorina approached its second anniversary. Poland argued it needed Javorina as its second mountain resort (in addition to Zakopane) and in order to improve the local transportation. Czechoslovakia maintained Javorina was as necessary for military reasons.⁹⁹ By 1923 the conflict had acquired

Soviet Russia and a stick for the Poles. See Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 222.

⁹⁶ The Polish Delimitation Commissioners intimated to Lt.-Col. Uffler, President of the Delimitation Commission, that only a cession of Javorina could eliminate tension caused by Tešín between Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Delimitation Commissioners intimated to Lt.-Col. Uffler, Czechoslovakia could not cede Javorina to Poland. See Lt.-Col. Uffler to Quai d'Orsay, 3 May 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 54-57.

⁹⁷ Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 231; Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 219. Cienciala pointed out that the French government decided not to raise the issue, since any decision was bound to dissatisfy either Poland or Czechoslovakia. See Note by J. Laroche on forthcoming Skrzynski visit to Paris, 13 March 1923, AD/MAE, Pologne, vol. 138, 60; report from French Minister, Prague, 16 March 1923, *ibid.*, 93; Wandycz, *France*, 267; quoted in Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 219.

⁹⁸ K. Bader, chargé d'affaires at the Legation in Prague, to MSZ, Prague, 21 March 1923, No. 824/23/T, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 325, 24-26. Bader reported unease in Prague after the Conference of Ambassadors approved Poland's eastern borders, a diplomatic success of Warsaw. Bader wrote Beneš hoped and tried, with Couget's assistance, to "sink" the decision on Javorina in the question of eastern borders. *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ See Lt.-Col. Uffler à Quai d'Orsay, le 3 Mai 1921, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Pologne, vol. 58, 54-57.

inordinate proportions and impacted on international relations.¹⁰⁰

Javorina became a condition *sine qua non* for Czechoslovakia and Poland to communicate.¹⁰¹

The Polish Government insisted that the Conference of Ambassadors should settle the delimitation of Javorina without further delay on the basis of the opinion of the Commission of Delimitation of 25 September 1922. Warsaw interpreted the hesitation displayed by the Conference of Ambassadors to decide the delimitation as a proof of partiality.¹⁰² The local population urged a settlement as well. The population of Jurgov, Repiská, Čierna Hora and V. Lipnica urged a solution to the issue of Javorina and V. Lipnica split in two parts.¹⁰³ Czechoslovakia maintained that the border in the valley of Javorina was already settled by the previous decisions and the Conference of Ambassadors, reluctant to impose a non-consensual solution upon Czechoslovakia and Poland, referred the dispute to the League of Nations.¹⁰⁴

The Supreme Council of the League of Nations dealt with the Javorina question from 20 to 22 September 1923. Jan Krčmář¹⁰⁵ and Stanisław Schimitzek¹⁰⁶ represented Czechoslovakia and

¹⁰⁰ Skrzyński, Minister of Foreign Affairs informed A. de Panafieu, French Ministre in Warsaw, that Poland could not forget the attitude of Czechoslovakia in 1919 and 1920 and that Czechoslovakia had to pay for its past acts by a sacrifice in the Javorina question. See A. de Panafieu to MFA, Warsaw, tel. no. 87, 3 March 1923, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 59, 158.

¹⁰¹ K. Bader, Chargé d'affaires a.i., to MSZ, Prague, No.662/23/T, 5 March 1923, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 108, 5-9. K. Bader informed E. Beneš that Javorina was for Poland condition *sine qua non* for Beneš's visit and negotiations in Poland. *Ibid.*

¹⁰² H. Ciechanowski, Legation London, Pro Memoria [for British Government], No. P 565, London, 30 April 1923, 46-48.

¹⁰³ Podanie do Prezydenta RP przez delegatów ze Spisza i Orawy, Nr.5649/23, Warsaw, 22 July 1923, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 325, 131-132. The delegations from Spiš and Orava met with Polish President during his visit to Cracow. *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ See F. Couget to MFA, Prague, tel. no. 32, 28 February 1923, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 59, 148-151. The authority of the League of Nations in the Javorina question stemmed from the League of Nations Covenant's Article 12 (point 1) and Article 15 (point 1). The responsibility of the Supreme Council of the League of Nations in the Javorina question stemmed from its responsibility in conflict resolutions mentioned in the Article 12 (point 1) and Articles 2 and 15 (points 1 - 10). Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 111.

¹⁰⁵ Professor Jan Krčmář - representative of Czechoslovakia before the Supreme Council of the League of Nations in the Javorina question.

¹⁰⁶ Stanisław Schimitzek - representative of Poland before the Supreme Council of the League of Nations in the Javorina question.

Poland before the Supreme Council, but given the political importance of the question, so did both Foreign Ministers, Edvard Beneš and Konstanty Skirmunt.¹⁰⁷ Poland presented its ethnographic and historical claims on Spiš in the Legal Memorandum for the League of Nations. The Supreme Council also did not intend to impose its decision upon Czechoslovakia and Poland but decided instead to seek the advice of the Permanent Court of International Justice. The Czechoslovak and Polish representatives, together with the Rapporteur of the question of Javorina, Quinones de Leon,¹⁰⁸ formulated the request submitted to the Permanent Court.¹⁰⁹ The Supreme Council of the League of Nations requested of the Court an advisory opinion on whether the question of the delimitation of the frontier between Poland and Czechoslovakia had been settled by the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors of 28 July 1920.¹¹⁰ On 27 September 1923 the Supreme Council of the League of Nations adopted a resolution, in which it requested an advisory opinion of the Permanent Court of International Justice on the question of Javorina.¹¹¹

The Permanent Court of International Justice discussed the question of Javorina from 13th

¹⁰⁷ At the meeting on 21 September 1923 Beneš and Skirmunt met with the Rapporteur of the question of Javorina, a Spanish delegate, Quinones de Leon, director of the Political Section of the League of Nations's Secretariat, Mantoux and the director of the Legal Section van Hamel. Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 120.

¹⁰⁸ Quinones de León - Spanish diplomat, Delegate of Spain at the League of Nations, Rapporteur for the Javorina Question.

¹⁰⁹ Question of Javorina, Report of Representative of Spain, League of Nations, C.639.1923.VII, Geneva, 26 September 1923, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 325, 155-161; also Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 121. See also *Publications de la Cour Permanente de Justice Internationale*, Series B; Nr. 8, Recueil des avis consultatifs, (Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff's Publishing Company, 1923), 10, Series E, Nr. 1, Rapport Annuel de la Cour Permanente de Justice Internationale, 1er janvier 1922 - 15 juin 1925, 209, series E, Nr. 1, 209. Schimitzek and Krčmář, representing Poland and Czechoslovakia in the question of Javorina, discussed the formulation of the request submitted to the Permanent Court of International Justice on 22, 24 and 25 September 1923. Schimitzek and Krčmář met with Quinones de Leon on 26 September 1923. They all agreed on the formulation of the report submitted to the Council of the League of Nations. *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ The Permanent Court of International Justice, *Question of Jaworzina, Advisory Opinion*, 1923 P.C.I.J. (ser. B) No. 8 (Dec. 6) (Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff's Publishing Company, 1923), 10.

¹¹¹ See "Requête pour avis consultatif," E.Drummond (Société des Nations), 22 October 1923, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 61, 12-25; Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 121. See also *Publications de la Cour Permanente de Justice Internationale*, Series B; Nr. 8, Recueil des avis consultatifs, Leyden 1923, 10, Series E, Nr. 1, Rapport Annuel de la Cour Permanente de Justice Internationale, 1er janvier 1922 - 15 juin 1925, 209, series E, Nr. 1, 209.

to 14th of November 1923 and then handed down its advisory opinion.¹¹² It sent its advisory opinion to the Supreme Council of the League of Nations on 6 December 1923.¹¹³ The Permanent Court of International Justice ruled that the question of the delimitation of the frontier between Czechoslovakia and Poland had been settled by the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors of 28 July 1920 and that this decision was final. But the Court also ruled that the decision of 28 July 1920 had to be applied in its entirety, and that consequently, the frontier in the region of Spiš [in the valley of Javorina] remained subject to the modifications provided for under paragraph 3 of Article II of the same decision.¹¹⁴

The Supreme Council of the League of Nations received the Court's advisory opinion and it became its responsibility to decide on the question of Javorina. Poland wanted the Supreme Council to adopt the recommendation of the Delimitation Commission of 25 September 1922.¹¹⁵ In order to satisfy the strategic interests of Czechoslovakia, Poland was ready to make some concessions such as granting Czechoslovakia overflight rights in the Javorina region.¹¹⁶ In the end, the Supreme Council of the League of Nations declined the opportunity to endorse the Delimitation Commission's recommendation of 25 September 1922.¹¹⁷

Therefore, the Delimitation Commission recommended on 11 February 1924 a new solution

¹¹² Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 122. For description of the deliberations in the Hague see S. Schimitzek, *Drogi i bezdroża minionej epoki. Wspomnienia z lat pracy w MSZ (1920 - 39)* [Roads and Dead Ends of the Past Era. Recollections on the Work at the MFA] (Warsaw: Interpress, 1976).

¹¹³ See "Avis de la Cour permanente de Justice internationale," Ch. Benoist (Ministre aux Pays-Bas), The Hague, tel. no. 122, 6 December 1923, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 61, 32-33.

¹¹⁴ The Permanent Court of International Justice, *Question of Jaworzina, Advisory Opinion, 1923 P.C.I.J. (ser. B) No. 8 (Dec. 6)* (Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff's Publishing Company, 1923), 57.

¹¹⁵ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 125.

¹¹⁶ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 125. Cesarz wrote that on 10 December 1923 Polish Foreign Minister Seyda recommended to the Polish delegate at the League of Nations, *inter alia*, the idea of Poland's granting Czechoslovakia overflight rights in the Javorina region, in order to satisfy its strategic interests. *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ For the Resolution of the Supreme Council (17 December 1923) and the verbatim record of the session see The League of Nations, Geneva, tel. no. 122, 19 December 1923, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 61, 51-65.

to the question of Javorina. Under this proposal, Czechoslovakia would retain all the Javorina valley and Poland would retain the two villages of Kacvín and Nedzeca and the rest of the Jurgov community. Thus, the Delimitation Commission endorsed the *status quo* decided upon by the Conference of Ambassadors on 28 July 1920. At the same time, the Delimitation Commission made it known that the recommendation of 25 September 1922 was the solution based on geographical, economic and communications considerations.¹¹⁸

On 12 March 1924 the Supreme Council of the League of Nations adopted the latest recommendation of the Delimitation Commission, in which the Council endorsed the *status quo* decided upon at Spa on 28 July 1920 by the Conference of Ambassadors. The Supreme Council then mandated the Delimitation Commission to prepare the necessary protocols for delimitation of the Czechoslovak - Polish borders in Spiš. The Conference of Ambassadors adopted these provisions on 26 March 1924.¹¹⁹

The negotiations between Czechoslovakia and Poland in Cracow from 25 April to 6 May 1924 closed the Javorina case.¹²⁰ At Cracow Poland tried to obtain administrative or customs jurisdiction over Javorina, but Czechoslovakia declined it.¹²¹ On 6 May 1924 Czechoslovakia and Poland signed in Cracow the final protocol, which allowed for full implementation of the Spa decision made on 28 July 1920.¹²² The Conference of Ambassadors adopted the Cracow protocol on

¹¹⁸ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 128.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 19.

¹²¹ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 129; Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 111. Previously, Poland objected to the idea of obtaining some touristic and economic rights in Javorina. Maurycy Zamoyski, Polish delegate at the Peace Conference, wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on 3 March 1923, that the Polish government could accept some "illusory touristic and economic rights" in Javorina. Maurycy Zamoyski, Polish Delegation at the Peace Conference, to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paris, 3 March 1923, No.122/23, AAN, Ambasada RP w Londynie, t. 325, 10-11.

¹²² For the Protocol from Cracow negotiations of 1924 see "Protocole des délibérations à Cracovie du 25 avril au 6 mai 1924," Lubochna, tel. no. 86, 24 May 1924, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 61, 169-180. See also Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 129; A. Szklarska - Lohmannowa, *op. cit.*, 118 - 119. The Cracow Protocol

5 November 1924. The Javorina dispute, the last remaining border dispute between Czechoslovakia and Poland, was over.¹²³

The Czechoslovak - Polish dispute over Javorina sank the Beneš - Skirmunt Pact of 6 November 1921, which had aimed to improve bilateral relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland.¹²⁴ Poland saw in the cession of the Javorina valley a symbolic gesture redressing Czechoslovakia's wrongdoing in Tešín Silesia, and the means of rallying political support for the Beneš - Skirmunt Pact in the Polish parliament. Czechoslovakia declined, however, Poland's offer to settle the question of Javorina.¹²⁵

The outcome of the dispute over Javorina was puzzling. Internally, Beneš and Czechoslovak foreign policy got credits for the successful defence of Czechoslovak borders. Beneš improved his reputation, which had been damaged by the loss of the Slovak villages in Orava and in Spiš at Spa in 1920.¹²⁶ Paradoxically, in the dispute over Javorina, Czechoslovakia could have obtained, but declined, the return of some of the villages lost at Spa. Poland was disappointed by Czechoslovakia's intransigence over the Javorina valley and the *Sejm* did not ratify the Beneš - Skirmunt Pact. On the other hand, Poland retained the villages of Kacvín and Nedeca, which it was willing to exchange for the valley of Javorina. Poland maintained the villages of Kacvín and Nedeca had a Polish population,

extended certain accommodations to the borderland population in the economic, communications and tourism areas. *Ibid.*, 119. The Delimitation Commission also formally endorsed the Cracow Protocol after its signing by the two parties.

¹²³ Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów*, 129. The last accord related to the border settlement between Czechoslovakia and Poland was signed on 1 June 1925 in Prague. For the complete documentation on the border settlement between Czechoslovakia and Poland see "La documentation finale de la délimitation des régions de Teschen, d'Orava et de Spisz [Spiš]," Lt.-Col. Uffler, Brno, no. 116 CP/C, 1-2 June 1925, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 62, 53ff.

¹²⁴ Kutrzeba observed: "Thus ended a test of Czech [Czechoslovakia's] goodwill." See Kutrzeba, *Nasza polityka zagraniczna*, 70.

¹²⁵ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 176. For more on Czechoslovakia's support of West Ukrainian movements see A. J. Motyl, *Turn to the Right* (East European monograph series ; no. 65) (Boulder, CO: Columbia University Press, 1980), 52-3.

¹²⁶ The Slovak People's Party (SĽS) criticized Beneš over his conduct at Spa. The SĽS defended Javorina as Slovak territory. Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," note no. 19, 112.

but the local population desired to return to Czechoslovakia, in apparent contradiction to official Polish pronouncements.

The activist foreign policy of the Soviet Union, which desired to break out of its international isolation, threatened to undermine Polish diplomatic efforts to obtain international recognition of the Soviet-Polish borders. The Genoa Conference¹²⁷ and the Rapallo Treaty¹²⁸ signaled a new dawn for Soviet foreign policy activism, and the revival of German - Russian cooperation.¹²⁹ In the 1920s France and Britain initiated a rapprochement with Germany.¹³⁰ Both sides decided to come to terms with each other, to find a new *modus operandi* and a new generation of statesmen facilitated new thinking.¹³¹ German statesmen hoped to restore German economic and political strength and to gain support for the revision of the Polish-German frontier.¹³²

France signed a treaty of alliance with Czechoslovakia on 24 January 1924, three years after

¹²⁷ The Genoa conference was held from 10 April to 19 May 1922.

¹²⁸ The Rapallo Treaty between Germany and Soviet Russia was signed on 10 April 1922. The treaty established full diplomatic relations between its signatories and, among others, confirmed mutual renunciation of previous claims.

¹²⁹ Cienciala suggested that the Genoa Conference “was not a defeat for Poland, but neither was it a victory.” The Allies did not recognize the Polish-Soviet frontier and the Rapallo Treaty raised the specter of a new partition of Poland. Poland blamed Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Beneš for severely undermining Polish efforts to construct a united front of East-European states. Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 197.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 223-4. In December 1922 Germany failed to fulfil the agreed deliveries, and was declared by the Reparation Commission to be in “voluntary default.” On 11 January 1923 French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr in order to enforce Germany’s cooperation. The German government declared a policy of passive resistance. France failed to obtain reparations from Germany and German inflation threatened to destroy the German capacity to pay. These factors motivated both Western and German statesmen to seek a different form of cooperation. The Dawes Plan adopted in August 1924 at the London Conference opened a new era of cooperation.

¹³¹ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 223. In Germany, Gustav Stresemann became German Chancellor in August 1923 and held the post of Foreign Minister until his death in October 1929. Stresemann chose a policy of “fulfillment,” or coming to terms with France and Britain, both in order to restore the German economy and to gain Western support for his objective of revising the Polish-German frontier. In France, the elections of 11 May 1924 led to the victory of Edouard Herriot’s *Cartel des Gauches* over Poincaré’s *Cartel Bleu*. Herriot and his Socialists advocated the scaling-down of reparations and were critical of the Versailles Treaty. In Britain, Ramsay MacDonald’s Labour Party assumed power in 1924. Ramsay MacDonald and Édouard Herriot wanted to bring Germany into the League of Nations. *Ibid.*

¹³² Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 223. The road to Locarno began with France’s failure to squeeze reparations from Germany by occupying the Ruhr. The subsequent German inflation threatened to kill the goose that could lay the golden eggs; so, both Western and German statesmen agreed that a different solution had to be found. *Ibid.*

signing a similar treaty with Poland. The fact that the treaty was without military convention could be interpreted as a sign of Czechoslovakia's inferior military importance to France.¹³³ After signing the treaty with France a trend toward rapprochement appeared also in the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland.¹³⁴ Throughout 1924 signs of improving relations and the easing tensions between the two Central European neighbours continued.¹³⁵ On 12 March 1925 Czechoslovakia proposed to exchange notes stating that all border questions between Poland and Czechoslovakia were regulated. Poland proposed on 13 May 1925 to make this statement after signing and ratification of the border statute.¹³⁶ Edvard Beneš, the central figure of Czechoslovak foreign policy, confirmed the interest of Czechoslovakia to come to terms with its northern neighbour.¹³⁷ This peaked in the spring of 1925, when the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister signed a series of treaties on 23 April 1925 in Warsaw. Czechoslovakia and Poland concluded a treaty of arbitration and conciliation, a liquidation convention on matters arising from border delimitations, a treaty regularizing the treatment of respective minorities, a commercial treaty and an agreement for the

¹³³ Wandycz, *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances*, 10. The Treaty of Alliance and Friendship between Czechoslovakia and France, signed on 24 January 1924, contained no military convention; only secret letters exchanged between Beneš and Poincaré spoke of joint measures to counter aggression against either signatory by a common enemy. *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 226. At the time of the signing of the Geneva Protocol (The Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes) in 1924 Beneš agreed with Skrzynski to work for better relations and to surmount existing difficulties between Czechoslovakia and Poland. Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 226.

¹³⁵ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 226. The transport of the remains of the great Polish writer Henryk Sienkiewicz through Czechoslovakia in the autumn of 1924 saw an outpouring of pro-Polish sentiment during demonstrations in Czechoslovakia. *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Dr. E. Borowski, Notes regarding the Work of the International Delimitation Commission for Marking the Czechoslovak - Polish Border in Sections Related to the Decision of the Conference of Ambassadors on 28 July 1920, 6 March 1939, AAN, MSZ, t. 5560, B-21829, 6-13. The negotiations on the statute started in Prague on 25 April 1927 and the statute was signed in Gdynia 24 September 1931, but it was not ratified by Poland. *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 226. In the autumn of 1924 Edvard Beneš told the Polish Socialist leader Mieczysław Niedziałkowski that "on his word of honor" he wanted an agreement with Poland and that he considered this possible. Beneš assured Niedziałkowski that he no longer wanted a Czechoslovak - Russian frontier. Beneš explained that in case of a Polish-Soviet war, Czechoslovakia would be neutral; but if Germany moved against Poland, this would be a *casus belli* for Czechoslovakia. *Ibid.*

transit of war material to Poland.¹³⁸ The treaty of arbitration and conciliation did not cover any territorial questions. A series of treaties of 23 April 1925 attempted to find a solution to all aspects of Czechoslovak - Polish relations. Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš expressed the opinion that the signing of the treaties liquidated all disputes between Czechoslovakia and Poland and began a new period of friendly relations between the two countries.¹³⁹

Aristide Briand¹⁴⁰ continued with his policy of Franco - British rapprochement with Germany.¹⁴¹ The process of weakening France's commitments to Czechoslovakia and Poland went on due to disharmonious relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia.¹⁴² Some authors suggested France's reconciling the eastern alliances with a policy of rapprochement with Berlin was comparable to the squaring of a circle.¹⁴³ But it seemed, at times, that Czechoslovak - Polish efforts to reconcile their strategic objectives with their territorial disputes too were comparable to the squaring of circle.

France sought in Czechoslovakia and Poland a substitute for Russia, its former ally against

¹³⁸ Wandycz, *France*, 343-44; quoted in Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 244. Wandycz incorrectly dated Skrzynski's visit to Prague, Skrzynski visited Prague in the spring of 1926, not in 1925 as stated by Wandycz.

¹³⁹ Viktor Borodovčák et al., *Poliaci a my* [The Poles and Us] (Bratislava: Osveta, 1964), 135. Edvard Beneš stated at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament on 1 April 1925 that negotiations with Poland "means complete liquidation of all disputes ... and a beginning of a new era of friendly relations between our states." *Zahraniční politika* (Foreign Policy), which was the official publication of the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, stated that the treaties "solved comprehensively all basic questions of our mutual relations [Czechoslovakia and Poland]...." *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁰ Aristide Briand (1862 - 1932) - French politician, Prime Minister of France (eleven terms), the 1926 Nobel Peace Prize recipient.

¹⁴¹ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 242. Herriot's government resigned in April of 1925. A new government under Paul Painlevé, included Aristide Briand who again held the two posts of premier and foreign minister. *Ibid*. The policies associated with Briand's name sought to resolve France's political, economic, and strategic problems through a revival of the *entente cordiale*, a reconciliation with Germany, a defensive military strategy, and the maintenance of a sphere of influence in East Central Europe. Wandycz, *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances*, 156.

¹⁴² Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 243. Cienciala suggested that Briand might have been obliged to take a line more favorable to Poland and Czechoslovakia if the two countries had stood together, but this was not the case. *Ibid*.

¹⁴³ Piotr Wandycz suggested in his study of French eastern alliances that reconciling the eastern alliances with a policy of rapprochement with Berlin was comparable to the squaring of a circle. Wandycz, *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances*, 157.

Germany, the ally which France had lost after World War I.¹⁴⁴ But Czechoslovakia and Poland could not satisfactorily substitute for Russia. France and Britain could not ignore and isolate Russia and Germany forever and over time Russia and Germany returned to the bosom of European affairs. While Prague and Warsaw could not prevent a Franco-British rapprochement with Russia or Germany, the fallout from this rapprochement affected Poland more than Czechoslovakia.¹⁴⁵

Czechoslovak - German borders, unlike the Polish - German borders, escaped revisionist considerations in the mid-1920s. Czechoslovak - German relations were free of tension caused by German border revisionism, which posed a challenge to the territorial sovereignty of Poland. Czechoslovak representatives, deceived by a false sense of security vis-à-vis Germany, played upon the relative peacefulness of Czechoslovak - German relations.¹⁴⁶ In addition, Czechoslovakia would, opportunistically, join those voices which viewed the Polish frontiers as a source of tension in Central Europe.¹⁴⁷

Germany used the rapprochement with the Franco - British couple to direct its criticism of the Versailles borders to Central Europe and concentrated on the Polish - German borders. Wishful thinking that Germany would work for the peaceful change of the borders in Central Europe cast

¹⁴⁴ Piotr S. Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 370. Wandycz wrote that Poland and Czechoslovakia were a natural substitute for the Russian ally, but not fully a satisfactory one. *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies*, 370. Wandycz wrote that France could afford to ignore Austria and Hungary, but could not dismiss Russia. As a consequence, Paris gave up meddling in the Danubian basin, but Warsaw was unable to prevent French approaches to Russia. *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 243. Cienciala wrote that Czechoslovak ministers were fond of drawing a distinction between their country's good relations with Germany and the bad relations that existed between the latter and Poland. Despite Beneš's declarations to Niedzialkowski, the Czechoslovak ministers did not hide their support of German revisionist claims nor their critical attitude towards Poland. *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 244. Wandycz wrote that Beneš told the United States chargé d'affaires, Frederick I. Pearson, that he did not believe in the permanence of the Polish frontiers and that, if severely pressed, Poland would accede to some demands for revision. Beneš told the Czechoslovak parliament that Polish control over the Corridor and Upper Silesia could not last and that he recognized the need for some revision of Poland's western boundary. See Wandycz, *France*, 336-37. *Ibid.*

Polish - German diplomatic tensions in a negative light and seemed to support the views that the Polish Corridor¹⁴⁸ was an “absurdity”¹⁴⁹ and that “the Polish frontiers and their peaceful modification” were a problem for European peace.¹⁵⁰

Franco-British rapprochement with Germany led to the Locarno conference from 5th to 16th of October 1925, where Germany signed with its neighbours a series of treaties.¹⁵¹ The Locarno Treaties guaranteed the security of Germany’s neighbours, but made a distinction between those in the west and in the east.¹⁵² Germany also signed arbitration treaties with Poland and Czechoslovakia, but these treaties excluded territorial questions.¹⁵³ Locarno was another step in the restoration of cooperation between the Great Powers based on a mutual agreement regarding their spheres of influence. Germany was anticipated to join other Powers, with Eastern Europe recognized as Germany’s sphere of influence.¹⁵⁴ Locarno damaged France’s commitments to Czechoslovakia and Poland, whose position at the conference was weakened by Czechoslovakia’s demonstrative emphasis on an independent approach to the project. However, Czechoslovakia did not feel

¹⁴⁸ The Polish Corridor - a land-based access of Poland to the Baltic Sea.

¹⁴⁹ Beneš told Lewis Einstein, the American Minister in Prague, in May of 1925 that the Polish Corridor was an “absurdity” and that Poland would abandon the Corridor in twenty years’ time. Wandycz, *France*, 344; quoted in Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 244.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 244. In June 1925, President Masaryk told the British Minister in Czechoslovakia that “the real problem of European peace lay in the Polish frontiers and in finding a means to bring these frontiers into harmony with the facts without another war.” Masaryk denied that Czechoslovakia had any military agreement with Poland and said that this was absolutely out of the question. He also said that a smaller and more homogenous Poland would be more stable and added that “the Czech people would not stand for military commitments towards the Poles, of whose fondness for hazardous adventure they were profoundly suspicious.” See Prague dispatch No. 209, 12 June 1925, Foreign Office (hereafter FO), 371/10674/256/C8043/12; quoted in Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 244. On the same occasion, Masaryk mentioned that an emissary sent by Stresemann had assured Beneš that Germany had no wish to seek any changes in the German - Czechoslovak frontier. *Ibid.*, Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 244.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 263. Beneš arrived at Locarno on 7 October; Skrzynski followed on the next day. *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 270-271.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 270.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 279.

threatened by Germany in 1925.¹⁵⁵

In May of 1926 Marshall Piłsudski seized power in Poland and inaugurated the *Sanacja* régime.¹⁵⁶ Piłsudski, who retained control of the army as minister of war and as the General Inspector of the Armed Forces, preferred to deploy lesser figures to introduce strong presidential government in Poland.¹⁵⁷ Piłsudski's coup was carried out in the name of restoring "health" to the body politic and introduced the political regime that continued until 1939.¹⁵⁸ The changes in Poland in 1926 diminished the prospects of a rapprochement between Czechoslovakia and Poland. The *Sanacja* regime, also called the "Rule of the Colonels," was ill-disposed towards Czechoslovakia, but until the end of 1932 the Polish government believed in the possibility of improving mutual relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland and the government did not question the *raison d'être* of Czechoslovakia.¹⁵⁹ Józef Piłsudski viewed Czechoslovakia as an artificial state that could be dismantled. This outlook continued during the "Rule of the Colonels," throughout the 1930's until 1938-39, when Czechoslovakia and Poland could have benefitted from closer cooperation against Germany.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 275. Cienciala wrote that Franco - British rapprochement with Germany masked a process of weakening France's commitments to Czechoslovakia and Poland under the verbiage of articles 15 and 16 of the League Covenant. In her opinion Briand and Berthelot believed in the necessity of a French political and economic rapprochement with Germany and they also believed that Great Britain would never undertake any commitments to support Poland, Czechoslovakia, or any other East European state against aggression. *Ibid.* Cienciala believed that Poland and Czechoslovakia might have been able to obtain better guarantees for their security against Germany in Locarno if they had stood together. But Beneš believed that his country was not threatened. Cienciala suggested that it was Beneš who suggested to Briand the solution of replacing the French guarantee of the eastern arbitration treaties by separate mutual-assistance treaties between France and her eastern allies. *Ibid.*, 274-5.

¹⁵⁶ From the Latin word *sanatio* - recovery.

¹⁵⁷ Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 240-241.

¹⁵⁸ Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 241.

¹⁵⁹ H. Batowski, *Stosunki polsko-czeskie i polsko-słowackie, polsko-czechosłowackie i polsko-czesko-słowackie, 1918-1939* [Polish-Czech and Polish-Slovak, Polish-Czechoslovak and Polish-Czech-Slovak Relations], 12; as quoted in *SPCS 18-39*, 2.

¹⁶⁰ In Robert Kvaček, *Uvažování o jednom vztahu* [Thinking Over the One Relationship], *Slezský sborník VIC*, no.1 (1996): 20-28.

On 9 February 1927 the Foreign Ministry asked the diplomatic posts in Czechoslovakia for information regarding Polish minority in Slovakia with regard to planned cultural-awakening action and the problem of the Polish national consciousness. The Consulate in Ostrava noted that in Spiš the Polish ethnographic region¹⁶¹ represented the population of 20-25,000 although, with the exception of Malá Ľubovňa, without Polish consciousness, but not deprived of awareness that it did not speak Slovak. In Orava, the Polish ethnographic region¹⁶² represented the Polish-speaking population of 12-15,000 with Slovak national consciousness. Kysuce (*Czadeckie*), was a Polish region from a linguistic point of view,¹⁶³ with the purely Polish population of 6-7,000. The population of Kysuce (34-40,000) did not have a national consciousness. In case of receiving required funding, the Consulate in Orava, in cooperation with the Consulate in Bratislava, would send an expert to assess the possibility of starting the national-awakening work.¹⁶⁴

Zygmund Lasocki, Envoy in Prague, wrote back to Warsaw on 18 March 1927, in reference to the Consular Department's letter Nr. K.I: 756/pf.180/27 of 9 February 1927 addressed to the Consulate in Bratislava. Lasocki dealt with the Orava and Spiš question twice before his posting to Prague. Lasocki visited President Masaryk in April 1919 who offered wide ranging concessions in Spiš and Orava, but Lasocki's initiative was disregarded by the Foreign Ministry. Lasocki criticized the initiative of the Foreign Ministry as "belated, unworkable, and above all damaging to the relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia." Neither the Legation in Prague, nor Consul

¹⁶¹ Jaworzyna, Zdziar, Szwabys Wyznie i Niznie, Stara Wies, Maciasnowce, Hanuszowce, Frankowa, Jezierska, Hagi, Haligowce, Rychwald, Slowianska Wies, Wyborna, Kryg, Lendak, Jurskie, Krzyzowa Wies, Kolaczkow, Druzbaki Wyznie i Niznie, Lackowa, Forbasy, Lubowla Stara i Nowa, Sadek, Granastow, Pilchow, Mniszek, Gibel, Relow, Hawki, Lechnica i Lesnica. See Ripa, Ostrava, L.99 pf/27, 5 March 1927, Tajne, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 6-7.

¹⁶² Herducka, Nowoc, Benedykow, Wesola, Rabcza, Rabczyca, Mutne, Sihelna, Polhora. See Ripa, Ostrava, L.99 pf/27, 5 March 1927, Tajne, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 6-7.

¹⁶³ Skalite, Czarne, Swierczynowiec. See Ripa, Ostrava, L.99 pf/27, 5 March 1927, Tajne, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 6-7.

¹⁶⁴ Ripa, Ostrava, L.99 pf/27, 5 March 1927, Tajne, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 6-7.

Staniewicz in Bratislava, were aware of any larger Polish communities in Slovakia, with the exception of Stará Ľubovňa. Lasocki found the action understandable only if Poland intended to conduct a strongly anti-Czech policy aiming at the entente with Hungary regarding northern Slovakia. However, since apparently this was not the intention of the Foreign Minister, Lasocki beseeched the Minister to abandon the action.¹⁶⁵

The Minister assured Łasocki that the awakening action among the Polish Highlanders in Slovakia, conducted within the framework of the Polish - Czechoslovak agreements on minorities protection, would not have an irredentist character. Poland loyally respected the existing border, but desisting from revisionist intentions did not absolve Poland of interest to care for the Poles left on the other side of the border. The Minister argued that he did not know about any Slovak community attached to Poland. The Minister admitted though that in the some villages of Polish Spiš and Orava the population remained cool towards Poland, but since they were speaking Polish, they needed to be considered as the unconscious Polish population, and not the Slovaks, the same way the Polish-speaking Upper Silesians were not viewed as the Germans.¹⁶⁶

The Consulate in Bratislava evaluated the numerical and national situation of the Polish communities in Slovakia.¹⁶⁷ According to consular reports the local population of the areas concerned, the eastern and north-western Spiš and the north-eastern Orava, considered itself Slovak (except Hniezdne) and maintained a friendly, neutral or even hostile attitude towards Poland. Their dialects varied from the Goral-Polish-Slovak to the Goral. The population represented the electorate

¹⁶⁵ Posel Łasocki, 18 March 1927, Nr. 23/S/27. Scisle tajne, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 13-14.

¹⁶⁶ "Gorale polscy w Słowacji," Minister of Foreign Affairs to Łasocki, 7 April 1927, K.I.2200/pf.573/27, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 12-14.

¹⁶⁷ Konzul Merdinger, Bratislava, 11 April 1927, L Prez 119/27, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 22-23.

of the Hlinka Slovak People's Party (HSL'S).¹⁶⁸

Komorliewski, Chargé d'affaires a.i. in Prague, argued that the Polish minority in Slovakia did not form so significant concentrations anywhere in northern Slovakia that they could have national, political or strategic importance for Poland. Furthermore, the Polishness of their dialect did not create a necessary basis to starting activities, which among the population left then not only without a feeling of belonging to the Polish nationality (not even to talk about the Polish statehood), but also without a concept of Poland and would require significant financial expenditures, which should be directed to Tešín Silesia.¹⁶⁹

Warsaw organized consultations of Polish diplomats in Czechoslovakia to discuss Polish action among the Polish mountaineers in Slovakia.¹⁷⁰ Change of Polish policy towards Slovakia occurred at the end of the 1920s. Poles started to organize research trips to Slovakia (Spiš) to study how many Polish townships were there.¹⁷¹ The Polish scouts (Harcers) in Czechoslovakia organized tourist trips to Slovakia, to familiarize themselves with the area and the local Polish youth.¹⁷² Trips assessed the status quo of a Polish element in Spiš and the attitude of the population to the Poles and Poland.¹⁷³

Poland criticized the treatment of the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia. Interestingly, Polish criticism addressed only the problems of the Polish minority in Tešín Silesia, not in Slovakia, which

¹⁶⁸ "Agencja konsularna RP w Koszycach," L. prez 76/27, Košice, 6 April 1927, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 27.

¹⁶⁹ "Polish minority in Slovakia," Chargé d'affaires a.i. (Komorliewski) to MSZ, Prague, 27 May 1927, No. 60/S/27, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 28-31.

¹⁷⁰ MSZ to Diplomatic posts in Czechoslovakia (Bratislava, M. Ostrava), K.I.3944/pf.1028/27 July 1927, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 40-41.

¹⁷¹ Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 112-113.

¹⁷² "General Command of the *Harcerstwo* and Spiš/Orava," Consul Ripa, Mor. Ostrava, 2 June 1927, L:203 pf/27, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 33-35.

¹⁷³ "*Harcerstwo Polskie* in Czechoslovakia," Consul dr. Karol Ripa, L.466 pf/27, 12 October 1927, Mor. Ostrava, AAN, MSZ, t. 10398, B-26808, 57-80.

contradicted the claims of the existence of Poles in northern Slovakia. Jan Meysztowicz,¹⁷⁴ who worked at the Polish consulate in Moravská Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, criticized Czechoslovakia for applying economic pressure on its minorities, while preserving the semblance of the rule of law. The conflicting foreign policies of Czechoslovakia and Poland did not allow for the relaxation of the ensuing tensions.¹⁷⁵

Individual antagonistic positions vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia grouped Germany, Poland and Hungary into a community of interests, which worked for the weakening and eventual disintegration of Czechoslovakia. Germany, Poland and Hungary viewed Czechoslovakia as an obstacle or problem and hoped to benefit from its elimination.

The most logical instrument for strengthening Czechoslovakia and Poland would have been an alliance, which was also the aim of French policy. The only *raison d'être* for a Czechoslovak - Polish alliance was the threat of Germany, but as long as Czechoslovakia and Poland did not feel threatened by Germany, their alliance had little strategic value. Poland resented Czechoslovakia's seizure of Tešín Silesia in 1919-1920. Still, though Pilsudski had no faith in Czechoslovakia's survival, Skirmunt and Skrzynski did work for close cooperation with that country. But Masaryk and Beneš were not interested. Czechoslovakia vacillated on the recognition of the Polish-Soviet frontier,

¹⁷⁴ Jan Meysztowicz (1910 - 1997) - Polish diplomat (1932-39). Meysztowicz took a co-op assignment at the Polish consulates in Moravská Ostrava, and Marseille, France, during his studies at the Jagiellon University in Cracow.

¹⁷⁵ Report of Jan Meysztowicz on his assignment to the Polish Consulate at Moravská Ostrava, July 1930, *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 27, 111-112. Meysztowicz summarized that in general, the civic rights of the Magyar (in Slovakia), Ukrainian (in Subcarpathian Russia) and Polish (in the Zaolzie) minorities were respected. He believed, however, that the Czech administration, educated in the Habsburg centralistic traditions, knew how to apply especially economic pressure, without actually breaking the law. The pressure aimed at maintaining minorities in neglect, which was manifested by supremacy of the Czechs in all areas of life. According to Meysztowicz, this situation caused outrage and centrifugal tendencies also among the Slovaks. The effectiveness of these methods was also visible in Tešín Silesia, and mutual distrust and divergence of the foreign policies of Prague and Warsaw did not allow for any alleviation. See the Report of Jan Meysztowicz on his assignment to the Polish Consulate at Moravská Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, Moravská Ostrava, July 1930, *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 27, 111-112.

supported Ukrainian self-determination,¹⁷⁶ questioned Polish claim to Eastern Galicia¹⁷⁷ and was flexible on the issue of the revision of the Polish-German frontier.¹⁷⁸ The Polish government believed that no political *détente* between Prague and Warsaw was possible without an improvement in the position of Poles in the Olza region. Warsaw maintained that serious decisions concerning Tešín Silesia could only be taken in the case of a general conflagration. Until then, it would be necessary to awaken national consciousness and organize the local Polish population.¹⁷⁹

Poland reacted to the increasing cooperation of the Great Powers and the gradual restoration of the “Concert of Europe” in the so-called Stresa front, by pursuing its own independent foreign policy. Warsaw believed that alongside the protecting powers and their client-states, a new form of medium states appeared, which could not be included in either of the two groups. Poland, a state objectively considerable and having its own part to play in Central and Eastern Europe, had to counteract.¹⁸⁰ Poland tried to establish its own sphere of influence in Central and Southeastern Europe - the Third Europe (*Intermarium*).¹⁸¹ Piłsudski believed Poland needed to pursue a more

¹⁷⁶ Czechoslovakia disputed the inclusion of East Galicia in Poland and signed trade agreements with both the Ukrainian People’s Republic of Kiev and the West Ukrainian Republic (East Galicia). The West Ukrainian Republic had a consulate in Prague and the retreating West Ukrainian army crossed over to Czechoslovakia. The status of East Galicia remained formally unresolved until 1923. Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 172-3.

¹⁷⁷ Piotr Łossowski, “Stabilizacja pozycji międzynarodowej Polski (czerwiec 1921 - marzec 1923) [Stabilization of International Position of Poland (June 1921 - March 1923)],” in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [A History of Polish Diplomacy], vol. 4 (1918-1939), ed. Piotr Łossowski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1995), 206. E. Beneš stated at the conference of the Little Entente in 1922 that the Czechoslovak public did reconcile with assigning of Eastern Galicia to Poland. Foreign Minister Narutowicz criticized Czechoslovakia at the League of Nations and successfully lobbied against Beneš’s candidature to the League of Nations. Beneš reacted by withdrawing his formal support to Poland on Eastern Galicia. Warsaw recalled Piltz, its Envoy to Prague, in December 1922. *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 278.

¹⁷⁹ Jozef Beck, *Final Report* (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, Publishers, Inc., 1957), 7.

¹⁸⁰ Jozef Beck, *Final Report*, 36.

¹⁸¹ For more on the Third Europe, see Milica Majeriková, “Politika tretej Európy” [Third Europe Policy], chap. in *Vojna o Spiš. Spiš v politike Poľska v medzivojnovom období v kontexte česko-slovensko-poľských vzťahov* [The War for Spiš. Spiš in Polish Policy of the Interwar Period in the Context of Czech-Slovak-Polish Relations] (Cracow: Spółok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2007), 71-91.

assertive foreign policy and attempt its own rapprochement with Germany and the Soviet Union.¹⁸² Pilsudski believed that Poland would either achieve greatness, or would mean nothing.¹⁸³ When the German delegation left the League of Nations Disarmament Conference and Germany withdrew from the League of Nations in October of 1933, Poland took advantage of Germany's isolation to improve its relations with Germany. Germany's withdrawal from the League left an empty space in definitely bad bilateral relations with Poland and neither Warsaw nor Berlin intended to let them deteriorate even further.¹⁸⁴ The German - Polish rapprochement culminated in the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact between Poland and Germany on 26 January 1934.¹⁸⁵ Poland and Germany praised the Pact and welcomed it as proof of the successful relaxation of mutual tensions.¹⁸⁶ The improvement of relations with Germany timed Poland with a relaxation in relations with the Soviet Union, but the improvement of bilateral relations with Germany and Russia was limited by the impossibility of making Polish policy dependent on any of these, for Poland, dangerous partners.¹⁸⁷

After the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact, Poland adopted a more assertive attitude towards Czechoslovakia. Poland regarded Czechoslovakia as the main impediment to the Third Europe (or *Intermarium*), a Polish sphere of influence, which would attract friendly or neutral states under Polish leadership. Czechoslovakia obstructed the southward expansion of Polish influence,

¹⁸² Ladislav Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938. Politicko-diplomatické vzťahy* [Struggle for Central Europe 1933-1938. Political and Diplomatic Relations] (Bratislava: Veda, 1986), 71. Deák noted that Polish Foreign Minister August Zaleski, who represented the French orientation of Polish foreign policy, resigned from his post in November 1932 and was replaced by Józef Beck. *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 83.

¹⁸⁴ Jozef Beck, *Final Report*, 28.

¹⁸⁵ *Documents on German Foreign Policy* (hereafter referred to as *DGFP*) C-II, 128-30, 144-46, 148-49, 312-314; as quoted in Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 77. Deák pointed out that the meeting of Hitler with Polish Envoy J. Lipski on 15 November 1933 produced a consensus to express the principle of non-violence in mutual relations between Germany and Poland in a more formal way. *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 78. Warsaw received the Pact as a success of Polish foreign policy, with obvious benefits for the country. Berlin viewed the Pact as a successful break out of Germany's diplomatic isolation and a successful penetration of the French system of eastern alliances. *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Jozef Beck, *Final Report*, 51.

for which the attainment of a common Polish - Hungarian border was a necessary condition.¹⁸⁸

Warsaw criticized Prague for its mistreatment of the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia.¹⁸⁹ The Polish government also demonstrated sympathy and support to autonomist movement in Slovakia.¹⁹⁰

Warsaw envisaged Slovak-Polish rapprochement paralleled with intensification of activities to awaken Polish consciousness in northern Slovakia. The Polish action in Slovakia became more coordinated through regular consultations of local and central authorities.¹⁹¹ These issues were designed to increase pressure on the Czechoslovak government and weaken its international position.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 82; Mečislav Borák and Rudolf Žáček, “*Ukradené*” *vesnice. Musí Češi platit za 8 slovenských obcí?* [“Stolen” Villages. Must the Czechs Pay for 8 Slovak Townships?]) (Český Těšín: Muzeum Těšínska, 1993), 16. Deák wrote that Warsaw started seriously to consider the idea of forming a grouping of states under Polish leadership in the spring of 1934. Deák, *op.cit.*, 82. Borák wrote that the new orientation of Polish foreign policy tried to eliminate Czechoslovakia from the political life of Central Europe. Borák, *op.cit.*, 16.

¹⁸⁹ Czechoslovak Envoy in Warsaw, Dr. V. Girsá, reported on the Polish minority statistics regarding Czechoslovakia in “*Rocznik Polityczny i Gospodarczy 1933*.” The Polish statistics claimed 250,000 Poles in Czechoslovakia, whereas the Czechoslovak statistics only 77,000. See “*Polský záujem o Tesínsko a severní Slovensko. Akce “Fondy pro polské zahraniční školy,”*” Dr. V. Girsá, Envoy, Warsaw, c.j. 717/34, 31 January 1934, AKPR Praha, T11.21. c.V.

¹⁹⁰ Positive attitude towards Slovak autonomist movement would not prevent Polonophile activism in northern Slovakia. Polish Consul in Moravská Ostrava, Karol Ripa, analysed in October of 1933 the prospects of “Polish action” in Slovakia. Ripa estimated that at least 48-50,000 Poles lived in Slovakia. The population, however, did not have Polish national consciousness., mainly due to interrupted contacts with the Polish lands and gigantic negligence before the World War I. Ripa believed that Polish action could, simultaneously, create Polish national consciousness and nurture local separatism. The Polish action would need, however, to disguise its Polish character, at least at the beginning, because the local Goral population would view it with suspicions and distrust. See “*Możliwości polskiej akcji na Słowacyźnie,*” dr. Karol Ripa, Mor. Ostrawa, 10 October 1933, AAN Warsaw, MSZ, f.10412, 86-115.

¹⁹¹ At the consultations in December of 1937, Vetulani, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ), stressed the delicate nature of Polish activities in Slovakia. Polish irredentist activities could damage Slovak-Polish relations. Polish aspirations in the Šariš region, would certainly completely compromise Poles in Slovaks’ eyes. See “*Protokół Konferencji w sprawie Spisza, Orawy, Czadeckiego i Słowacji, odbytej u Pana Wojewody Śląskiego w dn.15 grudnia 1937r.,*” Katowice, 17 December 1937, AAN Warsaw, MSZ, f.10412, 2-10. At the consultations in May of 1938 Prof. Semkowicz observed that in the last population census 1,000 persons in Slovakia declared Polish nationality. See “*Protokół obrad w sprawie Orawy, Spisza, Czadeckiego i Słowacji, odbytych u Pana Wojewody Śląskiego w dniu 31 maja 1938r.,*” Katowice, 31 May 1938, AAN Warsaw, MSZ, f.10412, 45-50. For more on Slovak-Polish rapprochement and Polonophile activities see, Milica Majeriková, “*Buditeľská a zbližovacia akcia*” [Awakening and Rapprochement Movement], chap. in *Vojna o Spiš. Spiš v politike Poľska v medzivojnovom období v kontexte česko-slovensko-poľských vzťahov* [The War for Spiš. Spiš in Polish Policy of the Interwar Period in the Context of Czech-Slovak-Polish Relations] (Cracow: Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2007), 59-70.

¹⁹² Deák wrote that Poland revived the Tešín dispute in January of 1934 as an “apple of discord” that would weaken Czechoslovakia. Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 83. The Czechoslovak government argued that Poland’s criticism of the maltreatment of the Polish minority covered up larger political plans, possibly a rapprochement

After the turn of 1934 - 1935, relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland became strained. The theme of anti-Czech propaganda was the ill-treatment of the Polish population in the western part of Cieszyn-Silesia, called the Zaolzie district in Polish.¹⁹³ The treatment of the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia viewed by Poland as a nightmare, weighed heavily on relations between the two countries. The Poles blamed the Czechs of denationalizing the Polish minority. Some Poles admitted as counterproductive (or even as blunder), Polish denial of any Czech authority over Těšín Silesia, regardless of the origin of their sovereignty therein. Poland stirred up Polish minority there, claiming its apparent annexation.¹⁹⁴ At the same time, Warsaw intensified its activities in Slovakia and tried to achieve a Slovak-Polish rapprochement. Wacław Łaciński, Polish Consul in Bratislava, recommended the relevant Polish organizations establish contacts and closer cooperation with various sections of the *Matica slovenská*, which fulfilled, in effect, a role of the Slovak Academy of Science. Łaciński asked Wierzbowa to lobby the *Sekcja Słowacka* (the Slovak section) in Cracow to take care of the above program.¹⁹⁵ Warsaw's assistance helped, in various forms, to build and strengthen Slovak identity and sovereignty. The Club of the Slovak Engineers in Bratislava contacted unofficially Łaciński to obtain programs of Polish technical universities, their study programs, exams, and other organizational information and the materials to help an initiative to open a Slovak

with Germany and Hungary against Czechoslovakia. See Ambassador to MSZ, Paris, 15 November 1935, No. 49/C/3, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 108, 135-138.

¹⁹³ *SPCS 18-39*, 2; Henryk Wereszycki, "Beck and the Cieszyn Question," in *History of Poland*, 2^d ed., eds. Aleksander Gieysztor, Stefan Kieniewicz, Emanuel Rostworowski, Janusz Tazbir and Henryk Wereszycki, (Warszawa: PWN - Polish Scientific Publishers, 1979), 600. For more on the ethnic composition of Těšín Silesia in 1930 see Dan Gawrecki, "Kolik bylo Poláků, Němců, a Čechů na Těšinsku v r. 1930?" [How many Poles, Germans, and Czechs lived in the Těšín region in 1930?], *Slezský Sborník* 1991, 89(1): 39-44.

¹⁹⁴ "The Polish-Czech Relations in 1935-1937," Report of Lt.-Col. B.J.Kwieciński to the Register Office at the Ministry of Defence, 2 February 1940, London, in Sławomir M. Nowinowski, ed., *Stosunki polsko-czechosłowackie 1932-1939 w relacjach dyplomatów II Rzeczypospolitej* (Łódź: Ibidem, 2006), 25.

¹⁹⁵ "Cooperation of Polish organizations with the *Matica slovenská*," Consul Łaciński to the Polish Envoy, Bratislava, 12 May 1935, R.15/C/4, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 61, 13-14.

technical university.¹⁹⁶ The Polish activities in Slovakia included cooperation of the Polish and Slovak youth movements. Consul Łaciński successfully built contacts between the leaderships of the Slovak Catholic Scouts and the Polish *Harcers* organizations. The Slovak Scouts decided to cooperate with the Polish *Harcerstwo* through mutual exchange of Scout camps and attending instructor courses in Poland. The Slovak Scouts decided to participate at the annual gathering (*zlet*) in Spale with its own delegation.¹⁹⁷ The Polish *Harcers* made several trips to Slovakia and reported a positive attitude of the local population towards Poland.¹⁹⁸ The Polish Consulate in Bratislava noted with satisfaction an increase in the Slovak participation at the vacation courses on Polish culture. Slovak participants returned impressed and reiterated their favourable attitude towards Poland, which was later reflected in their press articles. The Consul viewed every Polish stipend as a good investment in the future, participants' sympathies toward Poland and its culture. Łaciński observed the Slovak participation at the courses depended on Polish efforts (stipends), but also on development of the Polish - Czechoslovak relations, when the Czechs paralysed any Slovak pro-Polish inclination by giving it a political meaning bordering on treason.¹⁹⁹ Slovak-Polish cooperation, membership in the

¹⁹⁶ Łaciński to posel, Prague. 5 July 1935, No. 15/C/8. Slovak Polytechnic, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 61, 27. The Club of Slovak Engineers in Bratislava lobbied for opening a Slovak technical university, modelled on the pre-WWI Mining Academy in Banská Štiavnica. *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Wacław Łaciński, 11 May 1935, R.301/C/4, Poufne!. Cooperation of the Slovak Scout(s)ing with Polish *Harcerstwo*, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 98, 5-6. Łaciński reported the Slovak Catholic Scouts would participate at this year's annual *zlet* in Spale, needed to extend deadline for subscription. Łaciński, taking into account the Minister's instruction at the recent consular consultations regarding importance of Slovaks' participation at Spale, recommended to consider positively the request for extension. He also asked the Slovak delegation would receive a special attention during their visit. *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ "Obóz wędrowny na Słowaczynie," Aleksander Klotz, Consul, Moravská Ostrawa, 3 October 1935, R.301/pf/1/C/44, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 98, 23-24. Consul Aleksander Klotz reported that from 16 - 28 September 1935 the *Harcers* visited Hronec, Brezno, Čierny Balog, Vserbie, Podbrezová and Bystré. Trip confirmed overall positive attitude of the local population towards Poland. The population, a majority of the HSLS sympathizers, had also strong Communist sympathies. *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ Wacław Łaciński, Bratislava, 2 December 1935, No. 350-a/K.W./C/27, Slovak Participation at Vacation Courses on Polish Culture, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 93, 51- 54. Łaciński reported the following Slovak participants and their press articles: R. Krušínský, P. Čarnogurský, Dr. A. Mráz; R. Krušínský, "Kursy o kulturze i języku polskim zaczęły się," *Slovák*, 21 VII 1935; R. Krušínský, "Słowacy na kopcu Marszałka Piłsudskiego," *Slovák*, 26 VII 1935; P. Čarnogurský, "U stóp Matki Boskiej Ostrobramskiej w Wilnie," *Slovák*, 25 VII 1935; Dr. A. Mráz, "Troche

Kolo Polskie (Polish Circle) and other related activities could lead to accusations of Polonophile sympathies and difficulties with the official authorities.²⁰⁰ The Slovak organizations, afraid of the possible negative impact of governmental reprisals, became more careful or even reluctant to cooperate with their Polish partners. Good example represented cancelled travel of the *Matica slovenská* delegation by the Polish line.²⁰¹ The Consulate and the Foreign Ministry invested a lot of effort in this project, but the travel was cancelled at the last moment and the Consulate did not know the reasons, but suspected a possible pressure from Prague.²⁰² Strained Czechoslovak - Polish relations negatively affected possibilities of the Slovak - Polish cultural rapprochement and Polish cultural penetration in Slovakia, in some areas they led even to a total exclusion. Slovakia, considered so far by Polish diplomatic representatives as a territory was especially grateful for

uwag o zlozonej rzeczywistosci,” *Národné noviny*; Dr. A. Mráz, “Z teatrow polskich,” *Naše divadlo*, No. 7 z IX 1935. *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ “Slovak Anatomy Dictionary,” Łaciński to Envoy, Prague, 4 August 1935, No. 15/C/11, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 61, 33. According to a report by Łaciński, Dr. Doc. Julius Ledényi, docent at the University in Bratislava, member of the *Kolo Polskie*, experienced difficulties related to his academic cooperation with Polish institutions. Ledényi worked on a Slovak edition of an Anatomy dictionary as he tried to establish Slovak terminology and purge Czech terms, aware of possible negative reaction in predominantly Czech academia. Ledényi was abruptly recalled back during his travel to Poland in July 1935, as his deputy Prof. Frankerberger, Czech, opened his office and found the dictionary and initiated immediate termination of his visit. Ledényi was accused of Polonophile sympathies and of inclination to Polish influence. His case was pending at the University Senate. *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ “Travel of the *Matica slovenská* Delegation to the US,” Consulate in Bratislava, Nr. 15/C/9, 22 July 1935, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 61, 28-31. In November 1935 the *Matica slovenská* proposed a gift of Slovak books to the Slovak Americans accompanied by a small delegation (J.C.Hronský, K.Čulen, Cincík and K.Plicka). They intended to travel by German lines, but the Consulate in Bratislava recommended Polish lines to them and asked the Polish authorities to make a better offer to the Slovaks. The Consulate argued that the delegates could propagate Polish lines among the Slovak Americans. *Ibid.* Łaciński and Zbigniew Jakubski, Vice-Consul, worked hard to persuade the Slovaks to travel by the Gdynia-Ameryka line (S.M. Pilsudski). See “Travel of the Slovak Delegation of the *Matica slovenská* to the US,” Vice-Consul Zbigniew Jakubski (for Łaciński), 15/C/10, 6 August 1935, Ref. to Nr. 15/C/9, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 61; “Travel of the Slovak Delegation of the *Matica slovenská* to the US,” Łaciński, 15/C/12, 2 September 1935, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 61, 56; “Travel of the Slovak Delegation of the *Matica slovenská* to the United States,” Łaciński, 15/C/14, 16 September 1935, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 61, 69-71.

²⁰² “Akcja kulturalna - zmiana nastrojow. Secret,” Łaciński, 15/C/22, 9 November 1935, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 61, 63-68. Łaciński detailed how strained Czechoslovak - Polish relations limited Polish cultural penetration in Slovakia. The *Spolok Sv.Vojtecha*, one of the most important Slovak cultural institutions, broke personal contacts and cancelled publication of a planned book on Poland, prepared in Poland, as Prague warned it to stop annual subvention if the *Spolok* published the book. The Lector of Polish language in Bratislava experienced cool reactions to his proposed activities in Slovakia and a significant decrease in number of students of the Polish language (now barely 12, before more than 30). The above examples demonstrated the difficulties in the Consulate’s cultural activities in Slovakia. *Ibid.*

cultural penetration; this outlook changed by the end of 1935 to a territory especially difficult for Polish cultural penetration.²⁰³

When Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union signed on 16 May 1935 a treaty of alliance Poland saw in this treaty of alliance proof of Czechoslovakia's anti-Polish orientation and a threat to Polish interests in Central Europe.²⁰⁴ Poland, reproaching Czechoslovakia for its conduct in 1919-1920 and its treatment of the Polish minority, could see little sympathy for its neighbour.²⁰⁵

Czechoslovakia and Poland, the two principal allies of France in Central Europe in the interwar period, failed to forge a closer relationship. The relationship between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland was bruised by the 1920 arbitration of the mutual border. The dispute over the Javorina valley, a peculiar legacy of the 1920 arbitration, stimulated rather than stifled growing divergence of opinions on both sides. Originally, though, the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland saw a relaxation after the settlement of the issue of Javorina.²⁰⁶ But overall, Poland accepted the verdict over Javorina as its failure.²⁰⁷ When Germany assumed a more assertive posture in Central Europe in the 1930s, Czechoslovakia and Poland, two elements of the French anti-German barrier in Eastern Europe, followed their own distinctive policies. The attitude of "mutual political reservation" persisted in relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland.²⁰⁸ This course culminated in the fall of

²⁰³ Łaciński, 15/C/22, 9 November 1935, Akcja kulturalna - zmiana nastrojów. Secret, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 61, 63-68. Łaciński, after explaining the difficulties of the Consulate in its cultural activities in Slovakia, expressed optimism, Polish culture remained attractive for the Slovaks and all efforts should be made to maintain all achievements. *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 101-102. E. Beneš's boasting about Czechoslovakia's position in Central Europe, after his return from Moscow in June 1935, was not lost in Poland. *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Jean Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, with a Foreword by Léon Noël (Paris: Plon, 1952), 77.

²⁰⁶ "Relations polono-tchéco-slovaques," A. de Panafieu, Warsaw, tel. no. 330, 22 November 1924, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 61, 216-217.

²⁰⁷ "Question de Javorzyna," MFA, Paris, tel. no. 86, 19 December 1923, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1929, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 61, 96-97.

²⁰⁸ "Extrait de l'exposé de M. Bénès concernant la politique polonaise," Léon Noël to Pierre Laval, Prague, no.391, 10 November 1934, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1918-1940, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 127, 207-9.

1938, when the two neighbours stood face to face, rather than side by side. In the fateful year of 1938 isolated Czecho-Slovakia was weakened by Poland's emphasis on an independent Polish approach to the Munich conference. In the fall of 1939, isolated Poland, facing Germany and the Soviet Union, bordered with Slovakia alienated by the Polish excessive territorial demands in 1938 and instigated by Germany. Thus, in 1938 - 1939, both Czecho-Slovakia and Poland paid the ultimate price for their mutual alienation and hostility.

6.

(UN)DOING INJUSTICES.

...although we do have on our side not only the law but also force and we do not need, in this question, to consider someone's decisions or judgements, now enters into play another moment, and a very important one, a moment of a very delicate political nature. Now, our action in Spiš and Orava deals not with the Czechs, but with the Slovaks; a nation whose friendship is very important. We know that the Slovaks are oversensitive on the point of Spiš and Orava, Father Hlinka, the recently deceased leader of the party that is now in power in Slovakia, to his death could not forget the "injustice" caused by Poland to the Slovak nation by taking the strips of Spiš and Orava. Beside being emotional, circumstances undoubtedly play a role here, in fact that the Hlinka Party has numerous adherents among the Polish Gorals [Highlanders] in Spiš and Orava. Another grab of border land will no doubt provoke a great bitterness among the Slovaks.

However, one has to be prepared for this, and this consideration should not divert us from reclaiming actions. Appropriate arrangements and friendly talks with the Slovaks could subdue to a large extent the acuteness of this embitterment.

Władysław Semkowicz, 8 October 1938

The eventful year of 1938 culminated for Czechoslovakia at the Munich conference of Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany at the end of September of 1938. The Munich conference shook the Czechoslovak state to its foundations and affected the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland. After the *Anschluss* of Austria in March of 1938 by Germany Polish diplomacy sought to link the question of the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia (Tešín Silesia/*Zaolzie*) to the question of the German minority (the Sudeten territory). Warsaw demanded that Czechoslovakia accord the same rights to the Polish minority as to any minority in the state, including the Germans. During critical moments in the fall of 1938, Poland benefitted from mounting pressure of Germany and the Franco-British coupling on the Czechoslovak government. Czechoslovakia sought Polish neutrality, but Warsaw took advantage of Prague's difficulties to renew old territorial demands. Prague had to give in to Polish demands in October and November of 1938, but the outbreak of the German -

Polish war in September of 1939 prevented longer-lasting effects these border rectifications.¹

The inter-war relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, and Czechoslovakia and Poland were difficult² and weighted down by perceived Czecho-Slovak acts of hostility in 1919 - 1920 and the adverse treatment of the Polish minority by Czechoslovakia. Poland blamed Czechoslovakia for mistreatment of the Polish minority, at the same time, the Polish government refused even to recognize the Slovaks as one of its several national minorities. The relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland became even more intricate in the second half of the 1930s owing to the rapprochement between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union and due to more assertive German role in Central Europe.³ Poland received the treaty of alliance between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union of 16 May 1935 as proof of its anti-Polish orientation and saw in it a threat to Polish interests in Central Europe.⁴ After 1935 relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia remained tense. Poland criticized Czechoslovakia for the ill-treatment of the Polish minority in the western

¹ For more see Milica Majeriková, "Recipročná agresivita" [Aggression Reciprocated], chap. in *Vojna o Spiš. Spiš v politike Poľska v medzivojnovom období v kontexte česko-slovensko-poľských vzťahov* [The War for Spiš. Spiš in Polish Policy of the Interwar Period in the Context of Czech-Slovak-Polish Relations] (Cracow: Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2007), 93-106.

² In June of 1925, President Masaryk explained to the British minister in Prague that "the real problem of European peace lay in the Polish frontiers and in finding means to bring these frontiers into harmony with facts without another war." Masaryk denied that Czecho-Slovakia had any military agreement with Poland and claimed that a smaller and more homogenous Poland would be more stable and added that "the Czech people would not stand for military commitments towards the Poles, of whose fondness for hazardous adventure they were profoundly suspicious." See Prague dispatch no. 209, 12 June 1925, FO [Foreign Office], 371/10674/256/C8043/12; quoted in Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 244.

³ Poles insisted they have never committed any act of aggression against Czechoslovakia, while, on the contrary, "the Czechs" committed hostile acts against Poland: they attacked Tešín Silesia in 1919 and blocked the transit of munition destined for Poland in 1920, during the Polish fighting against the Bolsheviks. See Notes of the Szembek - Laval discussion, 11 May 1935, in Jean Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, with a Foreword by Léon Noël (Paris: Plon, 1952), 77. Pierre Laval (1883 - 1945) - French politician, Prime Minister (1935 - 1936).

⁴ Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938* [The Struggle for Central Europe 1933-1938] (Bratislava: Veda, 1986), 101-102. E. Beneš boasted about Czechoslovakia's position in Central Europe, after his return from Moscow in June 1935, which was not lost on Poland. *Ibid.*

part of Tešín Silesia and this mistreatment became the dominant theme of anti-Czech propaganda.⁵

French acquiescence to Germany's unilateral dismantling of the demilitarized zone in the Rhineland on 7 March 1936 made apparent France's declining interest in eastern alliances with Poland and Czechoslovakia.⁶ As France's disengagement foretold an eventual restoration of German hegemony in Central Europe, Poland and Czechoslovakia, the two key allies of France in Central Europe, searched for their own *modus vivendi* with the increasingly assertive Germany.⁷

In the mid-1930s Czechoslovakia and Poland pursued their own projects for an integrated Central Europe, which could withstand the domination of external powers. The *spiritus movens* of the Czechoslovak project was Czechoslovak Prime Minister Milan Hodža⁸ during his brief tenure as Czechoslovak Foreign Minister from December of 1935 to February of 1936. Hodža's vision of an integrated Central Europe mirrored the British policy of rapprochement with Germany, primarily in Central Europe, but his project was short-lived and unsuccessful.⁹

⁵ Henryk Wereszycki, "Beck and the Cieszyn Question," in *History of Poland*, 2^d ed., eds. Aleksander Gieysztor, Stefan Kieniewicz, Emanuel Rostworowski, Janusz Tazbir and Henryk Wereszycki (Warszawa: PWN - Polish Scientific Publishers, 1979), 600.

⁶ France reacted to this event by retreating behind the Maginot Line. France's passivity towards its immediate neighbor sparked doubts about French conduct in far away Central Europe. To some observers, France's passivity confirmed its resignation to an eastern system of alliances. This resignation threatened to restore German hegemony in Central and South Eastern Europe. Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 152-3.

⁷ Deák suggests two main reasons for Czechoslovakia's attempted rapprochement with Germany: the disintegration of the French system of alliances in Central Europe and a crisis of collective security within the League of Nations. Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 178. President Beneš declared in April of 1936 that "if Western Europe neglects what is going on in Central Europe, we need to come to an agreement with our neighbors." *Ibid.* In mid-November of 1936 two German emissaries, A. Haushofer and M. K. Trauttmansdorf, visited Prague and met twice with President Beneš. However, the German side discontinued the talks in March of 1937. See Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 182. For more on the German - Czechoslovak talks see "The Meeting of Beneš with the German Emissaries Haushofer and Trauttmansdorff," Prague, 18 December 1936, AMZV (Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí [Archives of Foreign Ministry], hereafter referred to as AMZV) Prague, Kabinet vecný bez č., Box No. 3.

⁸ Milan Hodža (1878 - 1944) - Slovak politician and diplomat, Czechoslovak Prime Minister (1935 - 1938) and Foreign Minister (1935 - 1936).

⁹ AAN-MSZ (Archiwum Akt Nowych - Ministerstwo spraw zagranicznych [Polish Modern Archives - Archives of the Foreign Ministry], (hereafter AAN-MSZ) Warsaw, Pos. RP Wieden 16, dok.1/. C/tj/3, Wieden 18 December 1935; AMZV Prague, Trezorové spisy II/1 č.9698, Pariz 20 January 1936; *Documents diplomatiques français* (hereafter DDF) II-1, 50-51; quoted in Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 124. Hodža's initiative ended in March of 1936 when the signatories of the Rome Protocols (Italy, Hungary and Austria) amended the original Protocols. The amendments prohibited Austria's rapprochement with the neighboring Danubian states. Hodža also faced pronounced opposition to

Poland's vision of an integrated Central and Southern Europe, the concept of the Third Europe or the *Intermarium*, was designed to integrate under Polish leadership all the states from the Baltic to the Black Seas.¹⁰ Geographically and strategically the Polish concept of the Third Europe collided with Czechoslovakia's reliance on the Little Entente and the increased role of the Soviet Union in Central Europe.¹¹ Hungary played a key role in Poland's concept of the Third Europe because a common Polish - Hungarian border would open direct access to South and Southeastern Europe.¹² Polish - Czechoslovak strategic competition and antagonism predated the mid-1930s.¹³ Similarly, the history of French attempts at mediation of Czechoslovak - Polish relations dated back to the beginning of the modern statehood of Poland and Czecho-Slovakia in 1918.¹⁴ Ultimately, the Czechoslovak and Polish projects for an integrated Central and Southeastern Europe failed and the French reconciliation of Poland and Czechoslovakia was unsuccessful.¹⁵ Czechoslovakia and Poland

his initiative in Czechoslovakia. Edvard Beneš and Kamil Krofta were pessimistic about Hodža's activities and used his first foreign policy missteps to compel his resignation from the post of Foreign Minister. Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 129.

¹⁰ Poland's leadership in a Third Europe was justified by its geostrategical position between Germany and the Soviet Union, as well as by its Great Power ambitions. Poland hoped to conduct an independent policy backed up by a neutral block of smaller Central and Southeastern European states, which were vulnerable to the Great Powers' influence and thus subject to their interests. See Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 201-2.

¹¹ Beck hoped in succeeding to isolate Czechoslovakia from its allies in the Little Entente (Yugoslavia and Romania). Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 203.

Józef Beck (1894 - 1944) - Polish politician born in Galicia, Legionary, Military officer, Military Attaché in Paris (1922-1925), Minister of Foreign Affairs (1932-1939).

¹² Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 202. Slovakia's geographical location in Central Europe determined its critical importance for the Third Europe. Poland, together with Hungary, tried to coordinate their policies toward Czechoslovakia and Slovakia. Since the spring of 1938 Warsaw tried to prevent a compromise between the Czechoslovak government and the Hlinka Slovak Peoples' Party (*Hlinkova Slovenská ľudová strana*, hereafter HSĽS) and encouraged the HSĽS pro-independence orientation. See Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 248; *Dziennik i teki Jana Szembeka* [Diary and Briefcase of Jan Szembek], vol. 4, 50, 54, 56.

¹³ Józef Beck viewed Czechoslovakia as an "unreliable state without internal cohesion," with an indecisive and turbulent policy. Antagonistically oriented Czechoslovakia, which was a dominant state of the Little Entente and a strong French ally, obstructed the *Intermarium* project; therefore it should be dismantled. Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 204.

¹⁴ French - British consultations in the summer of 1936 alluded to the improvement of Czechoslovak - Polish relations. K. Krofta met with J. Beck on 1 July 1936 in Geneva, where Beck admitted that the issue of the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia could be solved separately and on friendly terms. Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 204.

¹⁵ Deák attributed the failure of the Polish concept to an unrealistic assessment of the situation and to overestimation of the role of Poland in the region. Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 205.

believed they could individually deal with the growing influence of Germany in Central Europe.¹⁶

At the end of 1937 Franco - British appeasement of and rapprochement with Germany crossed its Rubicon. Britain conceded its readiness to accept evolutionary change of the *status quo* in Central Europe and a peaceful rectification of the German, Polish and Hungarian borders.¹⁷ Possibility of a “peaceful evolution” of territorial *status quo* in Central Europe stimulated and further revitalized revisionist and irredentist propaganda concerning Tešín Silesia, Orava and Spiš.¹⁸ The Czechoslovak leaders denied that Czechoslovakia could also be affected by eventual international turbulence.¹⁹

France and Britain were two strategic allies of Czechoslovakia and Poland, and their attitudes towards Germany were therefore vitally important to the fate of Central Europe.²⁰ France and Britain

¹⁶ Beck shared his views on the immediate future of Europe with Jan Szembek on 21 December 1936. Beck predicated internal paralysis in France, which would complicate the situation in Central Europe and in Czechoslovakia. In his view, Poland would then face five options, two of them would be unacceptable: passivity or a Czechoslovak - Polish alliance against Germany. The three remaining options were: “1.) to occupy Teschen [Tešín] and allow Hungary to occupy Subcarpathian Russia so as to obtain a common border with the Magyars. As regards Slovakia, Poland would inform Budapest that this was a lost cause, and Poland would make Slovakia a buffer - state under Polish influence and protection. This solution would require several [Polish] divisions dispatched to the Soviet borders. 2.) to take Kaunas; 3.) to occupy Dantzig (Gdansk).” See Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 219-220.

¹⁷ Lord Halifax, a private confidant of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, undertook a “private mission” to Germany in November of 1937. During his visit Halifax intimated to the German government British readiness to accept peaceful rectification of the Polish, Czechoslovak and Austrian borders. Germany would need to effectuate the rectifications peacefully. See Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 212.

¹⁸ The Slovak League delegates from the districts of Kežmarok, Levoča and Spišská Nová Ves demanded at their consultations in Levoča on 24 May 1936 preventive measures against Polish agitation, which “is dangerously spreading in the recent period.” See Peter Zmátlo, *Dejiny Slovenskej ligy na Spiši* [A history of the Slovak League in Spiš] (Krakow: Towarzystwo Słowaków w Polsce, 2007), 88.

¹⁹ “Exposé of the Foreign Minister Krofta,” K. Papée to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 16 November 1937, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 6, 42-48. “Exposé of the Foreign Minister Krofta,” K. Papée to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 16 November 1937, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 6, 42-48. Papée noted a lack of optimism in Krofta’s exposé in the Senate and Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, Krofta denied that Czechoslovakia could also be affected by international turbulence. Krofta tried not to divide countries into ideological blocks, Papée saw in this an attempt to stay away from ideological blocks. *Ibid.*

²⁰ In fact, France had much more at stake in Central Europe than Britain. The French system of alliances in Central Europe was intended to curtail Germany’s power. France had certainly larger ambitions and security interests in Central Europe than Britain. See Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 280.

Germany’s return to the political epicentre of Central European politics showed in the increased intensity of diplomatic visits to Germany: the visit of Hungarian Prime and Foreign Ministers, Darányi and Kánya, in November of 1937, the visit of Beck (Hitler) in January of 1938, the visit of Beck (Göhring) in February of 1938, etc.

The German leadership considered its future plans for Central Europe in November of 1937.

supported negotiated peaceful changes and eventual border rectifications with Czechoslovakia and sought to ensure the interested parties achieved their objectives amicably.²¹ Simultaneously, Britain and France increased political pressure on the Czechoslovak government to modify its policy towards minorities.²² Poland and Hungary actively cooperated in trying to create a common Polish-Hungarian border, which had serious implications for Czechoslovakia's territorial integrity.²³ Czechoslovakia, with its exposed geographic position and isolation in Central Europe, needed internal cohesion and cooperative and conciliatory attitude toward its minorities.²⁴

The *Anschluss* of 12 March 1938, a German annexation of Austria,²⁵ weakened the international position of Czechoslovakia. Germany acquired a common border with Hungary and could thus more easily exercise its pull on Central Europe. Hungary gravitated more and more

²¹ Cienciala argued that western statesmen measured Germany (and Russia) with a yardstick that reflected their own experience, perceived interests, hopes, and beliefs. They wished to restore the old "Concert of Europe," that is, cooperation between the Great Powers based on mutual agreement as to their particular spheres of influence. Germany was expected, sooner or later, to return to the status of a Great Power, and the British, in particular, saw Eastern Europe as Germany's sphere of influence. See Cienciala and Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno*, 279.

²² British and French pressure on Czechoslovakia to make concessions to the Sudeten Germans also encouraged other minorities to make their demands. Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 243.

Polish political groups in Czechoslovakia formed the Union of Poles in Czechoslovakia (*Zváz Poliakov v Československu*) and asked for autonomy. In the meantime, the Polish government notified Prague of its support for Polish minority demands. The German, Polish and Magyar minorities closely cooperated in increasing their pressure on the Czechoslovak government. Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 246. Also AAN-MSZ, 5428, Prague, 1 April 1938; *Dziennik i teki Jana Szembeka* (1935-1945), vol. 4, 43; quoted in Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 246.

²³ Miklós Horthy, during his visit to Poland in February of 1938, discussed the fate of Czechoslovakia and the coordination of Polish-Hungarian activities aimed at its disintegration. Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 246. In late February of 1938, Beck informed Göring that Poland was interested in solving the Czechoslovak question by receiving "some" territory. Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 246.

²⁴ "Exposé of the Prime Minister Hodža," K. Papée to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 18 November 1937, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 6, 60-64. Prime Minister Milan Hodža made a conciliatory statement in the Parliamentary Budget Committee on 17 November 1937, its significant part dealt with German and Polish minorities. K. Papée attributed his conciliatory tone as a reaction to the Polish-German declaration on minorities. Papée's noted, one cannot but smile, that after twenty years of its existence the Prime Minister needed to restate Czechoslovakia's *raison d'être*. *Ibid.*

²⁵ For more on the Anschluss, see Anna M. Cienciala, "The Anschluss," in *Poland and the Western Powers 1938-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 30-53.

towards Germany which complicated any solidarity among the Danubian countries.²⁶ In Prague, the *Anschluss* caused a panic in the public and a strong depression in the government. The fact that Czechoslovakia was now surrounded by the reinforced Reich could not leave bilateral relations without consequences. German pressure and interference into internal Czechoslovak affairs mounted. Hitler started to publicly emphasize the fact that both Austria and the Czech lands formed in the past a part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.²⁷

After the *Anschluss*, Warsaw predicted the upcoming collapse of Czechoslovakia under the combined pressure of Germany, the German, Magyar and Polish minorities, and the activities of the Slovak autonomists. This anticipated disintegration of Czechoslovakia would help in reaching the concept of *Intermarium* and protect Poland and Central Europe, under Polish leadership, from German domination. But in order for this scenario to work, Poland needed to prevent Germany's having an exclusive role in the disintegrated Czechoslovakia. Hence, Hungary and Poland would need to play a part in the disintegration process.²⁸

The so-called "Slovak Question," the position of Slovakia within Czechoslovakia and the Slovak-Czech relationship, played an important part in Polish foreign policy in 1938. Deterioration of Czechoslovak - Polish relations brought Polish activities in Slovakia to halt. Poland started to renew its cooperation with Slovak institutions.²⁹ Polish diplomacy contemplated several solutions

²⁶ Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 239. In April of 1938, the Czechoslovak Envoy in Budapest informed Prague of Hungary's rejection of any sort of cooperation. The Hungarian Foreign Minister admitted to the Czechoslovak Envoy that his country had its hands tied and was completely dependent upon Germany. *Ibid.*

²⁷ K.Papée to MSZ, Prague, No.7/C/2, 13 March 1938, AAN, Ambasada RP w Berlinie, t. 56, 7-12. Papée reported one Czechoslovak official's laconic comment: "If the whole world abandon us, we would have to, after a while, enter, *nolens volens*, into the orbit the Third Reich." *Ibid.*

²⁸ Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 247. The Polish government prepared its plan for the anticipated Czechoslovak crisis during April and May of 1938. It suggested that Czechoslovakia would disintegrate under the combined pressure of several factors. *Ibid.*

²⁹ Polish Books for Slovak Institutions, Łaciński, 15/C/4. January 1938, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 61, 76. Consul Łaciński proposed to restart Polish library activities and to renew the collections of selected libraries in Slovakia (T. Sv. Martin, Spišská Kapitula, Kláštor pod Znievom, Ružomberok, etc.). *Ibid.*

to the “Slovak Question” in the spring of 1938. Eisenlohr, German Envoy in Prague, assured Polish Envoy Kazimierz Papée³⁰ on 15 March 1938 that Germany was not interested in Slovakia.³¹ Warsaw supported Slovak autonomist aspirations, but hoped to reorient them from Prague towards Budapest, and to persuade the Hlinka Slovak Peoples’ Party (hereafter HSL’S) autonomists to seek Slovak autonomy within Hungary. The Polish Consulate in Bratislava, Slovakia, intimated to the HSL’S leaders that Slovakia would maintain its territorial integrity only in union with Hungary, otherwise its southern regions would be lost in any future partition of Czechoslovakia.³² Štefan Osuský, Czechoslovak Envoy in Paris, and himself Slovak, categorically denied any separatist aspirations of the Slovaks.³³

The Czechoslovak Envoy to Warsaw, Juraj Slávik, reported the intensification of Polish interest in Slovak affairs in March of 1938. In Slávik’s view, Poland masked its intentions under the guise of interest in Slovak culture and Polish - Slovak cultural cooperation. Slávik further noted Warsaw’s determination to increase pressure on Czechoslovakia, weakened by the *Anschluss*, and its determination to continue the political mobilization of national minorities and the autonomist HSL’S.³⁴ The Czechoslovak government courted the HSL’S as it stabilized the Czechoslovak governmental majority coalition, particularly vis-à-vis the German parties. Czechoslovak Prime

³⁰ Kazimierz Papée (1889 - 1979) - Polish Commissioner in Gdańsk/Danzig (1932-1936), Polish Minister in Prague (1936-1939), Polish Ambassador in Vatican (1939-1958).

³¹ K. Papée to MSZ, Prague, Tel. No. 52/6/2, 15 March 1938, AAN, Ambasada RP w Berlinie, t. 56, 13.

³² Report of Envoy Juraj Slávik on the anti - Czechoslovak block, Warsaw, 23 September 1938, in Jindřich Dejmek et al., eds., *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky. Československá zahraniční politika v roce 1938* [Documents on the Czecho-Slovak Foreign Policy. The Czecho-Slovak Foreign Policy in 1938] (hereafter *CSZP-38*) vol. 2, No. 681, 370-1. Poland abandoned the idea of Slovak autonomy within Hungary in the second half of September of 1938, after Hitler’s meeting with Chamberlain in Bad Godesberg on 22 - 23 September 1938 and after the HSL’S had accepted President Beneš’s proposals for the improvement of relations between Slovaks and Czechs.

³³ Frankowski, Chargé d’affaires a.i., to MSZ, Paris, No. 1-c/4., 1 April 1938, AAN, Ambasada RP w Berlinie, t. 56, 20-21.

³⁴ “Report of Czechoslovak Envoy Juraj Slávik on the Attitudes of the Polish Government,” Warsaw, 26 March 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 1, Doc. No. 169, 281-283. Slávik commented on the Polish media and governmental activities in the aftermath of the *Anschluss*.

Minister Milan Hodža, himself Slovak, hoped to bring the HSLS representatives into his government.³⁵

After the *Anschluss*, political representatives of the Sudeten Germans demanded the Czechoslovak government decentralize the state. Poland claimed Czechoslovakia maltreated its Polish minority. Polish diplomacy indicated that any concessions by the Czechoslovak government to other minorities, to the exclusion of the Polish minority, would immediately be bound to cause further tension between Warsaw and Prague.³⁶ Poland thus demanded the same treatment for all Czechoslovak minorities. In order to deal with increasing internal and external pressures, Czechoslovak Prime Minister Milan Hodža announced on 28 March 1938 a “new era of minority policy.”³⁷ Hodža’s announcement was met with mixed reactions. In the parliamentary debate on 29 March 1938 the Slovak autonomists pledged their support for the territorial integrity of a decentralized Czechoslovakia on condition the individuality of the Slovak nation was respected.³⁸ On the same occasion, L. Wolf, who represented the Polish minority in the Czechoslovak parliament,

³⁵ “Wstąpienia ludowców do rządu,” Laciński, 1 March 1938, Secret, 11/C/10, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 45, 1-4. Laciński informed about the talks between Hodža and Hlinka. Hodža contacted Hlinka, as a leader of the Slovak nation and proposed a cooperation. Hlinka convened the HSLS parliamentary club and recommended to enter the government. Hodža promised the HSLS one Ministry and one ministerial post w/o portfolio and promised a gradual fulfilment of the Pittsburgh Agreement according to an agreed roadmap. Hlinka’s decision surprised all and alarmed radicals. Opinions were expressed that this move would compromise Slovaks abroad and divide Slovak national movement. Hlinka changed his opinion after the strong arguments that the participation in the government would mean approval of cooperation with Moscow and the communists. Laciński concluded that this turbulence demonstrated how the Populists could rather quickly switch from a radical position to opposite. *Ibid.*

³⁶ See Minister Beck’s answer to the proposals of Minister Bonnet, 24 May 1938, in Waclaw Jędrzejewicz, ed., *Diplomat in Paris, 1936-1939. Papers and Memoirs of Juliusz Łukasiewicz Ambassador of Poland* (New York-London: Columbia University Press, 1970), 90-91.

³⁷ *CSZP-1938*, vol. 1, 288. Czechoslovak Prime Minister Milan Hodža announced on 28 March 1938 his program of the so-called Nationalities Statute (*národnostný štatút*) as a remedy to the centralist concept of Czechoslovakia.

³⁸ *CSZP-1938*, vol. 1, 290. Deputy Jozef Tiso, speaking on behalf of the HSLS, declared that the Hlinka Slovak Peoples’ Party “stood on a platform based on the individuality of the Slovak nation and the integrity of the Czechoslovak state.” Tiso pledged support to Czechoslovakia as a state where Slovak individuality could fulfil its aspirations, but he rejected centralism. Other HSLS deputies spoke in a similar manner. *Ibid.*

demanded autonomy for the Poles within a decentralized Czechoslovakia.³⁹

Czechoslovak diplomats then informed the world of a “new era of minority policy” in Czechoslovakia. Foreign Minister Kamil Krofta informed the Czechoslovak legations in France, Great Britain and Germany that “the government opted for a far-reaching action in our minority affairs.”⁴⁰ The Czechoslovak government decided to introduce a principle of proportional representation of all national minorities in the state administration. Ergo, Czechoslovak envoys Š. Osuský and J. Masaryk, presented a memorandum in this regard in Paris and London.⁴¹

In April of 1938 Envoy Slávik expressed profound scepticism vis-à-vis a possible rapprochement between Czechoslovakia and Poland in the immediate future. Slávik believed that Polish foreign policy would not recognize any step as sufficient enough and that Polish propaganda would continue to use its three main arguments against Czechoslovakia: “1) our Communism and infiltration of communist propaganda to Poland, 2) oppression of the Polish minority, 3) oppression of ‘the Slovaks’ by the Czechs.”⁴² Some Czechoslovak officials identified the territorial concessions in Tešín Silesia as the only remedy to the continued hostility between Poland and Czechoslovakia. Jaroslav Smutný, Chief of Protocol at the Presidential Chancellery in Prague, commented bitterly on Slávik’s Memorandum: “...The problems between us and Poland could be resolved only through

³⁹ *CSZP-1938*, vol. 1, 290.

⁴⁰ Report of Foreign Minister Kamil Krofta to the Czechoslovak Legations in France, Britain and Germany on the governmental program of the Nationalities Statute, Prague, 12 April 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 1, Doc. No. 199, 314-5. Krofta reported: “...7) We adopted measures to eliminate [our] policy of pin-pricks (*politika pichání špendlíkem*) in the gendarmerie and the police, justice, tax collection and administration, at the railways and postal offices, and we established *ad hoc* inspectorates to resolutely get rid of linguistic and national quarrels...” *Ibid*.

⁴¹ Papée to MSZ, Prague, No.52/C/10, 4 May 1938, AAN, Ambasada RP w Berlinie, t. 56, 52-3.

⁴² “Memorandum of Envoy J. Slávik to President E. Beneš,” as to a possible rapprochement between Czechoslovakia and Poland, Warsaw, 20 April 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 1, Doc. No. 216, 341-345. Cf. Slávik’s Memorandum in AMZV Prague, Kabinet 1938, No. 1686.

our cession of Teschen [Tešín] Silesia. It is a mistake to have any illusions about it....”⁴³ This categoric assessment, however dramatic and unacceptable - at the time - to the Czechoslovak government, proved correct in October of 1938.

For the moment, the Polish government diplomatically intimated that Prague’s minority policy continued to pose the main obstacle to a potential rapprochement between Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁴⁴ Simultaneously, the Polish government carried on with its policy of differentiating between Slovaks and Czechs⁴⁵ and used every opportunity to demonstrate its support for Slovak autonomist aspirations. In the summer of 1938 the delegation of Slovak Americans came to Europe (Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary) on the occasion of the 1938 Eucharistic Congress in Budapest and of the 20th anniversary of the Pittsburgh Agreement.⁴⁶ The Slovak Americans used the anniversary of the Pittsburgh Agreement to express their support for Slovak autonomist aspirations. The Slovak delegation interrupted its transit through Poland by making a halt in Warsaw to

⁴³ *Ibid.* Jaroslav Smutný believed Poland wanted to avenge wrongdoing committed by Czechoslovakia at the partition of Tešín Silesia in 1920: “Poland seeks retaliation, because in the heart of every Pole remains revenge and he cannot accept that the Czechs, whom Poles underestimate or even despise, would not pay for any alleged [wrongdoing].... The Poles laugh at our friendly handshake. Unfortunately, I remain alone in this opinion.” For Smutný’s comments see Archiv Národního muzea [Archives of the National Museum] (hereafter referred to as ANM) Prague, f. E. Beneš, Inv. No. 441b, Box No. 47.

⁴⁴ The Czechoslovak Envoy in Paris Štefan Osuský forwarded on 4 June 1938 his report on the Polish Ambassador Lukaszewicz’s conversation with French Foreign Minister Bonnet, in which the Polish government pointed out that all of Czechoslovakia’s difficulties stemmed from its minority policy. See Report of Envoy Osuský on Minister Bonnet - Ambassador Lukaszewicz conversation, Paris, 4 June 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 1, No. 339, 508-9.

⁴⁵ Polish Foreign Minister Beck received Czechoslovak Envoy Juraj Slávik on 11 June 1938. Slávik wrote to Prague: “...Minister Beck explained in great detail that since the Slovaks were closest to the Poles, it was quite natural that they nurtured certain sympathies towards them, and that he [Beck] himself understood the Slovaks well (Slávik attributed this familiarity to Beck’s recent talk with the Slovak deputy Karol Sidor), whereas he [Beck] did not understand the Czechs. The Poles never had any problems with the Slovaks, and in Teschen [Tešín] Silesia [the Poles] had troubles only with the Czechs. The Slovaks were Catholics like the Poles, and so on.” Slávik’s notes of his conversation with Foreign Minister Beck, Warsaw, 11 June 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 1, No. 350, 524-529.

⁴⁶ The Pittsburgh Agreement - agreement signed by the Slovak and Czech representatives in the United States (the Slovak League, Bohemian National Alliance and the Federation of Czech Catholics) and T. G. Masaryk, on 30 May 1918 in Pittsburg. The agreement approved unification of the Slovaks and the Czechs in an independent state. As the agreement provided for Slovakia’s autonomy, it became a source of Slovak-Czech controversy in centralized Czechoslovakia and became political platform of the Hlinka’s Populist Party.

demonstrate their brotherly feelings toward Poland.⁴⁷ Juraj Slávik, Czechoslovak Envoy to Poland, conveyed the displeasure of his government over Warsaw's conduct during the visit: "...the undertone of the welcome ceremony for the delegation of the Slovak Peoples' Party on the occasion of the visit of the Slovak American League and the consistent ostracizing of the official Slovak delegation could not serve the cause of Czechoslovak - Polish rapprochement."⁴⁸

Tešín Silesia prevented any reconciliation between Poland and Czechoslovakia and Kazimierz Papée put the blame on Prague's lack of interest: "the Czechs make the world believe that the only obstacle to establishment of good relations with Poland is Polish animosity towards Czechoslovakia. In reality, the Czechs had never attempted to have serious discussions with us. They [the Czechs] are perfectly aware that the only question of interest to us, in potential discussion, is the return of Teschen [Tešín] Silesia to Poland."⁴⁹ But Tešín Silesia served as a smoke screen for larger strategic plans. Warsaw conditioned genuine Polish sovereignty, assured by the *Intermarium* project, as a prevention to complete subordination of Poland to Germany. However, the *Intermarium* project could only be realized through the disintegration of Czechoslovakia and cooperation of Hungary.⁵⁰ Poland maintained that the situation in Central Europe could only improve after

⁴⁷ Polish Consul in Pittsburgh, K. Ripa, informed Warsaw in January of 1938 that the Slovak American delegation (approximately 300 persons from various organizations such as the Slovak League, the Slovak National Alliance, the Slovak Jednota, the Falcons) planned to participate in the Eucharistic Congress in Budapest and to demonstrate the pro-autonomist orientation of all participating organizations of American Slovaks. Czechoslovak Consul in Pittsburg, Dr. Papánek, tried to deter the organizers from doing this. See Letter No. R.348. b. 77-L of K. Ripa on the transit of the Slovak delegation from the USA through Poland, Pittsburgh, 22 January 1938. Secret., in Zbigniew Landau and Jerzy Tomaszewski, eds., *Monachium. Polskie dokumenty dyplomatyczne* [Munich 1938: Polish Diplomatic Documents] (hereafter *Monachium*) (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985), Doc. No.7, 35-37.

⁴⁸ Notes of Slávik - Kobylański Conversation, Warsaw, 3 June 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 1, No. 335, 493-8.

⁴⁹ See Discussion with Papée, 4 July 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 321.

⁵⁰ Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 248-9. In early July of 1938 Beck conditioned genuine Polish sovereignty upon the disintegration of Czechoslovakia. Beck instructed Polish Envoy in Prague K. Papée that the further existence of Czechoslovakia was "absolutely unrealistic" and that only the disintegration of Czechoslovakia could allow the *Intermarium* project to avoid complete subordination of Poland to Germany. Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 247-8. See also AAN-MSZ Warsaw, 5434, Varsava, 12 April 1938; *Dziennik i teki Jana Szembeka*, vol. 4, 98, 151, 208; quoted in Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 247-8.

readjustment of Czechoslovakia's minority policy and Warsaw could not see any sign of goodwill. Nevertheless, J. Beck assured Paris, Warsaw would not initiate a crisis in the Czechoslovak question.⁵¹

Internal problems aggravated the international position of Czechoslovakia and weakened the internal cohesion of this centralized and multiethnic state. In the spring of 1938 the Czechoslovak government postponed publishing the final results of the local elections. This situation fueled speculation on the outcome of the elections, particularly in Slovakia.⁵² In the summer of 1938 Czechoslovakia had to accept the mission of Lord Runciman,⁵³ who came to mediate between the central government in Prague and the Sudeten Germans.⁵⁴ The Czechoslovak government adopted on 6 September 1938 its so-called Fourth Plan in response to the demands of several minority groups in Czechoslovakia. The representatives of the Polish and Magyar minorities refused the plan on 8 September 1938 at their joint meeting with the representatives of the German minority.⁵⁵

Viewed from Warsaw, the contour of the situation was clear: Prague was routed, always withdrawing one step too late; Britain by the way dominating French politics, wanted to buy peace at the expense of Czechoslovakia. Warsaw indicated to Prague it would not be indifferent to the fate of territories with the Polish population.⁵⁶ Poland played an important role in German strategy

⁵¹ J. Beck to J. Lukasiewicz, Ambassador in Paris, No. P.III.72/tj, Warsaw, 13 June 1938, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 108a, 10-11.

⁵² Szembek noted in his diary: "The government hides the results of the local elections in Slovakia. ...One can guess they are not very favorable to the central government. ...the Slovak youth is more and more nationally conscious and demands 'Slovakia to the Slovaks.' They regard very negatively especially the Czech functionaries [in Slovakia]. One can compare that to the attitude of the Australians and the Canadians who do not support English interference. I observed this argument should be used in London." Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 322.

⁵³ Lord Runciman (1870 - 1949) - British politician, in 1938 sent by British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to Czechoslovakia to seek a settlement of the Sudeten crisis. Runciman's proposal served for the Munich Conference.

⁵⁴ In the summer of 1938 Lord Runciman reassured János Eszterházy, leader of the Magyar minority in Czechoslovakia, that the Magyar minority would also achieve its demands through peaceful negotiations with Prague. Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 243.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁵⁶ Beck, *Final Report*, 135.

towards Czechoslovakia, and Polish - Czechoslovak antagonism served Berlin perfectly in its efforts to isolate Czechoslovakia. France and Britain tried to reconcile Poland and Czechoslovakia and they supported Polish territorial demands in exchange for Poland's scaling down of its cooperation with Germany.⁵⁷ On the other hand, Berlin courted Poland by supporting its territorial demands and muting its hostile propaganda against Poland.⁵⁸ As Poland and Hungary insisted on equal treatment for all minorities in Czechoslovakia, this implied that a plebiscite, which was contemplated for the Sudeten Germans, would also be conducted in Tešín Silesia.⁵⁹

When Hitler threatened Czechoslovakia with open conflict on 12 September 1938, he set in motion the final stage of the Czechoslovak drama. Chamberlain met with Hitler in Berchtesgaden on 15 September 1938 and the British and French governments consulted their joint position for two days, the 18th - 19th of September 1938, in London. President Beneš considered the transfer of some German-populated territories of Czechoslovakia to Germany, and secretly dispatched Minister Jaromír Nečas to France to sound out French and British interest in his idea.⁶⁰ The British - French

⁵⁷ Beck also refused the request of the French government to clarify Poland's attitude vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia. Interview with Osuský at the MFA in Prague 25 May 1938; *DDF-II-10*, 296-7, 356, 649; *Diarusz i teki Jana Szembeka*, vol. 4, 146, 152, 212; quoted in Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 249.

⁵⁸ *Diarusz i teki Jana Szembeka*, vol. 4, 256-7, 259-260, 263, 266; quoted in Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 256. Beck observed that Berlin considered the attitude of Poland towards Czechoslovakia as a decisive factor in case of conflict. Beck further remarked that Goebbels issued very strict press directives in order to ban any hostile propaganda against Poland. See Discussion with Szembek (with Édouard Raczyński present), 6 September 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 332. Édouard Bernard Raczyński (1891-1993) - Ambassador of Poland to Britain (October 1934 - July 1945), Minister of Foreign Affairs (1941-1943), President-in-exile (1979-1986).

⁵⁹ On 16 September 1938 Beck instructed the Polish ambassadors to officially inform their governments of accreditation that Poland would insist on a plebiscite in Tešín Silesia should a plebiscite be conducted in the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia. See also *Monachium*, Docs. 180, 182 and 203.

⁶⁰ See Instructions of President Beneš to Minister Nečas for negotiations in France, Prague, 15 September 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 599, 284. Also in Archives of the Institute of T. G. Masaryk (hereafter AUTGM) Prague, EB-R, Box 248. President Beneš dispatched Minister Jaromír Nečas to France with the following instructions: "1) Never admit the plan originates in Czechoslovakia. 2) It must be kept highly secret, nothing should be published. 3) It must be agreed between France and England, after our specifying the scope of the ceded territory, that the danger lies in their [France and England] conceding everything to Hitler once we admit the principle [of territorial cession]. ...5) It would imply Germany could receive so many km² of territory (I do not know, but it could be approximately 4,000-6,000 km² - make no commitment here) on condition of accepting at least 1,500,000 - 2,000,000 of the German population. ...1) Do not tell that this is a plan of mine. 2) Do not say anything to Osuský and insist on leaving him out of this affair. 3) Destroy

plan stipulated the direct transfer of the Czechoslovak territories populated by the German minority where it had over fifty percent of the population. The demands of the Polish and Magyar minorities should be noted, but the solution regarding them would be deferred and would involve direct negotiations with the Czechoslovak government. The British-French proposal was presented in Prague on 19 September 1938 as an ultimatum.⁶¹ France and Britain made clear that Czechoslovakia's rejection of the plan would relieve them from their obligations and Czechoslovakia would stand alone against Germany and other enemies.⁶² The Czechoslovak government responded on 20 September 1938 with its Aide-Mémoire to the British-French proposal.⁶³

Poland and Hungary abandoned a plebiscite solution and officially requested, Poland on 21 September 1938, and Hungary on 22 September 1938, a direct transfer of territories with the Polish and Magyar minorities in Czechoslovakia, as well as a plebiscite in Slovakia and in the Subcarpathian Rus.⁶⁴ Polish Envoy Papée indicated in Prague that Poland would welcome, as a sign of Czechoslovak goodwill, the cession of Tešín Silesia "pour réparer cette injustice," that is to pay the partition of Tešín Silesia made at Spa in 1920.⁶⁵ The same day, President Beneš wrote a letter to President Moscicki proposing a mutually agreeable rectification of the border between

all these documents." *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 627, 336. The origins of the British-French ultimatum contributed to a political controversy regarding all those involved. Rumors appeared blaming President Beneš for a playing part in this events. Beneš attributed responsibility for his political downfall to the French and British "Munichites," Chamberlain, Daladier and others. Beneš truly hated Georges Bonnet, mainly for his deceitful insinuation that Prague had requested the Anglo-French ultimatum. See Taborsky, *President Edvard Benes: Between East and West, 1938-1948*, 69-70.

⁶² Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 260.

⁶³ *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 651, 343-5.

⁶⁴ Viktor Borodovčák et al., *Poliaci a my* [The Poles and Us] (Bratislava: Osveta, 1964), 142. The Polish request came one day after Hitler had indicated to Polish ambassador Józef Lipski that the time had arrived for Poland to officially present its demands vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia. *Ibid.* See also *DTJSZ*, vol. 4, 273.

⁶⁵ Notes of I. Krno - K. Papée conversation, Prague, 21 September 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 655, 348. In his conversation with I. Krno Ambassador Papée argued that the decision at Spa in 1920 was made when Russian troops stood before Warsaw, hence Poland had to accept anything in order to receive assistance from Western powers. Krno pointed out that Czechoslovakia was in a similar situation now, therefore it was totally inappropriate to renew discussions [about Tešín Silesia]. Ambassador Papée still believed Czechoslovak goodwill - that is to pay the cession of Tešín Silesia - would repair the injustice and definitely improve Czechoslovak - Polish relations. *Ibid.*

Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁶⁶ Beneš thus accepted a territorial rectification in Tešín Silesia in exchange for Polish neutrality in the anticipated conflict between Czechoslovakia and Germany.⁶⁷

The Czechoslovak government accepted the joint French - British plan of territorial cession on 21 September 1938, but Hitler rejected this solution at his second meeting with Chamberlain in Bad Godesberg on the 22nd - 23rd of September 1938. Hitler gambled for more and his tactics failed. Britain and France turned down additional territorial concessions to Germany and relieved the Czechoslovak government from accepting the French-British plan. Czechoslovakia officially declined the joint French-British plan on 25 September 1938 and mobilized.⁶⁸

The internal cohesion of Czechoslovakia was strengthened when the negotiations of President Beneš with the HSLŠ representatives (J.Tiso,⁶⁹ J.Buday, M.Sokol and J.Sivák) led to an agreement on Slovak - Czech relations on 23 September 1938.⁷⁰ Warsaw's support for Slovak autonomy within Hungary changed after Godesberg and after the HSLŠ had accepted President Beneš's proposals for the improvement of relations between Slovaks and Czechs. The Slovak autonomists remained loyal to a Czechoslovakia with Slovak autonomy.⁷¹

While the internal prospects of Czechoslovakia seemed to improve, the external position of Czechoslovakia continued to deteriorate. On 23 September 1938 Envoy Juraj Slávik reported for the first time the existence of a German - Polish - Hungarian block against Czechoslovakia:

⁶⁶ Mečislav Borák and Rudolf Žáček, "*Ukradené*" vesnice. Musí Češi platit za 8 slovenských obcí? ["Stolen" Villages. Should the Czechs Pay for 8 Slovak Villages?] (Český Těšín: Muzeum Těšínska, 1993), 17.

⁶⁷ Edward Taborsky, *President Edvard Benes: Between East and West, 1938-1948* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), 74. President Beneš wrote a personal letter to Polish President Ignacy Moscicki, offering to cede Tešín Silesia to Poland in exchange for Polish neutrality. *Ibid.* For the Polish Note Requesting cession of Tešín Silesia see *Monachium*, Doc. No. 253, 360-1.

⁶⁸ Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 262, 267-268.

⁶⁹ Jozef Tiso (1887 - 1947) - Slovak politician, Czechoslovak Minister of Health (1927-1929), Slovak Prime Minister (1938-1939), (1939), Slovak President (1939-1945).

⁷⁰ *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, 302. For the text of the Agreement see AUTGM Prague, EB-R, Box 261.

⁷¹ Report of Envoy Slávik on anti - Czechoslovak block, Warsaw, 23 September 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 681, 370-1.

A German - Polish - Hungarian front formed against us since Saturday [17 September 1938] when it was clear we were alone. Today the Poles began a game, aiming not only for Teschen Silesia, but for all Slovakia as well. ...In this game, where the Slovaks are also at stake, it is great mistake, that in the new [Czechoslovak] government, there is only one Slovak. Should it not be possible to gain the [Hlinka Slovak] Populists, then it is necessary to gain other Slovaks.⁷²

Envoy Slávik further specified: “Godesberg could decide Hungarian and Polish aspirations. Poland wants Teschen Silesia, she covertly threatens us with *faits accomplis*. The second stage would be solving the problem of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. ...The Slovaks shall decide the fate of Slovakia. Either independence, or with the Czechs, or with the Magyars. Poland would only then apply its aspirations to the Polish ethnographic territories [in] Čadca, Orava, Spiš and Javorina.”⁷³

Hungary and Poland insisted on granting to the Magyar and Polish minorities in Czechoslovakia the same concessions as to the Sudeten Germans. Polish Envoy J. Lipski informed Göhring that Poland claimed for the Polish minority the same rights as Germany claimed for the Sudeten Germans and that Poland expected a total solution to the Czechoslovak crisis, that is the complete disintegration of Czechoslovakia.⁷⁴ Hungarian Regent Miklós Horthy demanded German assistance in solving all minority problems in Czechoslovakia.⁷⁵ Poland and Hungary hoped the

⁷² Report of Envoy Slávik on anti-Czechoslovak block, Warsaw, 23 September 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 681, 370-1.

⁷³ Report of Envoy Slávik on the position of Poland, Warsaw, 23 September 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 687, 374.

⁷⁴ See AAN-MSZ Warsaw, 5431, Telegram No.127, Berlin, 20 September 1938; quoted in Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 263.

⁷⁵ See AAN-MSZ Warsaw, 5432, Telegram No.50, Budapest, 21 September 1938; *Ibid.*, 5430, Telegram No.2970, Budapest, 18 September 1938; quoted in Deák, *Zápas o strednú Európu 1933-1938*, 264. Miklós Horthy asked for Hitler's assistance in resolving the minority problems in Czechoslovakia: “There would not be peace in Central Europe, until the problems of all minorities in Czechoslovakia are solved.” *Ibid.*

conflict between Czechoslovakia and Germany would allow them to attain their objectives.⁷⁶ German influence in Czechoslovakia and Hungary's excessive territorial demands prevented the formulation of a joint Polish - Hungarian *démarche* on eastern Czechoslovakia. Poland acted alone and Warsaw presented new territorial demands regarding the mountainous area of Čadca and the Javorina area in Slovakia.⁷⁷ Czechoslovakia proposed a gradual territorial transfer under Allied supervision, while Poland urged the immediate cession of Tešín Silesia on 27 September 1938, but this Czechoslovak plan was viewed as mere foot-dragging.⁷⁸

All nations are, in the conduct of foreign policy, guided by conceptions of the national interest.⁷⁹ A *sauf qui peut* atmosphere emerged at the end of September 1938 and British and French national interests collided with those of Czechoslovakia. In this climate of confusion and insecurity the Slovak populist deputies Karol Sidor and Jozef Tiso presented on 29 September 1938 "The Declaration of a Union Between Slovakia and Poland" at the Polish legation in Prague.⁸⁰ In case of disintegration of Czechoslovakia Slovak autonomist leaders looked to Poland for guarantees of

⁷⁶ Beck informed the German government about Poland's support of the German minority demands against Czechoslovakia on 26 September 1938. The Polish government rejected Czechoslovak offers of conciliation and presented its own demands to Czechoslovakia on 27 September 1938. See *Dziennik i teki Jana Szembeka*, vol. 4, 277, 283; E. Beneš, *Mnichovské dny* (London : Ústav Dr. Edvarda Beneše, 1955), 303-4, 307-8; quoted in Deák, *Zápas o střední Evropu 1933-1938*, 270.

⁷⁷ Richard A. Woytak, *On the border of war and peace: Polish intelligence and diplomacy in 1937 - 1939 and the origins of the Ultra secret* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 57. The Polish officials insisted on the strategic importance of the border adjustments with Slovakia to Poland. When the Slovaks asked "against whom," the Poles gave no answer. The Slovak autonomous government informed the German government of Polish pressure and asked for support regarding the demarcation of the frontier. *DGFP*, Series D, Vol. V, Nos. 93 and 94; quoted in Woytak, *On the border of war and peace*, 57.

⁷⁸ Borák, "Ukradené" vesnice, 17.

⁷⁹ Taborsky, *President Edvard Benes: Between East and West, 1938-1948*, 62.

⁸⁰ The date of submission of the Declaration is unclear. Mateusz Gniazdowski and Dušan Segeš suggest 29 September 1938 as a correct date. See Mateusz Gniazdowski, "Obóz piłsudczykowski-sanacyjny wobec słowackiego ruchu autonomistycznego" [The Piłsudski-Sanacja Camp and the Slovak Autonomist Movement], in *Stosunki polsko-słowackie w I połowie XX wieku* [Polish-Slovak Relations in the 1st Half of the 20th Century], ed. Joanna Głowińska (Wrocław: IPN Wrocław, 2006), 40; Dušan Segeš, "Relacje między rządem polskim na uchodźstwie a politykami słowackimi podczas II wojny światowej" [The Relations Between the Polish Government-in-exile and the Slovak Politicians During World War II], in *ibid.*, 69.

Slovakia's integrity and security and opted for a union between Slovakia and Poland.⁸¹

Ultimately, the Western Powers decided to "save" the peace and on 29 September 1938 Germany, Britain, France and Italy signed the Munich Agreement. The "Munich Diktat" solved the Sudeten question; it sanctioned German influence in Czechoslovakia; curtailed Czechoslovak independence, and anticipated the solution of the Polish and Magyar minorities' demands in the future. In the words of Czechoslovak Prime Minister Gen. Syrový, by the Munich Diktat the Great Powers gave Czechoslovakia the choice between suicide and homicide.⁸² Poland maintained that the appeasement of Central Europe could take place only with its active participation. Poland's action was independent and based on immutable historic and ethnographic rights and Munich did not change its attitude to the restoration of Cieszyn Silesia.⁸³ Poland did not empower anyone to defend its interests at the Munich conference and did not send its representatives to Munich. For this reason the problem of Cieszyn Silesia was not affected by the conference.⁸⁴

The Tešín Silesia (Zaolzie) question was referred at Munich to a future decision, but Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck feared that, either promises would not be kept, or Germany would make their fulfilment dependent on territorial concessions by Poland, therefore, he resolutely demanded the immediate solution.⁸⁵ On 30 September 1938, before midnight, Poland issued a 24-hour ultimatum to Czechoslovakia demanding the immediate evacuation of large parts of Tešín Silesia

⁸¹ For more on the Declaration see Paľo Čarnogurský, "Deklarácia o únii Slovenska s Poľskom z 28 septembra 1938" [The Declaration of a Union Between Slovakia and Poland of 28 September 1938], *Historický časopis* XVI, No. 3 (1968): 407-423.

⁸² Igor Lukes, *Czechoslovakia between Stalin and Hitler: The Diplomacy of Edvard Benes in the 1930s* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 255-258.

⁸³ Polish Telegraphic Agency, 29 September 1938, AAN, Ambasada RP w Waszyngtonie, t. 212, 39-41.

⁸⁴ Polish Telegraphic Agency, 30 September 1938, AAN, Ambasada RP w Waszyngtonie, t. 212, 42-44.

⁸⁵ Wereszycki, "Beck and the Cieszyn Question," 600-1.

and its complete evacuation within 10 days.⁸⁶ The British Ambassador in Berlin warned of fatal consequences of Poland's military action against Czechoslovakia in this delicate international situation.⁸⁷ The British and French Ambassadors warned Warsaw its action against Czechoslovakia would damage its prestige.⁸⁸ The Czechoslovak government decided to avoid a direct military confrontation with Poland and on 1 October 1938 accepted the terms of the Polish ultimatum.⁸⁹ In the first days of October of 1938 Czechoslovakia transferred to Poland 863 km² of Tešín Silesian territory up to the frontier set by the 5 November 1918 agreement.⁹⁰ The occupation of Zaolzie Silesia was considered a great triumph for Beck and this view was shared by the entire country, even by the opposition Socialists.⁹¹ But the forcible border change, accomplished by Poland after the

⁸⁶ See Note of K. Papée to the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Krofta, Prague, 30 September 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 782, 457; AMZV Prague, f. Londýnský archiv-tajný, kart. 134; *Monachium*, Doc. No. 449. The Note of K. Papée to the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Krofta explained the position of the Polish government: "... il [le Gouvernement polonais] se voit obliger de la façon la plus catégorique de demander...: 1) L'évacuation immédiate par les troupes et la police tchécoslovaque [tchéco-slovaque] du territoire défini par la note sus-mentionnée, et délimité dans la carte y annexée.... 2) L'évacuation dans le cours de 24 heures, à compter de midi 1 octobre 1938, du territoire indiqué.... In *ibid.* See also Krno's Report on Papée's Intervention see *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 765, 443.

⁸⁷ Józef Lipski to MSZ, Berlin, 1 October 1938, No. N/1/194/38, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 108a, 35-39.

⁸⁸ Records from meetings of Director of Minister's Cabinet, W. Łubieński with British and French ambassadors on 1 October 1938, AAN, Ambasada RP w Paryżu, t. 108a, 41-43. Howard Kennard, British Ambassador warned Poland could become warmonger number one in Britain. Director of Minister's Cabinet, W. Łubieński explained that Poland believed justice should exist for all, not only for the Great Powers. Ambassador Noël justified the Four Power solution in Munich as a fire preventive measure. Łubieński made ironic comment: "There was no fire, nor inflammable material there, only four powers afraid of war." *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Borák, "*Ukradené*" *vesnice*, 17. Foreign Minister Krofta wrote to Kazimierz Papée regarding the Polish Demands on 30 September 1938: "...Le Gouvernement tchécoslovaque [tchéco-slovaque] désirerait souligner par toute la façon [tous les moyens] de procéder qu'il s'agit ici d'un acte de bonne volonté, venu de sa propre initiative et de sa libre décision. ...Le Gouvernement tchécoslovaque [tchéco-slovaque] donne au Gouvernement polonais l'assurance solennelle que la rectification des frontières et la remise consécutive du territoire ... seront réalisées dans toutes les circonstances quelque tournure que prenne la situation internationale." See Note of Foreign Minister Krofta to K. Papée with a Reply to the Polish Demands, Prague, 30 September 1938, *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 779, 456; AUTGM Prague, EB-R, Bíla kniha-Polsko, box 261; *Monachium*, Doc. No. 439.

⁹⁰ Ewa Orlof and Andrzej Pasternak, eds. *Stosunki polsko-czesko-słowackie w latach 1918-1939* [Polish-Czech-Slovak Relations in 1918-1939] (hereafter as *SPCS 18-39*) (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 1994), 2; Wereszycki, "Beck and the Cieszyn Question," 601. For the Instructions of Foreign Minister Krofta regarding the technicalities of the Tešín Silesia cession see *CSZP-1938*, vol. 2, No. 756, 433-4.

⁹¹ Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Marian Chodacki, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 353. M. Chodacki, a member of the PPS (the Polish Socialist Party), considered the occupation of the Zaolzie Silesia region as: "...a colossal triumph for Beck, which is admitted by the entire country, not only by the National Democrats, but also by the PPS, when one talks to them *tête à tête*." *Ibid.* Marian Chodacki (1898 - 1975) - Polish Commissioner-General in Gdańsk (Danzig).

Munich Diktat to Czechoslovakia, tarnished the international reputation of Poland and placed it among the aggressors. Poles in opposition to the *régime* shared the indignation of the international community.⁹²

The successful changes of the Polish - Czechoslovak border in the aftermath of the Munich Agreement could not conceal the relative failure of Polish diplomacy. Poland was excluded from the Great Powers talks in Munich, Czechoslovakia survived its own dismemberment - the complex solution coveted by Poland - and the achievement of the common Polish - Hungarian border at the expense of Czechoslovakia was still far away. In addition, after the Munich Diktat Czechoslovakia immediately re-oriented its foreign and internal policies in accordance with Germany, President Beneš tendered his resignation and left Czecho-Slovakia.⁹³

The Slovak autonomists, with the exception of a brief flirtation on 29 September 1938, refused the “complex solution” of the Czechoslovak problem consisting of Czechoslovakia’s break-up. The Žilina Declaration on Slovak autonomy of 6 October 1938 disappointed both Polish and German expectations of the rapid disintegration of Czecho-Slovakia.⁹⁴ Poland supported the break-up of Czecho-Slovakia as a condition *sine qua non* of its *Intermarium* project. Independent Slovakia was viewed as an ally or potential client-state as Poland hoped to limit German expansion into

⁹² Wereszycki, “Beck and the Cieszyn Question,” 601.

⁹³ President Beneš announced his resignation on 5 October 1938: “I believe I am acting rightly in leaving so that our State and nation can develop quietly and undisturbed in the new atmosphere and adapt itself to the new conditions.” Theodore Prochazka, Sr., *The Second Republic: The Disintegration of Post-Munich Czechoslovakia (October 1938 - March 1939)* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1981), 13; also *Memoirs of Dr. Eduard Benes*, 29. Beneš did not regret his behaviour during the Munich crisis and undoing the Munich Diktat became his political *raison d’être* in the coming years: “I consider that my behaviour over Munich was the greatest achievement of my life,” Beneš told Compton Mackenzie. “I am proud of Munich, and I do not deny that the Great Powers are still indebted to us.” Edward Taborsky, *President Edvard Benes: Between East and West, 1938-1948*, 71.

⁹⁴ W. Goetel stated to Semkowicz that in his view all Polonophile sympathies of the Hlinka Slovak People’s Party were only to play Poles against Czechs for Slovak autonomy. Józef Zieliński, “Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945,” in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 116.

Central Europe.⁹⁵ Warsaw started to combine its political pressure on Bratislava with its territorial claims to the northern parts of Slovakia.⁹⁶ Poland warned that it would raise its claims and support Hungarian claims should Slovakia decline to proclaim its independence. Warsaw intimated its intention to raise smaller territorial claims to an independent Slovakia than to Slovakia within Czecho-Slovakia.⁹⁷ Polish experts prepared two versions of Polish territorial demands communicated to Slovakia, a minimal version directed to an independent Slovakia, and a maximal version submitted to Czecho-Slovakia.⁹⁸

The memorandum to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Prof. Władysław Semkowicz of 8 October 1938 elaborated Polish territorial claims against Slovakia. Semkowicz examined individual Polish claims in the Čadca, Orava and Spiš regions and recommended for each sector a maximal and minimal program. The minimal program should set limits, going beyond which would appear to be detrimental to Polish rights and vital interests. Semkowicz warned that the Polish action in Spiš and Orava against the Slovaks was “a moment of a very delicate political nature” and that this “repeated grab of another border land will provoke no doubt great bitterness among the Slovaks.”⁹⁹ The

⁹⁵ The Polish Socialist Chodacki suggested using the following argument: “...it would be necessary to explain to the West that the prolongation of Czecho-Slovakia through Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus significantly increased the influence and facilitated German expansion in this part of Europe.” See Szembek’s Notes of a Meeting with Chodacki, 12 October 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 353.

⁹⁶ In support of Polish claims to northern Slovakia the Central Committee for Spiš, Orava and Kysuce (*Główny Komitet dla Spisza, Orawy i Czadeckiego*) was formed in mid-October 1938 in Cracow. The government-sponsored demonstration with Polish claims to Orava and Spiš occurred on 2 October. See Zieliński, “Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945,” 116.

⁹⁷ Ladislav Deák, “Poľské územné nároky voči Československu v roku 1938” [The Polish Territorial Claims Against Czecho-Slovakia in 1938], *Historický časopis* XXXIX, no.1 (1991): 13; Milica Majeriková, “Poľský záujem o Slovensko od Mníchova po vypuknutie druhej svetovej vojny” [Polish Interest in Slovakia from Munich to the Outbreak of WWII] *Historické rozhľady* III (2006), 171; Borák, “*Ukradené*” *vesnice*, 19.

Various lobbyist organizations appeared around this time in Poland, such as The Committee of Assistance to Spiš, Orava and Kysuce and the Committee of United Poles in Orava. The official propaganda justified additional territorial claims against Slovakia as remedying post-war injustices committed by the border delimitation between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia. Borák, “*Ukradené*” *vesnice*, 20.

⁹⁸ Majeriková, “Poľský záujem o Slovensko,” 171.

⁹⁹ Memorandum of Władysław Semkowicz to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 8 October 1938, *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 37, 129.

Memorandum warned: "...Now, although we do have on our side not only the law, but also force, and we do not need, in this question, to consider anyone else's decisions or judgements. There now occurs another moment, a very important one, a moment of a very delicate political nature. Now, our action in Spiš and Orava deals not with the Czechs, but with the Slovaks; a nation whose friendship is very important."¹⁰⁰ Semkowicz emphasized that Andrej Hlinka, who was considered a friend of Poland, until his death, could not forget the "injustice" done by the Poles to the Slovaks by taking strips of Spiš and Orava.¹⁰¹ Semkowicz admitted the local inhabitants considered themselves the Slovaks, but downplayed importance of national consciousness of the local population: "...True enough, only a small percentage of this population is nationally conscious and [they] largely considers themselves to be the Slovaks in a geographical sense - and this could be the most important counter-argument of the opposite side - but a question of national consciousness is a relative matter, depending also on cultural degrees and other external factors."¹⁰² Semkowicz believed that Poland could subdue Slovak embitterment: "One has to be prepared for this [great bitterness among the Slovaks], however this consideration should not drive us from reclaiming actions, appropriate arrangements and friendly talks with the Slovaks could subdue to a large extent the acuteness of this embitterment."¹⁰³

Warsaw expected that, after the question of Tešín Silesia, the solution of the Slovak question would follow and its solution would help to effectuate the complex solution of the Czecho-Slovak

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* Semkowicz wrote: "...We know that the Slovaks are oversensitive on the point of Spiš and Orava, that the recently deceased leader of the party that is now in power in Slovakia, Father Hlinka, until his death, could not forget the "injustice" caused by Poland to the Slovak nation by taking the strips of Spiš and Orava. Beside being an emotional moment, here undoubtedly circumstances play a role, that in fact among the Polish Gorals [Highlanders] in Spiš and Orava, the Hlinka Party has numerous adherents." *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

problem.¹⁰⁴ In fact, Slovak decision for autonomy and not independence, on 6 October 1938, angered the Poles, therefore they presented new territorial claims against Slovakia. These new claims represented a turning point in Slovaks' attitude to Poland.¹⁰⁵ The Polish government presented its territorial demands to the Slovak government in an effort to separate Bratislava from Prague, but Bratislava could not hide its disappointment.¹⁰⁶ Warsaw instructed Papée in Prague to decide for himself with whom he would negotiate. If Papée negotiated with Bratislava, Poland would not present great demands. On the contrary, if Papée negotiated with Prague, Poland would demand the maximum.¹⁰⁷ Hungary also presented its territorial demands to the Czecho-Slovak government. Poland considered the Hungarian demands unfortunate, they also included the Slovak capital of Bratislava. These demands discredited Hungary and caused Poland to distance itself from Hungary.¹⁰⁸

The Slovak government sent its emissary, Karol Sidor, a well-known Polonophile, to Warsaw, in the hope of persuading the Polish government to postpone its territorial demands. Sidor

¹⁰⁴ During their conversations on 7 October 1938, French Ambassador Léon Noël asked Jan Szembek about the question of Spiš and Orava and other Polish territorial demands on Czecho-Slovakia. Szembek informed Noël that "there are some Polish islands in the regions of Spiš and Orava, and that the attitude [of Poland] would depend upon the solution of the Slovak problem." See Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Léon Noël, 7 October 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 348.

¹⁰⁵ Józef Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945*, Note No. 27, 115.

¹⁰⁶ Borák, "Ukradené" vesnice, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Beck, 11 October 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 351-2. Beck discussed the instructions for Envoy Papée in a meeting on 11 October 1938: "...Papée should propose the following: it is in the interest of our two countries that the question is rapidly solved, however, if the Czechs do not want that, we could agree with a plebiscite.... It is important for our military authorities that we acquire Jaworzyna [Javorina] and the road connecting Niedzice [Nedzeca] and Szczawnica [Štiavnica], as well as the Sianki railroad. ...Papée should decide for himself with whom he would negotiate, taking into account that the Slovak sector is delicate. If he negotiates with the Slovak government, we would not formulate great demands. On the contrary, if he negotiates with the Czech government [sic!], we would demand maximum. Treat the Slovaks with great care, in order not to frustrate them." Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Beck, 11 October 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 351-2.

¹⁰⁸ Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Chodacki, 12 October 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 353. According to Chodacki: "...the Hungarians formulated their demands, in this case, very unfortunately. In demanding the cession of Bratislava, they definitively compromised themselves." *Ibid.*

pointed to the favorable opinion about Poland in Slovakia: "...the pro-Polish orientation is shared by all the Slovak people."¹⁰⁹ But this pro-Polish enthusiasm could be, according to Sidor, clouded by the question of the Polish [territorial] demands concerning Spiš and Orava.¹¹⁰ The Polish hosts tried to minimize the Polish territorial demands and pointed to their differentiation between Bratislava and Prague: "Poland would not raise any territorial claims against Slovakia, but things could be different, should Poland need to deal with Czecho-Slovakia."¹¹¹ The Polish side indicated that the Polish demands, having been presented to Bratislava and not to Prague, were minimum. Sidor tried to explain the prevailing public mood in Slovakia after the Polish demands. In his opinion the Slovaks trusted the Poles, but the Poles, on the other hand wanted to "extract [from the Slovaks] a piece of its body."¹¹² The Polish hosts were unsuccessful in convincing Sidor of the insignificance and advantageous nature of the Polish rectifications. The Polish side expressed its displeasure over the hostile tone of the Slovak press regarding Polish demands.¹¹³

Sidor returned to Slovakia with the message that the Poles wanted only minor border

¹⁰⁹ Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Sidor, 19 October 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 359-60.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* Sidor discussed the actual situation in Slovakia during a lunch hosted by Szembek and attended by Mirosław Arciszewski, Minister in Bucharest, and Tadeusz Kobylański, Director of the Eastern Department at the Foreign Ministry. Szembek wrote that regarding Orava and Spiš: "Here Sidor took a whining tone." *Ibid.*

Mirosław Arciszewski - Polish diplomat, Envoy in Bucharest (1932 - 1938), Counselor at the Foreign Ministry. Tadeusz Kobylański - Director of the Eastern Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* Jan Szembek explained to Karol Sidor: "...if we deal with an independent Slovakia, this question would not pose a problem, because we would not raise any territorial claims against an independent Slovakia, and one cannot consider as such our demands for border rectification, insignificant and necessary for the development of normal relations between Poland and Slovakia. Things would obviously look differently should we need to raise this problem with the Czechoslovak [Czecho-Slovak] state." *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.* Szembek described Sidor's arguments: "The Slovaks trusted the Poles and the Poles, on the contrary, wanted to 'extract from them a piece of its body.' Therefore, the Slovak government demands that we postpone the debate on this subject. Kobylański tried to demonstrate that the rectification concerns [only] insignificant territories predominantly without any population." *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.* Kobylański reminded the press that it seemed to forget the services the Poles had rendered to the Slovaks and added that the question of Slovak independence was raised here in the Warsaw City Hall during the visit of Slovak Americans. *Ibid.*

rectifications.¹¹⁴ But the Polish Consul in Bratislava submitted to the Slovak government on 25 October 1938 updated and extended territorial demands, summarized in six points.¹¹⁵ Bratislava refused the Polish demands of 25 October 1938 and proposed negotiations based on ethnic principles, which was refused by Poland. Warsaw threatened to claim the entire Orava and Spiš regions and turned to Prague in order to increase pressure on Bratislava. When on 31 October 1938 Papée threatened that Poland would take more drastic measures, the Slovak and the Czecho-Slovak governments agreed to accept the Polish demands.¹¹⁶ On 1 November 1938 Poland initiated the final delimitation of its borders with Czecho-Slovakia through a mixed delimitation commission in the following six areas: “...in the region of Čadca, in the region of Javorina, in the Pieniny Mountains, above [the city of] Poprad, in the region of Zegiestow and near the railway line Lupkow-Cisna.”¹¹⁷ The final negotiations between Prague and Warsaw began on 1 November 1938. The Slovak government also negotiated with Poland in the city of Bratislava and the signing of a border agreement on 30 November 1938 in Zakopane ended the negotiations.

The delimitation of the Slovak - Polish part of Czecho-Slovak - Polish borders in November of 1938 met with difficulties and hostility of the local population and Czecho-Slovak troops.¹¹⁸ The delimitation was accompanied by several violent incidents around [the town of] Čadca, in Javorina and in Oravský Podzámok, where on 24 November 1938, the locals attacked a bus carrying the

¹¹⁴ Borák, “*Ukradené*” *vesnice*, 20. Sidor claimed after his talks with Beck that “the Poles do not want a single [Slovak] soul and no territory from Slovakia.” *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ See Note of the Polish Embassy in Prague to the Czecho-Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague, 1 November 1938, *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No.39, 137-138.

¹¹⁸ Kobylański described the difficulties experienced by the border delimitation commission: “...Our delegation was attacked, after occupying the attributed territory, and met with the armed resistance of Czech [Czecho-Slovak] troops.” Notes of the Szembek - Kobylański conversation, 22 November 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 380-1.

Polish delegation.¹¹⁹ A brief but full-scale military confrontation between Czecho-Slovak and Polish troops erupted on 25 November 1938. Early in the morning Polish troops started to occupy Slovak territory around Čadca, which was subject to delimitation. A heavy artillery barrage followed on both sides, accompanied by Czecho-Slovak bombers. The Polish casualties amounted to 2 killed and 10 wounded, the Czecho-Slovak casualties reached 4 killed and 14 wounded. The Polish casualties included Major Štefan Rago on 27 November 1938 near Javorina.¹²⁰ The final protocol on the Slovak - Polish border delimitation, signed on 30 November 1938 in Zakopane, Poland, transferred 226 km² and a population of 4,280 to Poland (see Map 10).¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Borák, “*Ukradené*” *vesnice*, 21. For a Slovak point of view on the border delimitation see Jozef Šimončič, “Denník Dr. Františka Hrušovského, predsedu delimitačnej komisie československo - poľskej v roku 1938” [The Diary of Dr. František Hrušovský, Chairman of the Czecho-Slovak - Polish Delimitation Commission in 1938], *Studia Historica Tyrnaviensia* III (2003): 305-333.

¹²⁰ Borák, “*Ukradené*” *vesnice*, 21.

¹²¹ Borák, “*Ukradené*” *vesnice*, 21-22. There are inconsistencies regarding the size of Slovak territory and population transferred to Poland in the fall of 1938. Borák pointed out that contemporary Slovak sources indicated Slovakia lost more than 9,000 people. In his view this discrepancy was caused by the incorrect quoting of the full population of the affected townships, instead of only their delimited parts. *Ibid.* Some sources indicated Slovakia lost 227 km²: “W wyniku wydarzeń w roku 1938 Czechosłowacja utraciła na rzecz Niemiec.... Do Polski odeszło 1087 km², w czym 863 km² Zaolzia i 22 km² [sic!] na Spiszu, Orawie i w Czadeckim.” See *SPCS 18-39*, 2. Miškovič writes that according to the agreement between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland of 1 October 1938 and the note of 1 November 1938 Slovakia ceded to Poland 221 km² and 4,280 population. Slovakia ceded in Spiš the villages of Lesnica and Javorina, in Orava the villages Hladovka and Suchá Hora, in the district of Čadca parts of the villages of Čierne, Skalité and Svrčinovec. In addition, Slovakia had to accept rectifications of the Slovak - Polish border in Legnava, Cígelfka, Udavské, Babia Hora, Bobrov, in Veľký Sulín and Malý Lipník. Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 19. Mrozowski and Bron Jr. write that Poland presented its claims to the Slovak territory on 1 November 1938. Poland occupied until 27 November 1938 some territories in Kysuce, Orava and Spiš. The agreement signed on 31 November 1938 [sic] in Zakopane accorded to Poland additional territories. Poland occupied : in the Kysuce region (*Czadecki*) - a small territory south of the Malý Polom-Veľký Polom range (5.45 km²), parts of the districts of Skalité, Čierne, Svrčinovec (34.56 km²); in Orava - the Jalovec salient between Pílské and Babia Hora (3.6 km²), Veľká Lipnica (2.9 km²), Suchá Hora and Hladovka (41.3 km²); in Spiš - Javorina (108 km²), Lesnica (16.5 km²), Lopata at the left bank of the Poprad river (0.7 km²), Cígelfka (2.7 km²), the Udava springs (0.6 km²); in total 216 km². One Polish source (Przyjacieli Spisza i Orawy, *Kalendarz na rok 1939*, Kraków, 99-100) claimed that 95% of 4-4,500 of the local population was Polish. See Krzysztof Mrozowski and Michał Bron Jr., “Działalność polskich grup sabotażowo - dywersyjnych na Podhalu w latach 1939-1941,” in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), note no.5 on 179, 179-180. Zieliński writes that Poland acquired after Munich 220 km² and 2,500 population, including Hladovka a Suchá Hora in Orava, Javorina, Podspády a Lesnica in Spiš, not only as strategic rectifications, but also as communication and economic-tourist assets. Zieliński, “Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945,” 115. Kozenski writes that Poland received approximately 220 km² from Slovakia. See Jerzy Kozenski, “Kwestia słowacka w polityce Trzeciej Rzeszy” [The Slovak Question in the Politics of the Third Reich], *Studia z dziejów ZSRR i Europy Środkowej*, Vol. X, 105; quoted in Woytak, *On the border of war and peace*, 57.

Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary negotiated their common border and this process was concluded by the German - Italian arbitration. On 2 November 1938 Germany and Italy decided the fate of the Slovak border with Hungary in Vienna.¹²² The Vienna Arbitrage ceded large portions of southern Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus to Hungary. Polish Senator Feliks Gwiżdż vividly described the chaos in Slovakia after the Vienna arbitration in November 1938:

...the Slovaks cannot govern themselves. ...The Slovak government is completely subordinated to Prague, the Party of Slovak Unity collaborates mainly with the Czechs, and even if Tiso desires to preserve the autonomy of Slovakia, he does not want to break with Prague. Sidor is, in fact, very popular, but the Hlinka Guards and the national committees do not represent any organized power. The Czechs, who are very good organizers, control and decide everything in Slovakia. The Slovak finances are in their hands and the taxes collected in Slovakia are rendered to the central treasury, from where the Czech government [sic] arbitrarily pays out the amounts to the Slovaks. An unimaginable disorder reigns in the whole country. ...Everything is in chaos in Slovakia, the arguments and opinions change from one hour to another one.

As regards foreign policy, everything seems to indicate that the Slovaks would march [together] with the Germans. They [the Germans] confirm Central Europe is governed now by Hitler and they claim no interest in Subcarpathian Rus.¹²³

After the Munich Diktat and the Vienna Arbitration the weakest link in federalized Czecho-Slovakia became its easternmost territory - the Subcarpathian Rus. Germany alleged its *désintéressement* in the fate of the Subcarpathian Rus, whereas Hungary sought to re-integrate it under its jurisdiction. Poland supported Hungary in the hope of attaining a common Polish - Hungarian border. Prague, however, still remained the political centre for Subcarpathian Rus.¹²⁴

¹²² France and Great Britain, the two co-signatories of the Munich Agreement, declined to attend the Vienna Arbitration, which indicated their *désintéressement* in Czecho-Slovakia's fate.

¹²³ Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Gwiżdż, 9 November 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 373-4. Senator Feliks Gwiżdż was a member of the Ozon party.

¹²⁴ Kobylanski explained Beck's instructions to Papée in Prague: "He [Papée] should inform Prague that the former Polish - Czech disputes could be summarized in three points: the question of Teschen [Tešín] Silesia (Zaolzie Silesia in the original), which is suspended; the fact that Poland is separated by Czechoslovakia [Czecho-Slovakia] from its friend Hungary; and the Bolshevik and Ukrainian activities directed from Russia against our territory. Papée should vigorously stress that improvement of the relations between our two countries will depend on the attitude which Prague would adopt on these questions and particularly on that of Subcarpathian Rus." See Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Kobylanski, Warsaw, 9 November 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 373.

Warsaw conditioned the further improvement of relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland on Prague's attitude to the question of Subcarpathian Rus.¹²⁵

On the annexed Slovak territories the Polish government decreed the exclusive use of the Polish language in administration and the resettlement or expulsion of the Slovak teachers, priests and intelligentsia.¹²⁶ Warsaw's refusal to deal with the subsequent complaints further aggravated the already very tense Slovak - Polish relations.¹²⁷ Even after the border delimitation in Tešín Silesia and in Slovakia, Poland would not rule out entirely the idea of additional border rectifications with Czecho-Slovakia.¹²⁸ The question of the Slovak - Polish borders continued to preoccupy Slovak political leaders and they tried, in vain, to reopen the question of delimitation at the bilateral level.¹²⁹

British, French and Polish diplomats misjudged German strategy against Czecho-Slovakia. Hitler pretended that Poland and Hungary would actively participate in the solution of the "Czecho-Slovak problem," which was the complete dismemberment of Czecho-Slovakia, but in the spring

¹²⁵ Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Kobylanski, Warsaw, 9 November 1938, Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 373.

¹²⁶ Polish Ministry of Interior conducted population census in the regions attached to Poland in November of 1938. In the townships of Javorina, Lesnica, Hladovka and Suchá Hora, the census showed a total of 2,193 population, with the following breakdown: 1,731 Slovak, 430 Polish, 15 German and 1 Magyar. The respective townships showed the following details: Jaworzyna Tatrzańska [Javorina] - 381 total, 345 Slovak, 16 Polish, 15 German, 1 Magyar; Leśnica Pienińska [Lesnica] - 496 total, 491 Slovak, 5 Polish; Głodówka [Hladovka] - 575 total, 443 Slovak, 127 Polish; Sucha Góra Orawska [Suchá Hora] - 741 total, 453 Slovak, 282 Polish. See Results of Unofficial Population Census in the Hamlets Attached to Poland in November 1938, Ministry of Interior to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, 4 May 1939, no.PN.253/16/1, AAN Warsaw, MSZ, t. 6480, 9-10.

¹²⁷ Borák, "Ukradené" vesnice, 22.

¹²⁸ Szembek discussed the Czecho-Slovak border rectification with Hans Frank [the Governor General in Poland during the German occupation (1939-1945)]: "Frank said, regarding the question of Ruthenia, that it was not a question of justice [*ist keine Rechtsfrage*], since Poland had fixed, in a permanent way, its borders with Czecho-Slovakia, the way Germany had done, and the Poles have declared no other territorial demands on Czecho-Slovakia. I [Szembek] stressed that this applied exclusively to the new border of Silesia, but it did not imply any guarantee on our part regarding the remaining Czecho-Slovak borders." Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Frank, Warsaw, 16 December 1938, in Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 393-4.

¹²⁹ According to Borák, the question of the Slovak - Polish border resurfaced at the Slovak - Polish talks in January of 1939 in Cieszyn, Poland, but was absent at a meeting of K. Sidor and Senator F.Gwiżdż in February of 1939 in Ružomberok, Slovakia. In May of 1939 Pavol Čarnogurský was told in Warsaw that Poland considered the question of the Slovak - Polish border closed. This disappointed Bratislava because it had hoped that a threat of German expansion would force Warsaw to revisit the question of the mutual borders. Borák, "Ukradené" vesnice, 22.

of 1939 Germany started to depart from this position.¹³⁰ The Polish - German “contest” for Slovakia arrived at a final stage in March of 1939.¹³¹ The Polish Envoy in Prague emphasized the importance of keeping Berlin simultaneously and explicitly informed about the Polish position on the Slovak question. Papée considered joint [Polish-German] guarantees an essential element of any solution of the Slovak question.¹³²

In March 1939 Czecho-Slovakia disintegrated amidst German intrigues and double play. Slovakia declared its independence on 14 March 1939 and the rest of Bohemia and Moravia was occupied by the Germans and turned into the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia on 15 March 1939. Hungary occupied the rest of Subcarpathian Rus and attained a common border with Poland. German troops also entered Slovakia and occupied, allegedly as a temporary security measure to protect its troops occupying Moravia, the so-called “security zone” in the Western part of Slovakia (a part of the Váh river valley and the Záhorie region), but the German sources in Prague categorically denied any intentions to militarily occupy Slovakia.¹³³ Slovakia signed the Treaty of Protection (the *Schutzvertrag*) with Germany on 23 March of 1939 in Vienna.¹³⁴ The *Schutzvertrag* obliged Slovakia

¹³⁰ Borák, “*Ukradené*” *vesnice*, 22. Hitler promised Beck in Berchtesgaden, in January 1939, that Poland would have a part in the solution of the Czecho-Slovak problem. *Ibid*.

¹³¹ Kazimierz Papée, Polish Envoy to Prague, analysed the upcoming Polish - German contest (*rozgrywka*) in his secret report, dated 6 March 1939, to Warsaw. See Papée to MSZ, Prague, 6 March 1939, Secret. No.53. AAN, MSZ, t. 6474, B-22750, 5.

¹³² Papée to MSZ, Prague, 6 March 1939, Secret. No.53. AAN, MSZ, t. 6474, B-22750, 5. Papée also proposed to talk to Jozef Tiso, Prime Minister of Slovakia, and asked Warsaw for instructions. *Ibid*.

¹³³ Military Attaché to the Supreme Command in Warsaw, Prague, 18 March 1939, Secret. No. 74/39, AAN, Ambasada RP w Pradze, t. 25, 1-2. Polish Military Attaché quoted information obtained from German Military Attaché in Prague, Col. Toussaint. Toussaint also stated that if the *Reich* undertakes any action in the foreseeable future, this action would not be directed against Poland or Hungary. *Ibid*.

¹³⁴ Joseph A. Mikus, *La Slovaquie dans le drame de l'Europe* (Paris: Les îles d'or, 1955), 160. V. Bystrický states as the date of the signing of the *Schutzvertrag* 13 March 1939, which is incorrect, Slovakia declared independence only on 14 March 1939. See Valerián Bystrický, “Slovakia from the Munich Conference to the Declaration of independence,” in *Slovakia in History*, eds. Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč and Martin D. Brown (Cambridge: University Press, 2011), 174. Kirschbaum writes that the negotiations on the *Schutzvertrag* has begun on 17 March, were concluded when German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop signed it on 23 March 1939, Slovak Prime Minister Jozef Tiso had signed it on 19 March 1939. Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia. Struggle for Survival* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1995), 190.

to align its foreign and defensive policies with those of Germany.¹³⁵

Poland recognized independent Slovakia and opened its legation in Bratislava “with surprising rapidity” on 15 March 1939. Mieczysław Chalupczyński became chargé d’affaires on 16 March 1939.¹³⁶ On 1 April 1939 Poland closed its legation in Prague and simultaneously recalled its Envoy Kazimierz Papée.¹³⁷ Slovakia asked Polish *agrément* for Ladislav Szathmáry, its Envoy-designate, on 2 June 1939¹³⁸ and Szathmáry visited the Polish legation in Bratislava two days later.¹³⁹ The Slovak Envoy-designate asked Chalupczyński to inquire privately about Warsaw’s eventual reaction to Slovak interest in the buildings of the Czecho-Slovak legation in Warsaw.¹⁴⁰ The Slovak side urged Polish *agrément* for Szathmáry on 15 June 1939 as a “delicate question.”¹⁴¹ Warsaw communicated its *agrément* to Bratislava on 16 June 1939¹⁴² and Slovak Prime Minister Jozef Tiso signed Szathmáry’s credentials, dated 20 June 1939.¹⁴³ Polish President Ignacy Mościcki¹⁴⁴ received Szathmáry at an introductory diplomatic audience on 30 June 1939.¹⁴⁵ Szathmáry asked Mościcki to take into account the position Slovakia was starting from and to understand that the Slovak

¹³⁵ Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia. Struggle for Survival*, 190.

¹³⁶ Waldemar Michowicz, “Organizacja polskiego aparatu dyplomatycznego w latach 1918-1939 [Organization of the Polish Diplomatic Apparatus in 1918-1939],” in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* [A History of Polish Diplomacy], vol. 4 (1918-1939), ed. Piotr Lossowski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1995), 51.

¹³⁷ Michowicz, “Organizacja polskiego aparatu dyplomatycznego w latach 1918-1939,” 51.

¹³⁸ Verbal Note of the Slovak Foreign Ministry to Mieczysław Chalupczyński, Bratislava, No. 3381/1939, 2 June 1939, AAN, MSZ, t. 426, B-16574, 15-17.

¹³⁹ Chalupczyński to MSZ, No.109, Bratislava, 4 June 1939, AAN, MSZ, t. 426, B-16574, 19.

¹⁴⁰ Chalupczyński to MSZ, No.109, Bratislava, 4 June 1939, AAN, MSZ, t. 426, B-16574, 19. Chalupczyński informed Warsaw that Szathmáry made a positive impression on him, although he was not very known in Bratislava. Szathmáry claimed to have very good relations with Henryk Malhommé, Polish diplomat, Secretary of the Embassy in Berlin (1935-1939). *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Chalupczyński to MSZ, No.115, Bratislava, 15 June 1939, AAN, MSZ, t. 426, B-16574, 21. Chalupczyński informed Warsaw that the Director of Protocol reminded him of a “delicate question of Szathmáry.” Chalupczyński explained that a time elapsed [since the submission of Slovak request for an *agrément*] conformed with standard diplomatic practice. *Ibid.*

¹⁴² “Agrément for Slovak Envoy,” MSZ to Chalupczyński, Warsaw, No. P.D. 423/S1/Sz, 16 June 1939, AAN, MSZ, t. 426, B-16574, 22. Counsellor Zaniewski phoned Chalupczyński the President’s decision on 16 June 1939. *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ AAN, MSZ, t. 426, B-16574, 23.

¹⁴⁴ Ignacy Mościcki (1867 - 1946) - Polish Professor, President of Poland (1926 - 1939).

¹⁴⁵ AAN, MSZ, t. 426, B-16574, 31-33.

government's policy would be guided by a single motivation, which would be grounding the country's independence and development of the Slovak nation.¹⁴⁶ Mościcki confirmed the Poles maintained many sympathies for the brotherly Slovak nation. In 1938 Poland took what it had lost, but treated Slovakia friendly. Mościcki compared Poland's relation to Slovakia with that toward Lithuania.¹⁴⁷

While the solution of the "Czecho-Slovak problem" - its complete disintegration - accomplished one of the Polish foreign policy objectives, the fact that Germany assumed protection over Slovakia troubled Warsaw as it confirmed an ascending German influence on Poland's southern borders.¹⁴⁸ Germany exercised considerable pressure on the Slovak leaders in order to establish economic and political control over Slovakia.¹⁴⁹ Slovakia, which should have fitted into the Polish *Intermarium* concept and contributed to Polish security and independence, became a German ally.¹⁵⁰

In May 1939 Warsaw studied the effects of demarcation of the Slovak-Polish border rectified in the fall of 1938. Warsaw worried that Germany, desiring to arouse the Slovak-Polish relations, could take advantage of border demarcation for inciting the Slovak government to cause trouble to Poland. Eventually, the Germans could try to provoke border incidents. On the other hand, a

¹⁴⁶ Record of conversation President RP-Szathmary, 30.6.1939, GMP 396/SI/4, AAN, MSZ, t. 6474, B-22750, 56-57.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Borák, "Ukradené" vesnice, 22-23; Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 433.

¹⁴⁹ Szembek, *Journal, 1933-1939*, 433. Senator Gwiżdż visited Slovakia in March of 1939. He described the feelings of the population and the pressure exercised by the Germans on the Slovak leaders: "...there is a great disappointment. The Germans export from the country everything they can. The shops in Bratislava and in small towns are completely emptied [as a result of that]. The future régime of Slovakia is not yet set up. There is no doubt that Germany shall exercise economic and political control over Slovakia. The Slovaks cannot yet be considered as a constituted nation, at the most, they could be considered a tribe." Szembek's Notes of a Meeting with Senator Gwiżdż (in train), 22 March 1939, in *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ In May of 1939, the Polish Army deployed subversive guerilla groups on the Slovak-Polish border. See Alfons Filar, *U podnóża Tatr, 1939 - 1945. Podhale i Sądecczyzna w walce z okupantem* [At the Foot of the Tatras, 1939-1945. The Podhale and the Sądecczyzna during the War with an Occupier] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1985), 41.

unilateral Polish initiative in demarcation of the Slovak - Polish border could be a symptom of Poland's disregard of the Zakopane Protocols and this could give rise to eventual border incidents, which Poland wanted to evade.¹⁵¹ On 17 June 1939, Mieczysław Chałupczyński,¹⁵² Polish Chargé d'affaires a.i. in Bratislava officially proposed to Ferdinand Ďurčanský,¹⁵³ Slovak Foreign Minister, to finalize the Slovak-Polish border demarcation. Ďurčanský reacted pragmatically and informed Chałupczyński that, in a manner similar to the Slovak-Hungarian border demarcation, the [Slovak] public would not be informed about ongoing delimitation works on in the Polish sectors of the border.¹⁵⁴

The Slovak government wanted to expedite the delimitation of the Slovak-Polish border. Bratislava nominated on 26 June 1939 the following members of the Slovak delegation to mark the Slovak-Polish border: Dr. F. Hrušovský, Gen. R. Viest, Capt. M. Turzák, Ing. J. Mikuš, Ing. P. Gál. The Slovak Legation demanded from the Foreign Ministry as to when the Slovak-Polish delimitation commission would meet.¹⁵⁵ As Warsaw did not reply, the Slovak Legation urged response to its note, dated 10 July 1939, so that the Slovak-Polish delimitation commission would start to work as soon as possible.¹⁵⁶ Ladislav Szathmáry,¹⁵⁷ Slovak Envoy to Poland, inquired on 12 August 1939 at the Foreign Ministry into prospects of an earlier start of delimitation works, particularly in the Čadca sector. Szathmáry postulated his appeal by a difficult momentary position of the Slovak government

¹⁵¹ MSZ to Legation Bratislava, Warsaw, May 1939, No. P.III 387/Sł/10, AAN, MSZ, t. 6480, B-22756, 14-15.

¹⁵² Mieczysław Chałupczyński (1893 - 1945) - Polish diplomat, Consul in Užhorod, Chargé d'affaires a.i. in Bratislava (1939).

¹⁵³ Ferdinand Ďurčanský (1906 - 1974) - Slovak politician, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1939 - 1940).

¹⁵⁴ "Delimitation of the Polish-Slovak Border," M. Chałupczyński, Chargé d'affaires a.i., to MSZ, Bratislava, 20 June 1939, No. 387/1, AAN, MSZ, t. 6480, B-22756, 16.

¹⁵⁵ The Verbal Note, Slovak Legation to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, 10 July 1939, No.602/39, AAN Warsaw, MSZ, t. 6480, 18.

¹⁵⁶ The Verbal Note, Slovak Legation to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, 28 July 1939, No.817/39, AAN Warsaw, MSZ, t. 6480, 22.

¹⁵⁷ Ladislav Szathmáry (1895 - 1946) - Slovak and Czecho-Slovak diplomat, Slovak Envoy in Warsaw (1939).

vis-à-vis the Germans in the Čadca sector of the Slovak-Polish border.¹⁵⁸

In fact, the Slovak side hoped that during physical demarcation of the border, which was rectified in Poland's favour in the fall of 1938, it could accomplish some adjustments of the border. But the Polish side refused to consider any concessions, especially in the sectors of the Slovak border with military garrisons or with special German military installations. Józef Beck informed Professor Walery Goetl, Chairman of the Polish Delegation for the Demarcation of the Polish-Slovak Border: "In case of specific requests, related to the border adjustments in the Čadca area and the surroundings of Ždiar, which will most probably be presented, any border adjustments in the Čadca area are out of the question."¹⁵⁹

Berlin made considerable effort to maintain and deepen existing antagonisms in Central Europe. Slovak - Polish relations were burdened by the question of the territories incorporated into Poland (Upper Orava, Upper Spiš, Čadca and Pieniny).¹⁶⁰ Germany skillfully played this card in Slovak - Polish relations and the return of the Slovak territories became an effective argument in swaying Slovakia towards Germany. Bratislava had held a large anti-Polish meeting on 22 August 1939. The Slovaks demanded the return of the Slovak townships in Orava and Spiš.¹⁶¹ When the Soviet - German Pact of 23 August 1939 stunned the world with an example of international

¹⁵⁸ Record of Kobylański-Szathmáry Conversation on 12 August 1939, AAN, MSZ, t. 6480, B-22756, 35-36.

¹⁵⁹ Józef Beck to Prof. Walery Goetl, Chairman of the Polish Delegation for the Demarcation of the Polish-Slovak Border, Warsaw, August 1939, No. P.III.387/SI/25, AAN, MSZ, t. 6480, B-22756, 31-32.

¹⁶⁰ Slovak Envoy in Warsaw, Ladislav Szathmáry, discussed Slovak - Polish relations with Jan Szembek. Szathmáry said to Szembek that the main task of the government was to maintain independence and sovereignty of the Slovak state. In this connection Szathmáry noted that the facts of the last year [1938] left painful repercussions in the Slovak society. Szembek argued that the small border rectifications, to which Szathmáry had alluded ("Szathmáry agreed: oui, insignifiantes") could not be compared with the [German] occupation of entire right bank of the river Váh. See "Notatka z rozmowy p.min.Szembeka z posłem słowackim p.Szathmáry w dn.8 lipca 1939 roku," Warsaw, 8 July 1939, no.396/SI/5, AAN Warsaw, MSZ, t.7474, 6-61.

¹⁶¹ Borák wrote that Alexander Mach demanded the return of 13 Slovak townships in Orava and 12 townships in Spiš, which were "stolen" by Poland in cooperation with the traitor Beneš after World War I, as well as the territories ceded to Poland after Munich. See Borák, "*Ukradené*" *vesnice*, 23.

Realpolitik pragmatism, it boded ill for Poland. Alexander Mach¹⁶² grasped with pragmatism this symbolic reversal of alliances in international relations: “Even Russia safeguards its national interests. When the large Slavic Russian nation abandons its contemporary course and signs a non-intervention pact with big Germany, why should we [the Slovaks] make sacrifices to Slavic solidarity?”¹⁶³

The Soviet - German Pact of 23 August 1939 made the prospect of war between Germany and Poland very real. Ironically, the only party eagerly expecting the upcoming conflict was a group of Czech and Slovak exiles in Paris and London. For them, the prospect of the war between Germany and Poland, allied with Britain and France, was the only hope of restoring Czecho-Slovakia.¹⁶⁴ The war and defeat of Germany could liquidate the consequences of the fall of 1938 and the spring of 1939.¹⁶⁵

Slovakia, limited in foreign policy by the Treaty of Protection, took part in the invasion of Poland in September of 1939, alongside Germany. The German army launched its attack on Poland also from the Slovak territory and the Slovak army took part in the operations.¹⁶⁶ The participation of Slovakia in Germany's war - and as of 17 September, also the Soviet Union's war - against Poland

¹⁶² Alexander “Šaňo” Mach (1902 - 1980) - Slovak politician, Slovak Minister of Interior (1940-1944).

¹⁶³ Alexander Mach, “Pred rozhodnutím” [Before a Decision], *Slovák*, 23 August 1939, 1.

¹⁶⁴ Toman Brod, *Osudný omyl Edvarda Beneše 1939-1948. Československá cesta do sovětského područí* [The Fateful Mistake of Edvard Beneš 1939-1948. The Czecho-Slovak Road to the Soviet Tutelage] (Praha: Academia, 2002), 30. Brod qualified the situation as paradoxical and cynical, the false pacifism of 1939, stemming from the experience of the world conflagration in 1914-1918. *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Edvard Beneš proclaimed in September of 1939, on behalf of the Czecho-Slovak people, their adherence to the struggle of Poland and its allies, Britain and France, against Germany. Britain and France refused to enter into negotiations with Beneš. *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Three Slovak army divisions participated in the German-Polish war. Dušan Segeš, *Dvojkříž v siločiarach bieleho orla. Slovenská otázka v politike poľskej exilovej vlády za 2. sv. vojny* [The Slovak Cross as an Object of Interest of the White Eagle. The Slovak Question in the Policy of the Polish Government-in-Exile During World War II] (Bratislava: Veda, 2009), 33.

was controversial, despite the prospects of reclaiming the former Slovak territories.¹⁶⁷ On 1 September 1939 the Slovak Envoy in Warsaw, Ladislav Szathmáry, officially protested against Slovak participation in the German - Polish war and distanced himself from the policy of his own government.¹⁶⁸ The diplomatic fallout of the Slovak participation in the German - Polish war was mixed. After the outbreak of the war, Britain and France recalled their diplomatic representatives from Bratislava and began to consider Slovakia as a territory controlled by an enemy.¹⁶⁹ Poland also changed its attitude towards Slovakia and on 3 September 1939 the government allowed Czech and Slovak émigrés in Poland to organize a Czecho-Slovak Legion to fight against Germany.¹⁷⁰ The Soviet Union decided to recognize the Slovak Republic on 17 September 1939 and to appoint a diplomatic representative to Bratislava.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ The famous Slovak writer and poet Janko Jesenský dedicated his critical poem *Dekorovania za hrdinstvo* [Decorations for Bravery] to the Slovak participation in the war against Poland. See Janko Jesenský, *Na zlobu dňa*, vol. 2 (Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš, 1945), 103. For more on the 1939 campaign against Poland see Igor Baka, *Slovenská republika a nacistická agresia proti Poľsku* [The Slovak Republic and the National Socialist Aggression Against Poland] (Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav, 2006); Martin Lacko, ed., *Proti Poľsku. Odraz ťaženia roku 1939 v denníkoch a kronikách slovenskej armády*. [Against Poland. The Impact of the 1939 Campaign in the Slovak Army Diaries and Chronicles] (Bratislava: Ústav pamäti národa, 2007).

¹⁶⁸ Protest of Ladislav Szathmáry, Warsaw, 1 September 1939, *SPCS 18-39*, Doc. No. 45, 145-147; also "Premówienie p.posła Szathmáry w Polskim Radio w Warszawie dnia 2 września 1939, o godz.20.05," Warsaw, AAN Warsaw, MSZ, t. 7474, 125.

¹⁶⁹ Jan Rychlík, "The Slovak question and the resistance movement," in *Slovakia in History*, eds. Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč and Martin D. Brown (Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 195. After the outbreak of the war in September of 1939, the British government recalled its Consul from Slovakia, but tolerated on its soil the Slovak Consul in Britain, Milan Harminec, who also distanced himself from the policy of the Slovak government.

¹⁷⁰ Rychlík, "The Slovak question and the resistance movement," 195.

¹⁷¹ The Soviet press communiqué of 17 September 1939 informed: "The Soviet Ambassador in Berlin Škvarcev, upon the instructions of the Chairman of the Council of the Peoples' Commissioners and the Commissioner for Foreign Affairs Molotov, informed today the Slovak Envoy in Berlin, that the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics recognizes the Slovak Republic *de iure* and *de facto* and intends to establish diplomatic relations." Brod, *Osudný omyl Edvarda Beneše 1939-1948*, 36. Soviet foreign policy in the second half of 1939 surprised and troubled Czecho-Slovak exiles in Paris and London. They believed Soviet participation in the war with Germany would help restore Czecho-Slovakia. Soviet diplomatic recognition of the Slovak Republic and the closing down the Czecho-Slovak Legation in Moscow disappointed them. Czecho-Slovak exiles in Paris faced a delicate dilemma during the Soviet - Finnish war in 1939-1940 when Britain and France considered military intervention against the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovak National Committee in Paris, recognized as representative of Slovak and Czech interests, avoided participation in the League of Nations deliberations on the Soviet-Finnish conflict and the consequent expulsion of the Soviet Union from the League. *Ibid.*, 42-43.

Orava was occupied by German troops within few hours on 1 September 1939.¹⁷² Slovak troops occupied Spiš and on 1 September 1939 advanced to a line Bielowodská dolina - Javorina - Jurgov - Lapšanka - Nedzeca - Dunajec.¹⁷³ Some POWs, who fought against the Germans in Pekelník and Podvlnk in Orava, were detained in Ružomberok in Slovakia and after few days of detention, those who claimed to be Slovaks were released, the rest transferred to occupied Poland.¹⁷⁴ On 3 September 1939 Slovak troops completed occupation of all territories under Polish administration since 1920.¹⁷⁵ Direct military engagements of the Slovak army in the German-Polish war remained limited, which demonstrated its casualty rates of 18 dead, 46 wounded and 11 missing in action.¹⁷⁶ The territories transferred to Poland after July of 1920 were attached to Slovakia by the German - Slovak border treaty of 26 November 1939.¹⁷⁷ The German government proposed that Slovakia occupy a large part of the Nowy Targ district, but the Slovak government declined it.¹⁷⁸ In addition, Slovakia declined a request presented by the local Polish population to occupy the Nowy

¹⁷² Marek Plewczyński, "Powiat Nowy Targ w kampanii wrześniowej 1939 roku," in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 56-57.

¹⁷³ Igor Baka, *Slovenská republika a nacistická agresia proti Poľsku* [Slovak Republic and the Nazi Aggression Against Poland] (Bratislava: Eterna Press, 2006), 89.

¹⁷⁴ Plewczyński, "Powiat Nowy Targ w kampanii wrześniowej 1939 roku," 55.

¹⁷⁵ Baka, *Slovenská republika a nacistická agresia proti Poľsku*, 92.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 105. Baka writes that the casualty rates include also accidents.

¹⁷⁷ Zieliński attributes to the Slovak government the requests of the local Slovak population of 21 November 1939 to return to Slovakia 770 km² and 34,509 population. See Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 116. Borák described the restored territory as consisting of 770 km² and a population of 34,509. See Borák, "*Ukradené*" *vesnice*, 26. Other sources spoke of 807 km². See *SPCS 18-39*, 3. The former source cited as the date of the German - Slovak border treaty 21 November 1939, whereas the latter source gave 26 November 1939. The Slovak government conducted a population census in the restored territories. Out of a total of 34,509 people, 90 % claimed Slovak nationality. Polish nationality was not listed as an option in the census. Borák, "*Ukradené*" *vesnice*, 26.

¹⁷⁸ Janusz Berghauzen, "Polityka okupanta hitlerowskiego na Podhalu w okresie II wojny światowej," in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), note no. 20, 20-21. Berghauzen wrote: "Do bardziej interesujących, a nie zbadanych problemów w stosunkach niemiecko-słowackich należą propozycje rządu III Rzeszy wobec rządu słowackiego, dotyczące oddania Słowacji poważnej części powiatu nowotarskiego, aż po Nowy Targ." *Ibid.* For the situation in the Nowy Targ district in September of 1939 see Marek Plewczyński, "Powiat Nowy Targ w kampanii wrześniowej 1939 roku," in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 41-72.

Targ district (*powiat Nowotarsky*) so as to protect its Polish population against German persecution.¹⁷⁹ The Slovak parliament ratified the Treaty on 12 December 1939 and the districts in Orava and Spiš, assigned to Poland in 1920 by the Spa Conference and the subsequent delimitation, and the territories annexed by Poland in 1938, returned to Slovakia in the fall of 1939 (see Map 11).¹⁸⁰ The local Slovaks in the districts previously incorporated into Poland welcomed the re-integration of their regions with Slovakia.¹⁸¹

The Western provinces of the Polish territories occupied by the Germans in 1939 were incorporated into the German Reich on 26 October 1939. The territory of Tešín Silesia annexed by Poland in the fall of 1938 was also incorporated into the German Reich.¹⁸² The remaining Polish territories occupied by Germany formed the so-called “General Gouvernement.”¹⁸³

The Podhale region of Poland became part of the General Gouvernement. During World War II the Germans attempted to Germanize the population which was facilitated by weakening national

¹⁷⁹ Miškovič, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 13. Miškovič wrote that the Slovaks did not nurture any expansionist ambitions vis-à-vis Polish territories after Poland's defeat by Germany in 1939. He argued that the Slovaks could, but did not rectify the border in the Morské oko area, which was adjusted in 1905; and the Slovaks also declined German proposal to occupy some Polish territory. *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Irene Matuschak wrote that after March 1939 the local Slovak activists in Spiš and Orava petitioned the new Slovak government for reunification with Slovakia, which they considered their true motherland. Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948* (S.l.: Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, 2008), 21.

¹⁸¹ The local Slovaks welcomed occupying Slovak troops with flowers in Javorina and the local Slovaks welcomed the Germans with flowers in Dolná Zubrica. See Plewczyński, “Powiat Nowy Targ w kampanii wrześniowej 1939 roku,” in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 56-57. The [First Catholic Slovak Union] *Jednota* (Cleveland) 1939 Christmas issue published an article “*Rozžaté svetlá*” (Kindled Lights) by K. M. Urpín depicting the joy of the local Slovaks over the integration, their first Christmas celebration in Slovakia. See Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 21.

¹⁸² Robert Machray, *The Polish-German Problem. Poland's Western Provinces are the Condition of her Independence* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1941), 13; Borák, “*Ukradené*” vesnice, 19. The strategic and economic potential of Tešín Silesia was of great importance to Germany. Its German minority had a strong economic position and supported all centrifugal forces, including the pro-German Slonzak movement. These factors determined the fate of Teschen Silesia in 1939. For more see Otakar Kána, “Těšínske intermezzo - Nemecké zájmy na Těšínsku” [The Tešín intermezzo - German interest in the Tešín area], *Československý časopis historický* XVIII, nos.4-5 (1970): 397-410.

¹⁸³ Machray, *The Polish-German Problem*, 13.

unity of the Poles through support of the Gorals/Highlanders and the Kaszubians, as separate and distinct nations from the Poles.¹⁸⁴ The so-called “Goralenvolk” action aimed at weakening unity and resistance. The Germans reactivated in November of 1939 the *Związek Górali*, and in February of 1942 created the so-called *Komitet Góralski (Goralisches Komitee)*, but obtained a relatively low number of the Gorals.¹⁸⁵ The Germans supported the formation of the Goral nation in the Podhale region of Poland. But in the population census in June of 1942, only 18 % of the Polish population of the Nowy Targ district identified as the “Gorals” and received distinct Goral identification cards.¹⁸⁶

During the twelve months which followed after the Munich conference in September of 1938, the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland experienced dramatic developments. Poland benefitted from strategic isolation of Czecho-Slovakia in the fall of 1938 and achieved small strategic rectifications of the Slovak - Polish border. These rectifications of the Slovak - Polish border set up a shockwave to the perceived Slovak - Polish close relations. The disintegration of Czecho-Slovakia in March of 1939 removed a significant obstacle to the Polish concept of the Third Europe, but at the same time it extended German influence in Central Europe further to the East, which exposed fragility of the concept. The disintegration of Czecho-Slovakia compromised the strategic situation of Poland and increased importance of Slovakia. In the fall of 1939, Poland faced aggressive Germany in a situation encountered by Czecho-Slovakia one year ago. Slovakia profited

¹⁸⁴ Janusz Berghauzen, “Polityka okupanta hitlerowskiego na Podhalu w okresie II wojny światowej,” in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 14.

¹⁸⁵ Alfons Filar, *U podnóża Tatr, 1939 - 1945. Podhale i Sądecczyzna w walce z okupantem* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1985), 20-21. The German authorities issued 2,500 Goral and 8,000 Polish ID cards in Zakopane. *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Barbara Halbert, “‘Goralenvolk’,” in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 89.

from its alliance with Germany and recovered all districts transferred to Poland after World War I. The 1938 - 1945 period would dramatically transform not only the shape of the frontiers in Europe, but the outlook of Europe and its nations as well.

7.

WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY?

...we the Poles cannot blame the whole Czechoslovak nation for this and that move of the Czechoslovak government. Similarly, the erroneous policy conducted by Colonel Beck should not be and must not be held in the eyes of the Czechs and Slovaks against the Polish nation. ...From my side I have to confirm that the whole Polish nation, in 1920 and afterwards, dealt with the [Spa] solution as imposed and maintained it in its collective memory as highly unjust and wrong.

Władysław Eugeniusz Sikorski to Edvard Beneš, London, 25 July 1942

World War II significantly redrew the political map of Europe and wiped out Poland and Czecho-Slovakia from the map. Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, as well as a significant part of Europe, came under German domination. Czecho-Slovakia was “relegated” to the German sphere of influence by France and Britain as a consequence of the Munich Agreement. Poland came under German - Soviet occupation in the fall of 1939 after a devastating war. The Slovaks, Czechs and Poles lived through World War II under different conditions. The Slovaks lived in their own state - the Slovak Republic - in the German sphere of influence, however. The Czechs lived under German occupation - in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia - politically and economically integrated with the German Reich. The Poles, until the outbreak of the German - Soviet conflict in June 1941, lived under German and Soviet occupation. The Slovak - Polish border, the High Tatras in particular, in spite of many risks involved allowed the resistance movement in Poland to keep in touch with the Polish government-in-exile.¹

¹ See for example Jan Karski, *Mon témoignage devant le monde. Histoire d'un État clandestin* [My Testimony Before the World. The Story of a Secret State], anonymous translation from English, revised and completed by Céline Gervais-Francelle (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2010). Karski recalls: “...C’est à la fin de janvier 1940 que je pris le train à Varsovie pour Zakopane, <<point de départ>> prévu pour mon voyage en France. Zakopane est un village situé à une

The Polish government and high command refused to capitulate in the fall of 1939 and sought refuge in Romania. However, the Romanian government, under German pressure, interned them. On 1 October 1939, under French pressure, President Mościcki appointed Władysław Raczkiewicz as his successor and General Władysław Sikorski became prime minister of a broad coalition government-in-exile. Constitutional legality was thus preserved.² Slovak and Czech exiles in London and Paris created a Czechoslovak liberation movement and in 1941 achieved diplomatic recognition as the Czechoslovak government-in-exile. The cooperation of the Polish and Czechoslovak governments in exile influenced the question of their common borders, primarily in Tešín Silesia, but also the fate of Slovakia and its borders in Orava and Spiš. The fortunes of both governments differed, to some extent in relation to their attitudes towards the Soviet Union.³ The project of a more intimate form of Czechoslovak - Polish coexistence - a confederation⁴ - faded away and Czechoslovak - Polish cooperation gradually turned into hostility and a complete break-down in relations.

The restoration of Czecho-Slovakia presumed undoing the political and territorial changes made by Germany in Central Europe. Since the restoration required the military defeat of Germany and its allies, Slovak and Czech exiles seeking the restoration of Czecho-Slovakia eagerly awaited

dizaine de kilomètres de la frontière polono-tchèque [sic], au pied des Tatras, qui sont les sommets les plus élevés de la chaîne des Carpates. ...Dans un chalet, à la lisière du village, je rencontrai mon guide et les deux jeunes officiers qui devaient nous accompagner jusqu'à Košice, ville slovaque qui avait été incorporée à la Hongrie..... Le lendemain, à l'aube, nous nous mîmes en route à travers les montagnes slovaques." *Ibid.*, 91.

² Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 255.

³ For more see Dušan Segeš, *Dvojkříž v siločiarach bieleho orla. Slovenská otázka v politike poľskej exilovej vlády za 2. sv. vojny* [The Slovak Cross as an Object of Interest of the White Eagle. The Slovak Question in the Policy of the Polish Government-in-Exile During World War II] (Bratislava: Veda, 2009).

⁴ For more on a Czechoslovak - Polish confederation, see, for example, Ivan Štoviček and Jaroslav Valenta, eds., *Československo-polská jednání o konfederaci a spojení 1939-1944: Československé diplomatické dokumenty*. [Czechoslovak - Polish Negotiations of the Establishment of Confederation and Alliance 1939-1944: Czechoslovak Diplomatic Documents] (Prague: Karolinum and HÚ AV ČR, 1995).

a military confrontation with Germany: “...Czechoslovakia was the only state to rejoice over such a nightmare as the war, due to Europe’s fault. Without the war, we would cease to exist, we would be eaten by Germany and, after a while, one would talk about the Czechs the same way as about the Elbe Slavs.”⁵

The German tutelage over Central Europe frustrated the local populations and governments. Governmental analysis of Nazi interference with the Protectorate’s autonomy reflected a high level of frustration in Bohemia and Moravia : “It is useless to describe the feelings with which the Czech nation, politically so advanced, accepted the fact that its political life would continue in the form of a protectorate - a form so unusual in European affairs - while the Slovak nation, educated to its political and state life by the Czech nation, was left with independent statehood.”⁶ The apparent permanence of the German tutelage over Central Europe in 1939, reinforced by bizarre French - British behaviour during the German-Polish war, necessitated a certain accommodation with the *status quo*.⁷

The question of Tešín Silesia and its eventual return under Prague’s jurisdiction did not completely disappear from the Czech political radar screen during World War II. The return of Tešín to Protectorate territory resurfaced in the fall of 1939 after the German defeat of Poland. Protectorate

⁵ Eduard Beneš in his conversation with the Soviet Envoy I. M. Majski, London, 12 July 1941, in Libuše Otahalová and Milada Červinková, eds., *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939-1943, Acta Occupationis Bohemiae et Moraviae* [Documents From History of Czecho-Slovak Politics 1939-1943, *Acta Occupationis Bohemiae et Moraviae*] (hereafter *AOBM*) (Praha: Academia, 1966), vol.1, Doc. No. 198, 240-243.

⁶ See document “Analysis of the Nazi interference with autonomy of the so-called Protectorate,” Prague, 14 October 1939, *AOBM*, vol. 2, Doc. No. 365, 454-469.

⁷ Vojtech Mastny argued that Hitler’s quick victory in Poland and the relative inactivity of the Western powers persuaded the Czech leaders that German power in Europe would last and that concessions should be exacted before it was too late. Ergo, they decided to claim a return of Tešín Silesia. Vojtech Mastny, *The Czechs Under Nazi Rule: The Failure of National Resistance, 1939-1942* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1971), 108.

representatives Emil Hácha⁸ and František Chvalkovský⁹ took advantage of the Polish defeat in the fall of 1939 and started to discuss the return of Tešín Silesia with the Germans.¹⁰ Reich authorities pressured the Protectorate government into pledging loyalty to the Führer and, in exchange, the Germans alluded to the possible enlargement of the Protectorate's autonomy and the return of the Tešín area.

The changing international and internal circumstances also had a bearing upon Tešín Silesia.¹¹ The Czecho-Slovak exiles in Paris and London carefully followed events in the Protectorate, whenever they related to the possible restitution of the Tešín territory.¹² The idea of buying a pledge of loyalty (*Treugeloebnis*) from the Protectorate government or its President Hácha in exchange for the Protectorate's expanded autonomy and return of Tešín Silesia came up again early in November of 1939. A pledge of loyalty, made by the Protectorate government or its President to Hitler, worried the Czecho-Slovak exiles in Paris and London as it would embarrass

⁸ Emil Hácha (1872 - 1945) - Czech lawyer and politicians, Czecho-Slovak President (1938-1939), President of the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia (1939-1945).

⁹ František Chvalkovský (1885 - 1945) - Czech politician and diplomat, Czecho-Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs (1938-1939), Protectorate representative in Berlin (1939-1945).

¹⁰ According to Mastny, Hácha intimated to Konstantin von Neurath his desire for the return of Tešín and the Protector gave his initial blessing to the request. See Mastny, *The Czechs Under Nazi Rule*, 108. Hitler discussed the return of Tešín Silesia with Chvalkovský in Berlin on 30 September 1939. Hitler, according to rumors in Prague diplomatic circles, viewed the return favorably and had even hinted at a possible extension of the Protectorate's autonomy. *Ibid.*

¹¹ Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi rule*, 109. Mastny mentioned considerably diminished prospects for a negotiated settlement of the war as one factor which affected the fate of the Tešín project. Britain and France were reluctant to recognize Germany's recent conquests without guarantees against further aggression. Hitler's "peace offer" of 6 October 1939, intended to shift the responsibility for continued war upon them, was not accepted. Another factor, according to Mastny, which affected the fate of the Tešín project, was opposition among the Nazi radicals. The Central Office for Ethnic Germans was appalled that the few Germans in Tešín would have had to live under a Czech government. By 10 October 1939, Hitler had already decided against returning Tešín to the Czechs but he did not notify them of his decision. *Ibid.*

¹² H. Ripka to E. Beneš, 27 October 1939, *AOBM*, vol. 2, Doc. No. 368, 475. Hubert Ripka, living in Paris, conveyed on 27 October 1939 the following message from the Protectorate to Eduard Beneš in London: "A message from Hnevkovský [P. Drtina] and Vít [A. Pešl] from Prague, that [Protectorate President] Hácha and the [Protectorate] Prime Minister should be invited to Berlin, where the enlargement of Protectorate's autonomy and the return of Tešín shall be proposed. In exchange for these promises the Prague government should make "Treugeloebnis" (a loyalty pledge)...." *Ibid.*

their movement.¹³ Ultimately, the Germans dropped their *quid pro quo* strategy in November of 1939, which terminated hopes of Tešín Silesia's return under Prague's control.¹⁴

Unlike their Polish counterparts, the Czecho-Slovak exiles needed to clarify their leadership and certain conceptual questions. Several personalities competed for the leadership of the Slovaks and Czechs in exile. The leading candidates were long-time partners and rivals Štefan Osuský and Edvard Beneš. Both Osuský and Beneš wanted to represent Czecho-Slovakia after its disintegration in March of 1939, but their strategies differed. Osuský, recognized by Paris as Czecho-Slovak Envoy to France even after March 1939, believed he represented the continuity of Czecho-Slovakia. On 2 October 1939 Osuský, acting on behalf of the provisional Czecho-Slovak government, signed with Edouard Daladier a Franco - Czecho-Slovak agreement on reconstitution of the Czecho-Slovak army in France.¹⁵ Beneš, who originally resigned as president of Czechoslovakia on 5 October of 1938 and left for the United States, returned on 18 July 1939, after the March 1939 events, back to London and decided to unite the Czecho-Slovak exiles under his resumed presidential mandate.¹⁶ Osuský and Beneš, trying to exculpate their own activities before and after Munich, blamed each other for the catastrophe and challenged each other's credentials and aspirations to leadership. During the war Osuský diverged more and more from Beneš in his views on Slovak - Czech relations. Therefore, Beneš held Osuský personally responsible for the Slovak - Czech frictions that complicated the

¹³ See the message of a Protectorate resistance member to exiles in London concerning the Protectorate government negotiations, 2 November 1939, *AOBM*, vol. 2, Doc. No. 370, 477-478.

¹⁴ The German *quid pro quo* strategy consisted in linking the loyalty pledge of the Protectorate officials to the extension of the Protectorate's autonomy and the return of the Tešín area. On 20 November 1939 Tešín finally became part of the newly created administrative district of Katowicz. Mastny, *The Czechs under Nazi rule*, 109.

¹⁵ Marek K. Kamiński, *Edvard Beneš kontra gen. Władysław Sikorski* (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 2005), 13.

¹⁶ Kamiński, *Edvard Beneš kontra gen. Władysław Sikorski*, 12.

efforts of Beneš followers, particularly in the early stages of World War II.¹⁷

For some time, the former Czechoslovak Prime Minister Milan Hodža¹⁸ also aspired to lead the Czecho-Slovak exiles and he also contributed to the ongoing debate on the future of Slovak - Czech relations.¹⁹ In the internal struggle for the leadership of the Czecho-Slovak exiles no measures were to be excluded.²⁰ In the early stages of World War II, relations between the Slovaks and the Czechs, and relations with the Slovak Republic in general, represented a very sensitive issue for the Czecho-Slovak exiles in Paris and London, and for the Polish government-in-exile in London. Edvard Beneš remained very consistent and hoped for friendly relations between the future Czechoslovakia and Poland.²¹

The Polish government consistently differentiated the Slovaks from the Czechs and

¹⁷ See the Conversation between E. Beneš and L. Feierabend (9 March 1940), London, 11 March 1940, *AOBM*, vol. 2, Doc. No. 386, 517-518. Edvard Beneš explained to Ladislav K. Feierabend, the former Protectorate minister who had just arrived in London, his frictions with Štefan Osuský. Beneš blamed Osuský for his theory of diplomatic continuity of Czecho-Slovakia. Osuský, who did not resign his post of Minister to France, believed his post represented and guaranteed the diplomatic and legal continuity of Czecho-Slovakia. Osuský's theory and his political activities represented a significant challenge to Beneš and his supporters. In *ibid.* Osuský blamed Beneš for the failure of his pre-Munich foreign policy and pointed to his activities related to the mission of Minister Jaromír Nečas (for details see the Chapter No. 6).

¹⁸ Milan Hodža (1878 - 1944) - Slovak politician and diplomat, Czechoslovak Prime Minister (1935-1938), Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs (1935-1936).

¹⁹ The Paris exile journal *Česko-Slovenský boj* (Czecho-Slovak Struggle) published Hodža's article *Tretia republika* (The Third Republic). The Czech emigrés were particularly annoyed by Hodža's persistent writing of Czecho-Slovak in its hyphenated form, thus visibly denoting the dualistic nature of the future state. See *Česko-Slovenský boj*, roč. I, Nos. 26-28, Paris 1939; quoted in Jan Kuklík and Jan Němeček, *Hodža versus Beneš. Milan Hodža a slovenská otázka v zahraničním odboji za druhé světové války* [Hodža versus Beneš. Milan Hodža and the Slovak Question in the Resistance Abroad during WWII] (Praha: Karolínium, 1999), 51. Beneš commented on Hodža's attitude to Slovak - Czech relations: "...Hodža, for instance, now does not accept Czecho-Slovakia, he demands Czechia and Slovakia." See Diary entry for 6 November 1940, in Jana Čechurová and others, eds., *Válečné denníky Jana Opočenského* [The War Diaries of Jan Opočenský] (Praha: Karolínium, 2001), 52-53.

²⁰ The former Czechoslovak Prime Minister Milan Hodža was one of the possible contenders for the Czecho-Slovak exiled leadership. Hodža's private life was subject to criticism by his political opponents. Beneš agreed with a proposal of the British police to intern Ms. Majerová, an intimate friend of Milan Hodža. See J. Smutný's diary, London, 17 April 1940, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 84, 104-5.

²¹ Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace (hereafter HIA) Stanford, f. P-MSZ, folder 33, box 37, Report for the President of the Polish Republic, dated 27 August 1940; quoted in Kuklík and Němeček, *Hodža versus Beneš*, 124. The report on the status of Czechoslovak-Polish relations prepared for the Polish president Władysław Raczkiewicz by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs communicated Beneš's views: "Relations with Slovakia are internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, therefore, there is no place for any contacts of a political nature with the Slovaks, and especially with the Slovak separatists, if relations with Czechoslovakia should remain friendly." In *ibid.*

emphasized its sympathetic feelings towards Slovakia, which was expected to play an important role in a bloc of friendly states reaching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. While before September of 1938 the Poles did not like the Czechs, the events of March of 1939 gradually brought about a change of mind and the Poles started to regard the Czechs as their allies in a possible future German-Polish conflict.²² Poland recognized the Slovak Republic in March of 1939 and on 1 July 1939 closed the Czecho-Slovak representations in Poland and sequestered their property.²³ Until the outbreak of World War II, Polish official authorities were cool towards the Czecho-Slovak political emigration.

As long as the Polish government and Polish government-in-exile did not recognize the Czechoslovak National Committee, the body recognized by France and Britain as representing the interests of the Slovaks and the Czechs, it was difficult to talk about relations between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland. The Polish government-in-exile had two main objections to institutionalizing its relations with the Czechoslovak National Committee: the leadership question and the strong pro-Soviet inclination of Beneš, a front-runner for the leadership of the Czechoslovak National Committee.²⁴ Edvard Beneš and the Czecho-Slovak exiles viewed Poland's influence on Slovakia

²² V. Henzl's report [on Czecho-Slovak - Polish relations] dated 26 September 1939, in Ivan Štovíček and Jaroslav Valenta, eds., *Československo-polská jednání o konfederaci a spojení 1939-1944: Československé diplomatické dokumenty*. [Czechoslovak - Polish Negotiations of the Establishment of Confederation and Alliance 1939-1944: Czechoslovak Diplomatic Documents] (hereafter *CSPC 39-44*) (Prague: Karolinum and HÚ AV ČR, 1995), 32. V. Henzl, Czecho-Slovak Vice-Consul in Cracow, wrote an analysis of Czecho-Slovak - Polish relations in the fall of 1939. Henzl wrote: "...Before September of 1938 the Poles did not like the Czechs (the word "hated" would perhaps be too strong), after September they despised them. However, the events of March of 1939 gradually changed Polish-Czech relations. The Poles started to regard the Czechs as their allies in a possible future German-Polish conflict..." *Ibid.*

²³ For more see Jan Němeček, *Soumrak a úsvit československé diplomacie. 15. března 1939 a československé zastupitelské úřady* [Twilight and Dawn of Czecho-Slovak Diplomacy. 15 March 1939 and the Czecho-Slovak Legations] (Prague: Academia, 2008), 268-297.

²⁴ Smutný discussed Czechoslovak - Polish relations with Hladký, Czecho-Slovak Legation Counsel in London, on 18 April 1940. Smutný qualified Czechoslovak - Polish relations as politically unclear, given that the Polish government did not recognize the Czechoslovak National Committee. Hladký attributed the main share of blame to Osuský, although his responsibility was difficult to specify and prove. The fact was that under Osuský's influence the following objections circulated in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "1.) it is unclear who is entitled to speak on behalf of the Czechoslovak people, whether Dr. Beneš or Dr. Osuský. It is unclear whether a majority of the Czechoslovaks

as a challenge to Czech-Polish and Czechoslovak - Polish relations: "...this desire to find - via Slovakia - a way to the South and to check possible Czech attempts at a closer link with the East will always be alive in Poland, regardless of the regime and the Polish dimensions."²⁵ The events in Tešín Silesia in 1938 also pulled apart the Czechoslovak and Polish leaders in exile. Edvard Beneš surprised Władysław Sikorski²⁶ by suggesting that Józef Beck went so far with Germany as to submit the ultimatum similar to Hitler's ultimatum regarding Gdańsk.²⁷ Although Beneš backtracked on his claim, he insisted on the striking stylistic similarity of the two ultimatums.²⁸

Early in 1940 the Czechoslovak National Committee in Paris struggled for political recognition as the exile government of Czechoslovakia by the French and British governments as well as for recognition by the Polish government-in-exile. The partnership between the Polish and Czechoslovak exiles inferred a future partnership between Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Beneš group actively sought with the Polish government-in-exile a partnership which would strengthen the legitimacy of the movement.²⁹ Relations with the Slovaks and the Slovak Republic strained relations

stand behind Dr. Beneš. ... 2.) Dr. Beneš is famous for his critical stance towards Poland, he prefers cooperation with Russia and therefore Poland must be suspicious of Beneš's policy." See Conversation of J. Smutný with Hladký, Legation Counsel, London, 18 April 1940, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 85, 105.

²⁵ V. Henzl's report [on Czecho-Slovak - Polish relations] dated 26 September 1939, in *CSPC 39-44*, 32. V. Henzl, Czecho-Slovak Vice-Consul in Cracow, wrote: "The Poles consistently discerned the Slovaks from the Czechs, both officially and unofficially. Following the establishment of the so called Slovak State they continued stressing their warm feelings for Slovakia. The latter was an important factor in Beck's already mentioned conception of a bloc of states reaching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. ...the calculation concerning Poland's future influence on Slovakia. That is why I believe that just this desire to find - via Slovakia - a way to the South and to check the possible Czech attempts at a closer link with the East will always be living in Poland regardless of the regime and the Polish dimensions." *Ibid.*

²⁶ Władysław Eugeniusz Sikorski (1881 - 1943) - Polish military man and politician, Polish Prime Minister (1922-1923), Polish Minister of Defence (1923-1924), Prime Minister of the Polish Government-in-Exile (1939-1943).

²⁷ J. Smutný diary, Paris, 13 October 1939, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 10, 38-40. Władysław Sikorski asked Beneš: "...is it really true Beck went so far with the Germans?" See *Ibid.*

²⁸ J. Smutný diary, Paris, 13 October 1939, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 10, 38-40. Jaroslav Smutný explained: "...he [Beck] asked for the evacuation of four districts, two of them being Czech, and then a plebiscite, however, under Polish occupation. On the contrary, Beneš requested to set up immediately a commission and an occupation based on ethnicity. Beck rejected this." See *Ibid.*

²⁹ In March of 1940, Beneš commented on future relations with Poland: "...We shall not talk with the Poles about our borders, until we have an alliance [with them]." See E. Beneš's visit of Chatham House in Oxford, London, 9 March 1940, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 61, 83-84.

between the Polish government-in-exile and the Czechoslovak National Committee.³⁰ But relations with the Slovaks and the existence of the Slovak Republic affected also Slovak - Czech relations in exile and relations among Czecho-Slovak exiles. Even the critics of the Slovak government found it difficult to overlook certain positive results achieved by Bratislava.³¹

The fall of France in June of 1940 brought an end to the Franco-British policy of “phony war” against Germany. French and British Prime Ministers, Édouard Daladier and Neville Chamberlain, the main protagonists of the Munich Agreement and two determined opponents of Edvard Beneš, resigned.³² After the collapse of France, Štefan Osuský and other political opponents of Beneš in France, lost the support of the French government.³³ Slovak and Czech exiles in Paris left for London. Britain, isolated after the fall of France, needed political and military allies in Europe. Beneš decided to offer the political and military support of the Czecho-Slovak exiles in Britain in exchange for British recognition of his Czechoslovak provisional government.³⁴

In Central and Southeastern Europe, British interests collided the most with Italian and German interests in the Balkans. France abandoned its security ambitions and evacuated the area

³⁰ On the eve of the first anniversary of the disintegration of Czecho-Slovakia, Beneš claimed that Slovakia could not be independent and that the clear majority [of the Slovaks] supported union with the Czechs. See E. Beneš's visit of Chatham House in Oxford, London, 9 March 1940, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 61, 83-84.

³¹ J. Smutný discussed the situation in Slovakia with the Slovak Consul in London Milan Harminc in March of 1940. Harminc strongly insisted on issuing some proclamation on Slovakia. Harminc argued: “The Slovaks have today their state, regardless of its character, they received governmental jobs from their government, therefore it is impossible to easily take away from them [the Slovaks] everything, simply for their return to the Czechoslovak Republic. [Our] propaganda must stress what the Republic would guarantee to them....” See Conversation of J. Smutný with the Slovak Consul in London M. Harminc, London, 11 March 1940, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 62, 84. Harminc denied being a [Slovak] autonomist, and claimed to speak Czech as well as he spoke Slovak, and stressed his mother was Moravian. Harminc professed sincere interest in the cause [of Czechoslovakia]. *Ibid.*

³² Edvard Beneš disliked Édouard Daladier and Neville Chamberlain and others for letting him down at Munich, but allegedly he truly hated only Georges Bonnet, for his deceitful insinuation that Prague had requested the Anglo-French ultimatum. Edward Taborsky, *President Edvard Benes: Between East and West, 1938-1948* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1981) 69-70.

³³ Toman Brod, *Osudný omyl Edvarda Beneše 1939-1948. Československá cesta do sovětského područí* [The Fateful Mistake of Edvard Beneš 1939-1948. The Czecho-Slovak Road to the Soviet Tutelage] (Praha: Academia, 2002), 51.

³⁴ Brod, *Osudný omyl Edvarda Beneše 1939-1948*, 52.

after Munich. Germany gradually edged out Italy and won over British allies by political pressure, war threats and attacks. But even then Britain did not discard its security ambitions in Central and Southeastern Europe and studied various projects for organizing the space between Germany and Russia. One of the most ambitious plans was the project for a Polish - Czechoslovak confederation.³⁵

In the fall of 1940, the prevailing opinion was that the small states between Russia and Germany would not survive after the war and the area would have to be integrated into a larger entity. The Czechoslovak and Polish exiles began to discuss a possible common entity: federation or confederation. The project of a Czechoslovak - Polish entity faced significant obstacles: historical grievances (Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia), new political realities (the existence of the Slovak Republic), but also some prejudices and diverging strategic orientations (the role of the Soviet Union).³⁶

The Polish government-in-exile and the Czechoslovak provisional government on 11 November 1940 made a declaration on the Czechoslovak - Polish confederation. The two governments stated their intention of entering into closer political and economic union after the war. Great Britain supported the joint Czechoslovak - Polish declaration as a move to counter the German plans on a "New European Order."³⁷ The both governments The Czechoslovak - Polish union should

³⁵ Bohuslav Lastovička, *V Londýně za války: zápasy o novou ČSR, 1939-1945* [In London during the War: Struggles for new CSR] (Praha: Svoboda, 1978), 156. See also Bruce Lockhart, *Comes the Reckoning* (London: Putnam, 1947).

³⁶ E. Beneš sent a message to the Protectorate from London, dated 7 October 1940, where he wrote: "...I do not think we, as well as other small states, would exist isolated after the war. The space between Russia and Germany would have to be organized in some larger international entity, federation, or quasifederation. We are beginning to discuss this with the Poles." See *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 102, 130-132. Beneš worried about Slovakia's independence and its impact on the Czechoslovak national unity. He believed if the Czechs could come to terms with the Poles, the Slovak problem would seem easier to handle. He also saw some larger international entity with Poland possible only if the Poles accepted, that the post-war Poland had to be without nobility [*nešlechtické*], without large property owners [*nevelkostatkářské*], strongly social and democratic. Beneš saw Czechoslovak-Polish entity possible only if the Poles accepted, that the post-war Poland would not be and had not to be anti-Russian. He planned to prepare the Russians for that, in order that they did not oppose it. *Ibid.*

³⁷ Marek K. Kamiński, *Edvard Beneš kontra gen. Władysław Sikorski*, 70.

serve as the basis of a new order in Central Europe and would guarantee its stability. Stanisław Stroński³⁸ and Hubert Ripka³⁹ made explanatory statements on the declaration. Stroński stressed the stabilizing effect of the Czechoslovak - Polish union on Central Europe: "So far, all projects in this space, such as the Baltic, Balkan or Little Entente, have proved ineffective in preventing pressure from one side or the other. It is necessary to create a solid base, around which the others could organize."⁴⁰

The joint Czechoslovak - Polish declaration on Czechoslovak - Polish confederation on 11 November 1940 marked a high point in the cooperation between the Czechoslovak and Polish exiles. Prior to the joint declaration, both sides agreed to abstain from discussing territorial questions. Beneš insisted on the restoration of the pre-war Czechoslovak borders, without completely ruling out small border rectifications.⁴¹ Yet, in November of 1940, there seemed so many answered questions of internal⁴² or external nature that some observers even doubted successful restoration of Czechoslovakia altogether. O. D. Skelton, Canadian Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, analyzed in November of 1940 Canada's post-war commitments in Europe:

...How far we can at the present time undertake one-way after-war commitments on the continent of Europe might seem doubtful except to the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the

³⁸ Stanisław Stroński (1882 - 1955) - Polish journalist, academician and politician, deputy for the National Democracy. Minister of Information in the Polish government-in-exile.

³⁹ Hubert Ripka (1895 - 1958) - Czech journalist, diplomat and politician, foreign correspondent of *Lidové noviny*, Czechoslovak State Secretary of Foreign Affairs (1940-1945), Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Trade (1945-1948).

⁴⁰ Lastovička, *V Londýně za války*, 157.

⁴¹ In November 1940 E. Beneš hinted at possible territorial concessions to Poland in the Fryštát area. See diary entry for 6 November 1940: "...As concerns the Polish-Czech negotiations, the declaration shall be published on 11 November 1940. We have not discussed the Těšín question, the president's position is based on the borders of the Czechoslovak Republic. Should it be absolutely necessary, he would be willing to concede Fryštát...." Diary entry for 6 November 1940, in Čechurová, *Válečné denníky Jana Opočenského*, 52-53.

⁴² Beneš commented on Slovak - Czech relations on 6 November 1940: "...The same applies to the Slovaks. This is not a question of the Czech nation's concessions for joint coexistence, the point is, whether the Czech nation shall accept the Slovaks into joint coexistence." See diary entry for 6 November 1940, in Čechurová, *Válečné denníky Jana Opočenského*, 52-53.

League of Nations Society in Canada. Whether there will ever be a complete[ly] independent Poland or Belgium or Czechoslovakia, or whether they will have to seek strength in larger Federations, is one of the questions for the future. At present the trend is certainly against the possibility of Humpty-Dumpty being set up again precisely as before.⁴³

The United States government had problems with the Beneš concept of the continuity of Czecho-Slovakia and continued to recognize Vladimír Hurban⁴⁴ as the Czecho-Slovak Envoy.⁴⁵ Washington hesitated to recognize the Czechoslovak provisional government in London as the Czechoslovak government-in-exile.⁴⁶ The significant influence of Slovak Americans, the existence of the Slovak Republic and Washington's hesitation towards Beneš's provisional government in London led to thoughts of uniting Slovak Americans behind Beneš.⁴⁷ The loyalty or at least neutrality of Slovak Americans, many of whom supported the Slovak Republic and actively lobbied the United States government to accord to Slovakia diplomatic recognition, was a threat to the restoration of

⁴³ See Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Prime Minister, Ottawa, 2 November 1940, in *Documents on Canadian External Relations, 1939 - 1941*, Part I, Vol. 7 (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1974), Doc. No. 305, 218.

⁴⁴ Vladimír Hurban (1883 - 1949) - Slovak military man and diplomat, Czechoslovak chargé d'affaires in Egypt (1924-1930), Czechoslovak Envoy to Sweden, Norway and Lithuania (1930-1937), Czecho-Slovak Envoy in the United States and Cuba (1939-1946).

⁴⁵ Beneš-Smutný conversation, London, 11 May 1941, *AOBM*, vol. 1, Doc. No. 169, 213-4. Vladimír Hurban, recognized by the United States as Czecho-Slovak Envoy, informed London that the "implicit interpretation [of the continuity of Czecho-Slovakia] is dangerous because the last form of the [Czecho-Slovak] Republic that was internationally recognized, was the Munich Republic." Hurban also observed a divergence in the attitudes towards Czecho-Slovakia of the United States, Britain and Soviet Russia: "[The United States of] America recognized it, England recognized Slovakia, Russia not only expelled our [Czecho-Slovak] envoy, but received a Slovak envoy." See *ibid.*

⁴⁶ J. Smutný's comments on the message of V. Hurban from Washington, London, 20 March 1941, *AOBM*, vol. 1, Doc. No. 140, 190. Hurban explained Washington's hesitation to recognize the Beneš government in London: "...they [Washington] do not accept our arguments of continuity. Beneš wrote to Roosevelt as the former president, whereas Rackiewicz was recognized as constitutional president." Hurban viewed the solution in his theory of official non-notification of E. Beneš's abdication in 1938 as an answer to the legalistic dilemma. *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Conversation J. Lichner - J. Smutný, London, 19 March 1941, *AOBM*, vol. 1, Doc. No. 139, 189-190. Ján Lichner argued: "...even though Slovakia demonstrated it could somehow squeeze by, as a small nation it could still not live alone. It must join with somebody, it needs external help. And there is no one else to join with, except the Czechs. On the other hand, the Czechs equally need Slovakia. Slovakia forms a natural geographic appendix to the Czech lands, which could be economically self-sufficient, but as a small island in a German sea without a free East, which should bring in the territory of Slovakia." In *ibid.* Lichner showed Smutný a telegram from the Slovak National Alliance in the United States [*Slovenské národné združenie* - the SNZ], Mudroš [the SNZ] asked him to come to America. Lichner wanted to go, but on the condition that it would help to unite all Slovaks. Lichner agreed with Beneš that ex-patriots should not mix into the arrangements back at home, dictate or sign anything, but the ex-patriots' influence in Slovakia was still significant. See Conversation J. Lichner - J. Smutný, London, 19 March 1941, *AOBM*, vol. 1, Doc. No. 139, 189-190.

Czechoslovakia. In the absence of contacts between the Slovak Republic and the United States, some Slovak Americans hoped to represent Slovak interests in the United States.⁴⁸ Jan Masaryk⁴⁹ in Great Britain and Ján Papánek⁵⁰ in the United States indeed tried to reassure the Slovak Americans that the Slovak interests were properly represented in London.⁵¹

In London, Beneš and the Czechoslovak provisional government found more fertile ground than in Washington, and could ignore Slovak opposition due to the negligible size of the Slovak community. Slovak autonomists in London attempted in the spring of 1941 to enter into the ongoing Czechoslovak - Polish project for a confederation. Peter Prídavok,⁵² leader of a small Slovak autonomist colony in London offered his cooperation to Edvard Beneš in the hope of assuring the political autonomy of Slovakia in the confederation.⁵³ Beneš, however, planned to restore a centralized Czechoslovakia and he continued to ignore Prídavok and his offer to bridge these divergent positions. The Slovak autonomists envisioned expansion of the Czechoslovak - Polish

⁴⁸ For more see Marián Mark Stolarík, "The Slovak League of America and the Canadian Slovak League in the Struggle for the Self-Determination of the Nation, 1907-1992," *Slovakia* XXXIX, nos.72-73, (2007): 7-35.

⁴⁹ Jan (also Ján) Garrigue Masaryk (1886 - 1948) - Czech politician and diplomat, Czechoslovak chargé d'affaires in the United States (1919-1922), Czechoslovak Envoy to Great Britain (1925-1938), Czechoslovak Foreign Minister (1940-1945, 1945-1948).

⁵⁰ Ján Papánek (1896 - 1991) - Slovak politician, Czechoslovak diplomat, Czechoslovak representative at the United Nations (1947-1948).

⁵¹ J. Masaryk to Envoy V. Hurban, London, 13 March 1941, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 136, 188. Jan Masaryk sent assurances to Slovak Americans that Slovak interests would not be overlooked during the negotiations with the Poles [on the confederation]. Masaryk assured them that Beneš would do the same. Jan Masaryk also forwarded Beneš's reply to Ján Papánek regarding the Slovaks: "...It is nonsense to talk about giving up the Slovaks to the Poles. On the contrary, I have heard from some Slovaks about [myself] not being Polonophile enough." *Ibid.*

⁵² Peter Prídavok (1902 - 1966) - Slovak writer, journalist and politician, Head of the Press Bureau of the Slovak government and Head of the Slovak Press Agency (1938-1939), in exile (1939-1940 Paris, since 1940 London).

⁵³ Letter of Peter Prídavok to Eduard Beneš, London, 22 April 1941, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 160, 204-205. Peter Prídavok and his group supported the autonomy of Slovakia within Czechoslovakia and, in fact, insisted upon a common state, believing that the national existence of the Slovaks and Czechs would be jeopardized if they lived separately. Prídavok acknowledged that the official program of the provisional government did not respect the demands of the Slovak nation, but he hoped to bring divergent positions closer, on the understanding that the final say would belong to the Slovaks and Czechs at home. *Ibid.*

entity with other neighboring states.⁵⁴

The Soviet Union played an important and increasingly dominating role in E. Beneš's foreign policy. Beneš considered the Soviet Union's role essential for the defeat of Germany, which was a condition *sine qua non* for the restoration of Czechoslovakia. He hoped friendly relations with the Soviet Union might guarantee Czechoslovakia's security against Germany after the war. Beneš cultivated friendly relations with the Soviet Union and bid for Soviet support of his activities. He was ready to overlook some violations of international law by the Soviet Union and downplayed the annexation and Sovietization of the Baltic states - because they "were part of the Tsar's empire" - which could only worry his Polish partners.⁵⁵

The friendship between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union weighed heavily upon Czechoslovak - Polish relations. Beneš tried to persuade Polish leaders not to antagonize the Soviet Union and Stalin.⁵⁶ This was a difficult task indeed, given the fact that Poland was *de facto* at war with the Soviet Union.⁵⁷ Beneš downplayed worries about the orientation of his government and about the eventual communization of Czechoslovakia. He hoped to weather the Soviet pressure on his government and believed the maturity of the population would prevent the communization of the government and the state.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Peter Pridavok explained: "...Our goal is - as it was, in the past, for the Slovak autonomists led by Andrej Hlinka - the creation of the most intimate union with the brotherly Polish nation, so in this bloc, reiterated in time with participation of other neighborly nations.... See *ibid*.

⁵⁵ Brod, *Osudný omyl Edvarda Beneše 1939-1948*, 53.

⁵⁶ Brod compares Beneš's appeasement of the Soviet Union with the activities of the former British Prime Minister: "As once British Prime Minister Chamberlain had advised Beneš not to provoke Hitler by his obstinacy and recommended him to be conciliatory, now Beneš advised Sikorski to do the same vis-à-vis the Soviet leadership...." Brod, *Osudný omyl Edvarda Beneše 1939-1948*, 68.

⁵⁷ Marek K. Kamiński, *Edvard Beneš kontra gen. Władysław Sikorski* (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 2005), 16.

⁵⁸ Brod, *Osudný omyl Edvarda Beneše 1939-1948*, 124, 133. Beneš countered Soviet worries about the composition of his "Rightist" government: "I will tell them directly, if this is your condition, I am not ready to accept it. You could recognize the [Slovak] government of [Jozef] Tiso, so why could you not recognize mine as well?" *Ibid.*, 124.

The German - Soviet war in June of 1941 modified the character of World War II and altered the *status quo* in Central Europe. The previous German - Soviet alliance turned into a conflict and inevitably affected also the Slovak - Czech - Polish triangle. The Slovak Republic participated in the military campaign against the Soviet Union. The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was spared direct military participation but its economic contribution was significant.⁵⁹ The Slovaks, Czechs and Poles, whether in exile or at home, became involved at World War II. Central Europe again became a theater of war.⁶⁰

The outbreak of the German-Soviet war on 22 June 1941 had important consequences for the diplomatic recognition of the Czechoslovak exile movement. Czechoslovak exiles in London welcomed the war, which they hoped, would restore Czechoslovakia.⁶¹ The Soviet Union signed an agreement on cooperation with Britain on 12 July 1941 and on 18 July 1941 an agreement with the Czechoslovak provisional government. This surprised the Polish government-in-exile, which expected a coordinated approach towards the Soviet Union.⁶² On 18 July 1941 the Soviet Union and Britain accorded the Czechoslovak provisional government full recognition and established diplomatic relations. The Soviet government was the first to recognize Beneš's provisional

⁵⁹ The Protectorate representatives debated possible participation in the German military campaign against the Soviet Union. Brod writes: "Hácha discussed with von Neurath possible Czech military participation in a war against bolshevism. Neurath found this idea not feasible, not only from a technical and organizational point of view, but also because Germany valued 'the work of the Czech nation in the factories and in the fields, which would be jeopardized [by participation in the war].' Neurath had already spoken with Hitler about Czech military participation in the war, but he did not expect it. Neurath himself was not even inclined to examine voluntary formations, not to mention compulsory military service. ...Hácha returned to Czech military participation once again, in 1943, when he proposed to K. H. Frank to send Czech troops to the front." Brod, *Osudný omyl Edvarda Beneše 1939-1948*, 154.

⁶⁰ War activities returned to Central Europe. Borodovčák wrote that at the end of July 1943 Soviet airplanes air-dropped near Warsaw two Communist emissaries Karol Bacilek and Karol Šmidke, destined for the resistance in Slovakia. See Jiří Doležal and Jozef Hrozienčík, *Medzinárodná solidarita v Slovenskom národnom povstaní* [International Solidarity in the Slovak National Uprising] (Bratislava: Osveta, 1959), 142-3; quoted in Viktor Borodovčák et al., *Poliaci a my* [The Poles and Us] (Bratislava: Osveta, 1964), 153.

⁶¹ Eduard Beneš's conversation with the Soviet Envoy I. M. Majski, London, 12 July 1941, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 198, 240-243.

⁶² Eugeniusz Duraczyński, ed., *Układ Sikorski-Majski. Wybór dokumentów* (Warszawa, 1990), 26.

Czechoslovak government in London as the Czechoslovak government-in-exile. Britain recognized Eduard Beneš and his provisional government as the Czechoslovak government-in-exile but remained unenthusiastic regarding Czechoslovak - Soviet cooperation as London worried about undue Soviet influence in Central Europe. Beneš's concept of post-war Central Europe, in London's view, contemplated an overly active Soviet role in guaranteeing its integrity and security against Germany.⁶³

The alignment of the Soviet Union with Britain and its allies against Germany and its allies affected relations between the Polish and Czechoslovak governments-in-exile. The Soviet Union occupied a part of Poland, and Poland was *de facto* at war with the Soviet Union.⁶⁴ Now the Soviet Union fought against Germany, and Britain acclaimed the Soviet Union as its ally. The activist role of the Soviet Union in Central European affairs posed a challenge for the ongoing Czechoslovak - Polish negotiations on confederation. Beneš insisted the Poles reach an agreement with Russia.⁶⁵ The question of their mutual borders interested all parties and Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Soviet Union had irreconcilable and contradictory claims. Poland wanted the Soviet Union to recognize the borders of 1939, Poland could not accept the Soviet term national Poland. Czechoslovakia insisted on the principle of continuity its borders. Beneš sounded conciliatory on Subcarpathian Rus, it could

⁶³ Eduard Beneš's conversation with the Soviet Envoy I. M. Majski, London, 12 July 1941, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 198, 240-243. Beneš explained: "...I have told Lockhart about our understanding with Russia. I did not want the English to learn about it from some other side.... ...And it should be clear to them, that the Russians initiated the first contact and conversation and that we have not asked for anything. On the contrary, the Russians came with an offer [for a meeting]. This is important, because I have deduced from Lockhart's reactions, that the English are not unduly enthusiastic over that. I have told him candidly: Is it our fault, that we have been waiting for so long for your recognition? Should I refuse the Russian proposal, because you have been silent for weeks, because you have not appointed an ambassador, because we have been here [recognized only as] the provisional government? Nobody could ask this from me." *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Kamiński, *Eduard Beneš kontra gen. Władysław Sikorski*, 16.

⁶⁵ Eduard Beneš's conversation with the Soviet Envoy I. M. Majski, London, 12 July 1941, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 198, 240-243. Beneš explained Majski: "We have not committed ourselves to anything and we still insist the Poles reach an agreement with Russia. Majskij agreed with our policy of confederation with Poland, I had to explicitly confirm that it is a confederation, not a federation." *Ibid.*

belong to Czechoslovakia or to the Soviet Union and the outcome would be decided by them only.⁶⁶

The future organization of Central Europe and the role of the Soviet Union in it towered above the border issues. Beneš believed that a Czechoslovak - Polish confederation accepted by Russia, would prevent a future aggression of Germany in Central Europe. Beneš anticipated that Russia and the Slavs would play a dominant role in post-war Europe, even if some of Beneš's collaborators doubted the possibility of Poland's rapprochement with Russia. Beneš relied more on Russia's post-war influence and believed the Russians would reconcile with Europe and nobody would recall Bolshevism.⁶⁷

As work on the common Czechoslovak - Polish entity progressed, both sides became more rigid in their positions. It then became obvious to what extent past events, particularly those of 1938, burdened relations between the Czechoslovak and Polish governments-in-exile. Edvard Beneš sent a memorandum to Władysław Sikorski, dated 29 October 1941, with his summary of past Czechoslovak - Polish relations. Beneš tried to vindicate his activities and insisted that the Czechoslovak - Polish borders had been fairly and conclusively settled.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Eduard Beneš's conversation with the Soviet Envoy I. M. Majski, London, 12 July 1941, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 198, 240-243. Beneš wrote: "...Majskij described the first meeting with the Poles at the Foreign Office. ...Zaleski demanded the Russians should recognize the borders of 1939, because the Poles could not accept the term national Poland. ...I have explained to Majskij my view of the question of our borders. I have left him in no doubt about what would mean for us [our] having a common border with Russia, but also for Russian security. I have told him frankly we insist on the principle of continuity [of our borders] including the question of Subcarpathian Rus. It belongs to Czechoslovakia. But our position [on Subcarpathian Rus] which I communicate to everyone. Subcarpathian Rus could belong only either to us or to Russia. And the outcome shall be decided by us and the Russians, otherwise, it is nobody else's business. We shall not give it up at any cost...." *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Eduard Beneš's conversation with the Soviet Envoy I. M. Majski, London, 12 July 1941, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 198, 240-243. Beneš wrote: "...Majskij agreed with our policy of confederation with Poland.... ...Should the Poles be wise, we could organize Europe, that would prevent war [in the future]. Our confederation with Poland, supported [*patronovana*] by Russia, would create a barrier between Germany and Russia...." *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ E. Beneš's Memorandum to W. Sikorski, London, 29 October 1941, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No.71, 138-143. Beneš admitted some past mistakes in policy against Poland, but argued he had never approved those things, and eventually he had modified them right away. Beneš denied his letter to President Moscicki in September of 1938 expressed a need to correct a mistake committed against Poland. He blamed Col. Beck for a very aggressive policy against Czechoslovakia after the signing of the Polish-German non-aggression treaty. Beneš himself considered the border between Poland and Czechoslovakia fairly and conclusively settled. *Ibid.* Sikorski replied to E. Beneš on 25 July

In 1941 - 1942, the Czechoslovak - Polish talks on confederation achieved some progress and both governments in exile remained optimistic about their outcome. In November of 1941 Beneš stated that the establishment of a Czechoslovak - Polish confederation was realistic. Beneš hoped that other Central and East European states, such as Austria, Hungary and perhaps Romania could join the Czechoslovak - Polish confederation.⁶⁹ On 19 January 1942 Hubert Ripka and Eduard Raczynski⁷⁰ signed, on behalf of the Czechoslovak and Polish governments in exile, a 14-point declaration, which outlined the details of the future confederation between Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁷¹ Polish - Soviet relations, and especially the question of common borders, weighed heavily upon the fate of the Czechoslovak - Polish confederation. The Soviet Union insisted on friendly relations with Poland and Beneš accepted it as a precondition for Soviet support to Czechoslovak - Polish cooperation.⁷²

Czechoslovakia and Poland remained committed to a Czechoslovak - Polish confederation despite their divergent views on the territorial integrity of the future Poland and Czechoslovakia. In the summer and fall of 1942, Britain and France distanced themselves from the Munich Agreement. The British government informed the Czechoslovak government-in-exile on 5 August 1942 that Britain would no longer be bound by the Munich Agreement. Then the French National Committee

1942. See W. Sikorski's Letter to E. Beneš, London, 25 July 1942, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No. 122, 234-237.

⁶⁹ *Čechoslovák*, 14 November 1941, quoted in Lastovička, *V Londýně za války*, 161. Beneš made his claim in the exile newspaper *Čechoslovák*, dated 14 November 1941, *Ibid*.

⁷⁰ Eduard Bernard Raczynski (1891 - 1993) - Polish writer, diplomat and politician, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs (1941 - 1943), Polish President in exile (1979 - 1986).

⁷¹ Lastovička, *V Londýně za války*, 164.

⁷² E. Beneš's comments on his conversation with the Soviet Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov, London, 9-10 June 1942, *AOBM*, vol. 1, Doc. No. 222, 271-274. E. Beneš discussed Czechoslovak - Soviet relations and the Czechoslovak - Polish - Soviet "triangle" with the Soviet Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov in London on 9-10 June 1942. Beneš provided the following description of his conversation with Molotov: "Do you have any objections to this [Czechoslovak] policy with the Poles? Yes or no? To this he [Molotov] replied: *Budut-li nasi otnosenija v Polsce družestvenyja, net*. [Should our relations with Poland be friendly, no.] I answered: *nebudut-li Vasi otnosenija s Polsoj družestvenyja, konfederacyji nebudet*. [Should your relations with Poland not be friendly, there will be no confederation. This is an acceptable formula. Molotov also accepted it, I think, I have dissipated his concerns." In *Ibid*.

in London informed the Czechoslovak government-in-exile on 29 September 1942 of its decision to repudiate the Munich Agreement. As a reaction to these decisions the Polish government-in-exile approached the British government and the French National Committee with a view to ensuring that the Czechoslovak territories annexed in 1938 by Poland would not be affected by the British and French decisions.⁷³

A plurality of opinions on the future borders existed even within the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London. On 7 January 1942, Ján Paulíny-Tóth,⁷⁴ Slovak member of the State Council, proposed in the political committee of the Council a certain flexibility regarding the future borders of Czechoslovakia. Paulíny-Tóth suggested that Czechoslovakia should consider the possible restoration of Orava and Spiš to Slovakia for the border concessions to Poland in Tešín Silesia. Paulíny-Tóth inquired: "...should the [Czechoslovak] Foreign Ministry need to cede something [territory] in Teschen [Tešín] Silesia [to Poland], whether a compensation - a return of Orava and Spiš to Slovakia - could not be considered."⁷⁵

The Polish government-in-exile insisted on the reconstitution of Poland's borders as of 1 September 1939, which implied that Orava and Spiš, as well as Tešín Silesia, would remain under Polish jurisdiction. The Polish National Council unanimously resolved on 20 February 1943 that the "integrity of Poland's territory in its borders of 1 September 1939, and its sovereignty, are untouchable and indivisible."⁷⁶ The Polish government-in-exile informed the Czechoslovak government-in-exile of the decision of the Polish National Council (PNC) concerning the

⁷³ Statement by Hubert Ripka at the State Council, 17 May 1943 reported in *Čechoslovák*, 21 May 1943; quoted in Lastovička, *V Londýně za války*, 173.

⁷⁴ Ján Paulíny - Tóth (1903 - 1966) - Slovak politician, President of the Slovak National Party (1938-1939), Deputy Speaker of the Czechoslovak State Council in London.

⁷⁵ Lastovička, *V Londýně za války*, 257-258.

⁷⁶ *Čechoslovák*, 5 March 1943; quoted in Lastovička, *V Londýně za války*, 173.

inviolability of the Polish territorial integrity as of 1 September 1939. The Czechoslovak government-in-exile reacted by issuing an official protest against the Polish note on the PNC decision.⁷⁷

The question of the Slovak - Polish frontier in the Orava and Spiš regions bedeviled Slovak - Polish relations. The Slovak authorities and the Vatican modified ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the districts returned to Slovakia in 1939.⁷⁸ The Slovak government paid attention to living and educational conditions in the districts in Orava and Spiš returned to Slovakia.⁷⁹ The government faced a lack of Slovak teachers and priests, all of the previous teachers were of Polish nationality and had left, whereas some of the previous priests were allowed to stay.⁸⁰ The Ministry of Education in Bratislava sent the required Slovak teachers to the 34 returned schools with 6,037 registered students.⁸¹ Each student received textbooks and school supplies provided by the *Slovenská liga* (the Slovak League), the *Spolok Oravcov* (the Society of the Oravians) or the *Spolok Svätého Vojtecha*

⁷⁷ Lastovička, *V Londýně za války*, 261.

⁷⁸ For details see I. Kamenec, V. Prečan, S. Škorvánek, eds., *Vatikán a Slovenská republika (1939-1945). Dokumenty* [Vatican and the Slovak Republic (1939-1945). Documents] (Bratislava: Slovak Academic Press, 1992), and in particular: Orsenigo to Cardinal Maglione, Berlin, 16 September 1939, Doc. No. 9, 29; Maglione to Orsenigo, Vatican, 18 September 1939, Tel. No.115, Doc. No.10, 30; Orsenigo to Cardinal Maglione, Berlin, 20 September 1939, Tel. No.344, Doc. No. 11, 30-31; Msgr.Tardini to Orsenigo, Vatican, 22 September 1939, Tel. No.117, Doc. No.12, 31; Maglione to Orsenigo, Vatican, 29 September 1939, Doc. No.13, 31-32; Kapala to Msgr.Tardini, Rome, 3 October 1939, Doc. No. 14, 32-33; Cardinal Maglione to Orsenigo, Vatican, 5 October 1939, Doc. No.15, 34; Orsenigo to Cardinal Maglione, Berlin, 4 December 1939, Report No.264, Doc. No. 18, 37-38; Cardinal Maglione to Orsenigo, Vatican, 16 December 1939, Doc. No.20, 41-42; Report on the Conversation with Msgr.Tardini, Karol Sidor to MFA, Vatikan, 23 February 1944, Doc. No. 112, 178-180; all in *ibid.*

⁷⁹ The districts in Orava and Spiš returned to Slovakia after the German-Polish war in 1939 represented a total of 34 towns and villages with approximately 30,000 inhabitants. President Jozef Tiso visited the districts in Orava and Spiš returned to Slovakia in the spring of 1940. See Józef Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 117.

⁸⁰ Zieliński writes that K. Machaj and Buroň, Polonophiles, were allowed to stay in the Orava and Spiš districts returned to Slovakia, because they were considered Slovaks. See Zieliński, "Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945," 117.

⁸¹ Peter Zmátlo, *Dejiny Slovenskej ligy na Spiši* [A History of the Slovak League in Spiš] (Krakow: Towarzystwo Słowaków w Polsce, 2007), 93-94.

(St. Adalbert Society).⁸² On the other side of the border all these measures corresponded to Slovakization of the incorporated districts of Spiš and Orava.⁸³

Karol Sidor⁸⁴ and Kazimierz Papée,⁸⁵ Slovak and Polish envoys to the Holy See, maintained very cordial relations throughout the war. However, they could not reconcile their opposing views on the question of the Slovak - Polish borders. Sidor discussed the border-related issues with Papée in October 1943. Papée argued that Polish territorial concessions in the South (to Slovakia) would necessarily imply Polish territorial concessions in the East (to the Soviet Union). Sidor insisted that the Munich Agreement was no longer valid. Therefore, the territorial *status quo ante* was guaranteed. Papée denied any relevance of the Munich Agreement for the Slovak - Polish border: “Poles were against Munich, they were not invited and the Poles took possession of those regions from the Czechs and Slovaks on the basis of the Prague-Warsaw and the Bratislava-Warsaw agreements.”⁸⁶ Sidor attributed Polish actions in the fall of 1938 to Munich, whereas Papée denied any link between them. Sidor viewed Slovak - Polish border reconciliation with scepticism: “We decided to leave this question open.... Yet the Poles took [the Slovak territory] in November of 1938, claiming it was Polish. How could it be Polish when it had belonged to Slovakia for a thousand years? One really needs a lot of goodwill to not lose sight of the big issue because of the small border issues.”⁸⁷

⁸² Zmátlo, *Dejiny Slovenskej ligy na Spiši*, 95. According to Zmátlo, the *Spolok Sv. Vojtecha* (the St. Adalbert Society) bought textbooks and schools supplies for 166,148.80 Slovak crowns. The *Slovenská liga* (the Slovak League) donated the textbooks and school supplies for 13,634 Slovak crowns. *Ibid.*

⁸³ See Janusz Berghauzen, “Przedmowa do wydania I,” in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 6.

⁸⁴ Karol Sidor (1901 - 1953) - Slovak politician and diplomat, Slovak Minister to the Holy See (1939-1945). Sidor was considered a Polonophile and maintained long-term friendly relations with Kazimierz Papée.

⁸⁵ Kazimierz Papée (1889 - 1979) - Polish diplomat, Polish Ambassador to the Holy See (1939 - 1958).

⁸⁶ See the Diary of Karol Sidor from 1943, a record of Sidor’s conversation with Papée on 26 October 1943, quoted in Jan Kuklík and Jan Němeček, *Proti Benešovi! Česká a slovenská protibenešovská opozice v Londýně 1939-1945* [Against Beneš! Czech and Slovak anti-Beneš Opposition in London 1939-1945] (Prague: Karolínium, 2004), 366.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 366.

The Czechoslovak government-in-exile tried to preserve its exclusive jurisdiction over the question of Slovakia and the Slovaks. This premise, that Slovakia and the Slovaks were off the agenda in discussions with the Polish partners, was resolutely and repeatedly communicated to the Poles. Beneš insisted on the importance of a strong Czechoslovakia for Central Europe and conditioned Czechoslovak strength through his view of “Czechoslovak” unity. The Czechoslovak government, particularly its President Beneš, thus postulated Czechoslovak [national] unity as a *conditio sine qua non* for its integrity and strength.⁸⁸

The Czechoslovak concept of the pre-Munich borders and the Polish concept of the pre-September 1, 1939 borders seemed to stall the progress of the Czechoslovak - Polish negotiations in mid-1942. Both sides tried to persuade the other of its justice and truth. In July of 1942 Sikorski belatedly replied to the Beneš’s memorandum of October of 1941. In his letter Sikorski refused to apply the principle of collective guilt to Czechoslovak - Polish relations, and tried to distinguish between the individual political responsibility of the respective Czechoslovak and Polish statesmen and the political responsibility of the Slovak and Czech and Polish nations. Sikorski explained that the whole Polish nation received the Spa decision as unjust, wrong and politically imposed. Poland voiced its official protest against the solution adopted regarding Tešín Silesia through its representative in Paris, Jan Paderewski, and its Prime Minister Wincenty Witos.⁸⁹ Sikorski believed that the Polish nation’s opinion on the problem of Tešín Silesia could not absolve the government

⁸⁸ Eduard Beneš’s Minutes of His Conversations with W. Sikorski and Other Polish Politicians, London, 20 September 1940, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No. 24, 54-5. Eduard Beneš: “...We talked about Slovakia. I stated resolutely my opinions on Czechoslovak [national] unity. They [the Poles] accepted that they’re interested in a strong Czechoslovakia and, hence, in its unity, and that they should not and must not interfere in this matter. I reminded them that Hlinka arrived to Paris in 1920 [sic] with a Polish passport.” *Ibid.* Beneš stated incorrectly the date of Hlinka’s travel. Hlinka arrived in Paris in August and in September of 1919.

⁸⁹ Wincenty Witos (1874 - 1945) - Polish politician, member of the Polish People's Party (PSL), member of parliament in the Galician *Sejm* (1908–1914) and *Reichsrat* in Vienna (1911-1918), Chair of the Polish Liquidation Commission (*Polska Komisja Likwidacyjna*) in 1918, Polish Prime Minister (1920-1921, 1923, 1926).

of its duty to defend the territorial integrity of Poland.⁹⁰

The Czechoslovak government-in-exile considered the Polish annexations of 1938 as a Munich-related event. Therefore, Beneš and his government expected that Poland, as well as Britain and France, would reject their actions related to the Munich Agreement. Beneš made the *status quo ante* Munich a precondition of future talks with Poland. Beneš expected Poland would return everything annexed after Munich and proposed that Czechoslovakia would return to Poland Orava and Spiš annexed by Slovakia in 1939. Only then would Czechoslovakia be willing to enter into discussions with Poland.⁹¹ Bilateral talks bogged down and increasing polemics led the Czechoslovak and Polish representatives in exile to admit that their cooperation and contacts with other exile governments were more productive.⁹²

The question of Slovakia and the Slovaks, and the question of Tešín Silesia, topped the list of controversies the Czechoslovak government wished to settle between Czechoslovakia and Poland. At the Czechoslovak - Polish “summit” meeting between the Czechoslovak President in exile Beneš with his Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, and the Polish Premier in exile Sikorski with his Foreign Minister Eduard Raczynski, in November of 1942, both sides discussed the issues detrimental to

⁹⁰ W. Sikorski's Letter to E. Beneš, London, 25 July 1942, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No. 122, 234-237. Sikorski refused to blame the whole “Czechoslovak” nation for the decisions of its government. Similarly, he declined to blame the Polish nation for the “erroneous policy conducted by Colonel Beck.” Sikorski confirmed that the whole Polish nation, in 1920 and afterwards, dealt with the Spa solution as imposed and maintained it in its collective memory as highly unjust and wrong. Sikorski recalled the protests of Wicenty Witos and Jan Paderewski against the decision regarding Tešín Silesia. Sikorski believed the opinion of the Polish nation on Tešín Silesia could not absolve the Polish government of its obligation to defend the integrity of the state, which it represented. *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Extract from E. Beneš's Minutes of His Conversation with P. B. Nichols, London, 18 September 1942, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No. 134, 258-259. Beneš discussed Czechoslovak - Polish relations with P. B. Nichols: “...On this occasion I have alluded to Munich and Těšín [Tešín] and stressed that we need to also demand of the Poles that they compensate Munich. We shall demand the same of France. We demand that the Poles return what they have taken, we shall return what the Slovaks have taken since 1938 [sic], and then we will see how we can find agreement on all other issues. *Ibid.*”

⁹² J. Hejret's Minutes of His Conversation with W. Kulski, London, 29 October 1942, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No. 141, 269. W. Kulski informed J. Hejret that contacts with more distant countries - for instance with Belgium, the Netherlands - were developing better than contacts with Czechoslovakia. *Ibid.*

their cooperation. As regards Slovakia, the Polish government claimed its anticipated alliance with Czechoslovakia would demonstrate, *via facti*, that the question of Slovakia did not exist for the Polish government. E. Beneš proposed that the Poles solemnly reject their forceful annexation of 1938, and the Czechoslovak government solemnly reject the annexation of Polish territory by the Slovak government in 1939. Beneš expressed a willingness to go even further and to guarantee that the Slovaks who were responsible for the annexation of the Polish territory, would be hanged. Only this radical solution would allow a Czechoslovak - Polish agreement on the future borders. Raczynski questioned the applicability of the measures proposed by Beneš. Furthermore, the acceptance of this solution in Tešín Silesia would weaken the Polish prospects of defending integrity of their border with the Soviet Union.⁹³

In the spring of 1943, a stalemate in Czechoslovak - Polish negotiations on the confederation developed into a crisis in Czechoslovak - Polish relations. The differences in the Czechoslovak and the Polish evaluations of the significance of the Soviet Union for cooperation in Central Europe and the Tešín problem completely halted already strained progress.⁹⁴ The Czechoslovak and Polish governments in exile continued attempting to vindicate their interpretation of the events of 1938 and 1939 and the remedies they proposed to correct them. Poland insisted on the integrity of its territory as of 1 September 1939 whereas Czechoslovakia insisted on the integrity of its territory in the pre-Munich borders. The Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs informed his Polish partner on 4 March 1943 that Czechoslovakia could not acknowledge the territorial changes imposed in connection with Munich. The Polish Foreign Minister Raczynski replied on 19 March 1943 and

⁹³ H. Ripka's Minutes of E. Beneš's and J. Masaryk's Conversation with W. Sikorski and E. Raczynski. London, 23 November 1942, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No. 150, 282-285.

⁹⁴ Instruction of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs to All Representatives, London, 3 December 1942, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No. 155, 291-2.

pointed to the Polish National Council's decision of 20 February 1943 on the integrity of Polish territory as of 1 September 1939.⁹⁵

The stalemate in Czechoslovak - Polish relations developed into a full-blown crisis as background to the fallout of the Katyn controversy evolving between Poland and the Soviet Union in 1943. The Soviet Union used the controversy as a pretext for breaking its diplomatic relations with the Polish government.⁹⁶ The Katyn controversy⁹⁷ further deepened the chasm between the Czechoslovak and Poland governments in exile. The Czechoslovak State Council adopted on 19 May 1943 a resolution which condemned anti-Soviet propaganda culminating in what the Czechoslovak government termed the "so-called" Katyn massacre. The Czechoslovak State Council criticized Poland for insisting on the Polish annexation of Czechoslovak territories in Tešín Silesia and Slovakia in 1938. The State Council also criticized Poland for supporting the Czechoslovak opposition.⁹⁸

Czechoslovak - Polish relations changed dramatically between November of 1940 and May of 1943. In May of 1943 the Czechoslovak and Polish governments publicly aired their differences

⁹⁵ E. Raczynski's Diplomatic Note to J. Masaryk, London, 19 March 1943, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No. 167, 312-313. E. Raczynski informed J. Masaryk about the Polish National Council's decision of 20 February 1943 on the integrity of Poland's territory as of 1 September 1939. Raczynski replied to Masaryk's diplomatic note of 4 March 1943, in which Masaryk made it known that Czechoslovakia would not acknowledge territorial changes effected to its detriment in connection with Munich. Raczynski argued: "...Even if the arguments invoked by the two governments regarding the principle of territorial integrity are of a different nature, its practical application [*son application pratique ne comporte qu'une seule contradiction*] leads to only one contradiction, that is concerning the territory whose sovereignty was transferred on 1 October 1938 from Czechoslovakia to Poland." *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Marek K. Kamiński, *Edvard Beneš we współpracy z Kremlm* (Warszawa, 2009), 24.

⁹⁷ The Katyn controversy (1940) - known as the Katyn massacre, a mass execution of estimated 22,000 Polish nationals carried out by the Soviet secret police in April-May 1940, discovered and reported by Germany in 1943, denied by the Soviet Union, led to a rupture in diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the Polish government-in-exile in London.

⁹⁸ Resolution of the Czechoslovak State Council, London 19 May 1943, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No. 181, 335-337. The Czechoslovak State Council in London condemned on 19 May 1943 "the anti-Soviet propaganda culminating in the so-called Katyn massacre." The Council noted that while Great Britain had denounced Munich, Poland had not expressed itself and insisted upon the annexation carried out in 1938. The Czechoslovak State Council criticized the Polish National Council for its public affirmations of the Polish claim to the Czechoslovak territories in Tešín Silesia and in Slovakia. *Ibid.*

on controversial issues, such as the role of the Soviet Union and the common Czechoslovak - Polish borders in Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia. Both sides blamed the other for breaking their gentlemen's agreement and made their arguments.⁹⁹

The deterioration of Czechoslovak - Polish relations and the advance of the Red Army into Central Europe in 1944 stimulated considering alternative projects of Central European cooperation or the projects that were put on hold due to the Czechoslovak - Polish project of confederation. Czechoslovak representatives monitored the discussions held in Polish emigration circles about the confederative or federative arrangement for Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, some ideas represented a direct threat to the integrity and even the very existence of Czechoslovakia. The Polish initiative of establishing a Catholic bloc of states with Poland, Slovakia and the Ukraine challenged the authority of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile. Another initiative of a federation or a group of states under Polish control proposed to include Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia, Russia and a part of the Ukraine, eventually also Eastern Prussia and Upper Silesia, into planned entity.¹⁰⁰

Polish Prime Minister Sikorski died in a still not fully explained air crash off Gibraltar on 4 July 1943. Sikorski's death deprived the Polish cause of an internationally respected leader. His successor, Stanisław Mikołajczyk, the new prime minister, was shrewd and able but lacked Sikorski's authority.¹⁰¹ Sikorski's attitude towards the Soviet Union and its role in Central Europe

⁹⁹ H. Ripka's Letter to E. Raczyński, London 8 June 1943, *CSPC 39-44*, Doc. No. 185, 341-343. H. Ripka wrote to react to E. Raczyński's address at the Polish National Council on 25 May 1943, in which Raczyński commented on Ripka's exposé at the Czechoslovak State Council on 17 May 1943 on Czechoslovak - Polish relations. Ripka observed that the present situation greatly differed as to the agreed restraint in matters concerning the Cieszyn Silesia, Spiš and Orava, which formed the initial basis of the 11 November 1940 declaration. *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *CSPC 39-44*, n. 354. Major Václav Pán, Czechoslovak liaison officer in Portugal, informed from Lisbon on 12 June 1943 that Poland strived to establish under its direct control a federation or a group of states to include Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Russia and a part of the Ukraine, with Eastern Prussia, Upper Silesia and Cieszyn Silesia. *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 268.

had been critical.¹⁰² Sikorski viewed the Soviet Union's alignment with the Allies against Germany as a "catastrophe."¹⁰³ Sikorski strongly condemned Beck's conduct against Czechoslovakia, however; he never admitted Poland had to repair injustices committed by Beck against Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak government hoped Sikorski's departure would help to alter what it viewed as Polish inflexibility towards the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁴

The Czechoslovak government closely monitored all attempts to resolve the question of Slovakia and the Slovaks outside of its exclusive control. Beneš and the government negatively viewed any individual contact with Slovakia. When Sweden decided to receive Slovak Consul Dr. Štefan Pisko¹⁰⁵ the Czechoslovak government called it an openly unfriendly act.¹⁰⁶

The break in Polish - Soviet relations contrasted with the rapprochement between the Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak government-in-exile. Whereas the Soviet Union did not rush into diplomatic relations with Stanislaw Mikołajczyk, it wanted to speed up signing the political

¹⁰² See for example Alexander John Opaliński, "Diplomatic Compromise: General Władysław Sikorski's Soviet Policy and the Alliance of July 30, 1941 as a 'Third Way' Alternative For Polish Soviet Relations During the Second World War" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2006).

¹⁰³ J. Smutný's thoughts on W. Sikorski (who died tragically 4 July 1943 near Gibraltar), London, 5 July 1943, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 287, 345-347. J. Smutný wrote [about Sikorski after the fall of France]: "...Our mutual relations with Russia cast a shadow over our mutual negotiations; Dr. Beneš resolutely reminded Sikorski that he counted for certain, that Russia would find itself in the war at our side; here Sikorski replied with one sentence: 'Ça serait une catastrophe.'" *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* J. Smutný wrote: "...Sikorski's relation to us regarding *Těšínsko* [Tešín Silesia] was strange; Sikorski strongly condemned Beck's conduct, however he never declared, that he recognizes today's Poland has to repair an injustice, committed by Beck's Poland against us." *Ibid.* Smutný admitted Czechoslovakia's responsibility: "...Blame was not on the Czechoslovak side, that we came there where we are - at the most I could say, that in my humble opinion, we did not set up the Teschen [Tešín] question correctly, we should have insisted from the beginning that we have to remove the rock from [our] road, which was and is the biggest obstacle. ...What is the point of having this agreement, if both sides knew one thing: each side claims the disputed territories and does not want to abandon it and that this becomes a question of prestige..." *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Štefan Pisko [Bohuslav J. Pisko] - Slovak writer and diplomat, Slovak Consul to Sweden (1943-1945).

¹⁰⁶ Diary of J. Smutný, his conversation with E. Beneš, London, 17 October 1943, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 325, 397-401. J. Smutný discussed with E. Beneš the latest developments on 17 October 1943. Smutný pointed out: "We have received a message from Sweden, that the Swedes accepted - *only now* [italics in original] - the Slovak Consul, Dr. Pisko. It is a very unsympathetic move against us." Beneš commented it: "...we would not do anything at all, we will leave them, but our future relations with the Swedes must remain very cold, we should never forgive them this [move]." *Ibid.*

agreement with Edvard Beneš as soon as possible and made the treaty a *sine qua non* for his visit to Moscow in 1943.¹⁰⁷ Beneš wished to consolidate Soviet - Czechoslovak relations and Soviet support to his government with a bilateral treaty of friendship. Beneš imagined that Soviet guarantees of Czechoslovakia's independence and the pre-Munich Czechoslovak borders, were goals worthy of this rapprochement.¹⁰⁸

The Polish government-in-exile experienced in 1943 a deterioration of its relations with the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States. Cooling relations and declining political support led some Polish exiles to seek alternative approaches to Czechoslovak - Polish relations. Some Polish representatives saw a decline of Polish prospects in the Těšín question. Jan Stanczyk,¹⁰⁹ who believed in the necessity of future rapprochement between Czechoslovakia and Poland, anticipated a Polish *débat* in the dispute and suggested new arbitration to make the Polish defeat more agreeable. But Beneš did not warm up to Stanczyk's proposal as he did not admit to the existence of any dispute over Těšín Silesia, as he believed this case had already been subjected to arbitration and the second one was impossible.¹¹⁰

The Soviet Union apparently favoured Czechoslovakia over Poland in its territorial dispute. Beneš successfully established friendly relations with the Soviet Union and his pro-Soviet orientation, inter alia, was repaid in gaining Soviet support in the Těšín question. The Soviet Union

¹⁰⁷ Marek K. Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990), 26.

¹⁰⁸ London, 1 November 1943, *AOBM*, vol.1, Doc. No. 336, 406-408. Eduard Beneš explained in London on 1 November 1943: "One of the main arguments, which we ought to point out to the English to stop their objecting to our treaty with Russia, should be the Russians' commitment to us: 1.) to respect our state independence, 2) the borders, 3) no games with Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus...." *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁹ Jan Stańczyk (1886 - 1953) - Minister of the Polish government-in-exile (Minister of Social Services).

¹¹⁰ E.Beneš's Minutes of His Conversation with J.Stanczyk, London, 12 November 1943, *CSPC* 39-44, Doc. No. 198, 361-362. Jan Stanczyk proposed to Edvard Beneš: "...Would it not be possible to hand it [the Těšín question] to the English and the Americans and they would then decide in your favor, so that we are not defeated directly by you and it [dispute] will not continue into the future? Briefly, a new arbitrage?" *Ibid*.

viewed Czechoslovakia as a cornerstone of its influence in Central Europe due to its strategic position. Czechoslovak - Soviet relations were not burdened by history as the Polish - Soviet relations were by border issues and a recollection of the Polish - Soviet hostilities in the 1920s.

The Soviet Union supported strong Czechoslovakia and worried about a too strong Poland. The Soviet Deputy Peoples' Commissar for Foreign Affairs I. M. Majskij¹¹¹ prepared in January of 1944 analysis of Soviet plans for the future peace and post-war settlement.¹¹² Majskij argued: "Unlike in the case of Poland, it is to the advantage to the Soviet Union to strive to create a strong Czechoslovakia, which, as a consequence of the political mood of its population as well as in connection with the recently signed mutual assistance pact for twenty years, is able to become an important transmission of our influence in Central and Southeastern Europe."¹¹³ Moscow wished to restore Czechoslovakia at least in its former frontiers and Tešín Silesia should be returned to Czechoslovakia.¹¹⁴ It is possible that the Soviet strategic considerations motivated the anticipated restoration of Tešín Silesia to Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak and Polish governments in exile attempted during the war to establish closer cooperation between the future Czechoslovakia and Poland. The negotiations on the Czechoslovak - Polish confederation produced interesting results but, simultaneously, the negotiations exposed a serious divergency of views. While the Czechoslovak and Polish opinions

¹¹¹ Ivan Mikhailovich Majskij (Maisky) (b. Jan Lachowiecki) (1884 - 1975) - Soviet diplomat, historian, and politician, Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain (1941-1945).

¹¹² Analysis of the Post-War Settlement, I. M. Majskij to V. M. Molotov, Moscow, 10 January 1944, in T. B. Волокитина (отв. редактор), *Советский фактор в восточной Европе 1944-1953, Том.1, 1944 - 1948. Документы* [T. V. Volokitina, ed., *Sovetskij faktor v Vostochnoj Jevrope 1944-1953, Tom.1, 1944 - 1948. Dokumenty.*/T. V. Volokitina, ed., *The Soviet Factor in Eastern Europe 1944-1953, Vol. 1, 1944-1948, Documents*] (hereafter *SFVE*) (Moscow: Rosspen, 1999), vol.1, doc. no. 1, 23-48.

¹¹³ Analysis of the Post-War Settlement, I. M. Majskij to V. M. Molotov, Moscow, 10 January 1944, *SFVE*, vol.1, doc. no. 1, 30.

¹¹⁴ Majskij did not specify the extent of the "former frontiers" of Czechoslovakia. See Analysis of the Post-War Settlement, I. M. Majskij to V. M. Molotov, Moscow, 10 January 1944, *SFVE*, vol.1, doc. no. 1, 30.

seemed irreconcilable on the border issues (Orava, Spiš and Tešín Silesia), the most serious problem remained the role of the Soviet Union in Central Europe and in the Czechoslovak - Polish relations. The Soviet - Polish break and hostility affected the outcome of Czechoslovak - Polish confederation. Beneš and the Czechoslovak government-in-exile accepted the friendly Soviet - Polish relations as a *conditio sine qua non* for the successful grounding of the Czechoslovak - Polish confederation. The Czechoslovak - Soviet Treaty of Friendship in December of 1943 confirmed the importance of the Soviet alliance for Czechoslovakia at the expense of its relations with Poland. The Soviet Union promised to guarantee the restoration of Czechoslovakia to its pre-Munich borders at a time when Poland insisted on its borders as of 1 September 1939.¹¹⁵

The dramatic and tragic events, which fell upon the European continent at the end of the 1930s and in the first half of the 1940s, significantly remolded the national frontiers. Czechoslovakia, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland and Slovakia either suffered or benefitted from a wind of changes sweeping Europe first from the West and then from the East. The shape of the Slovak - Polish border became once again contested ground, where higher interests and intrigues cast long shadow over the interests of the local population. Poland savoured its moment of triumph vis-à-vis Czecho-Slovakia during and after the Munich conference in the fall of 1938. However, healing the 1920 arbitrage trauma in Tešín Silesia on the Polish side created another trauma on the Czech side in the same region. Territorially relatively small, but psychologically very significant, rectifications of the Slovak - Polish border in the fall of 1938 came at extravagant price, as it cost Poland all remaining Slovak sympathies. The extent of this error of judgment appeared in the fateful September

¹¹⁵ The Soviet Union's plans, regarding Poland and Czechoslovakia, were as follows: Tešín would be returned to Czechoslovakia; Czechoslovakia should be, at minimum, restored in its former frontiers. If the situation allowed to add some additional territory to Czechoslovakia, it should be done. See Analysis of the Post-War Settlement, I. M. Majskij to V. M. Molotov, Moscow, 10 January 1944, *SFVE*, vol.1, doc. no. 1, 23-48.

1939 days, when Slovak troops came on the heels of the advancing German invasion to recover the districts incorporated into Poland after World War I. The Slovak population in the districts returned to Slovakia welcomed the changes, which was understandable from their perspective of national persecution experienced in the interwar period in Poland. Naturally, the Polish and Polonophile population in Orava and Spiš saw the changes in a different light. Yet, the stability of this border settlement was fragile and conditioned by the war outcome. The turning tide of the war made the restoration of the pre-Munich border between Czechoslovakia and Poland political reality, which would roll back the Slovak - Polish border in Orava and Spiš and reinstate its inter-war form. In 1945 Czechoslovakia and Poland faced the legacy of Munich once again, although with the consequences quite different from those effected in the fall of 1938.

8.

1945 AND BEYOND: THE GHOSTS OF MUNICH.

As concerns the Spiš and Orava disputes, they have never acquired a character as acute as the Teschen [Tešín] dispute. Economic, territorial, demographic and even strategic importance of these two territories claimed by Czechoslovakia remained low (25 Slovak townships in total).

In Bratislava in July 1946 the Presidium of the Slovak National Council translated into French an Aide-Mémoire of 18 pages on the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland, this Aide-Mémoire informed that the Slovak population of Orava and Spiš (the parts, which belonged to the Kingdom of Hungary before 1918, and now under Polish authority) requested their annexation to Slovakia. There was a time (in 1945) when some Slovaks, hostile to the Prague government, seemed favourable to an exchange solution consisting of the following: the district of Teschen [Tešín], attached to Moravia and containing strong Polish majority, would have been abandoned to Poland, and the districts of Spiš and Orava, inhabited in majority by the Slovaks, would have been returned to Slovakia....

Ultimately, the Slovak schoolteachers had been assigned to the [Spiš and Orava] districts, and in 1947, the issue seemed to be in oblivion.

Consul General of France in Bratislava, 20 April 1949

The situation in the Slovak - Polish borderland in 1945 reflected complicated relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland. Clashes born of Polish territorial claims between Slovaks and Poles in Orava and Spiš and clashes between Czechs and Poles in the Těšín area were common after World War II. Czechoslovakia and Poland were very close to a war in June of 1945. After World War II relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia remained burdened by disagreement, especially over the borders, primarily over the Tešín (Těšín, Cieszyn) area. Czechoslovakia claimed it on economic grounds, Poland continued to claim it on ethnic grounds. The Tešín dispute delayed conclusion of a friendship treaty between Poland and Czechoslovakia until March of 1947. The Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance of 1947 confirmed the common anti-German alignment of Czechoslovakia and Poland. The Treaty granted the Slovak and Czech minorities in Poland and the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia cultural and political rights. Poland officially recognized, for

the first time, existence of the Slovaks in the incorporated districts of Spiš and Orava.¹

In 1945 Czechoslovakia and Poland viewed differently the events in 1938 - 1939. Both the Polish and Czechoslovak governments agreed on immorality of the Polish invasion of the Tešín district in the fall of 1938. The Czechoslovak government condemned as immoral the transfer of the incorporated districts of Spiš and Orava to Slovakia in 1939. But the Polish government viewed the transfer of the Tešín district and the Slovak territories in Orava, Spiš and Kysuce to Poland in 1938 as a rectification of historical injustice. The disputes with Poland in Upper Orava and Spiš had been an issue between Czechoslovakia and Poland briefly after World War II. Poland claimed these districts and persecuted their Slovak population, which concerned Slovaks in Slovakia and abroad. The Soviet Union suppressed this issue and imposed the *Pax Sovietica* upon Czechoslovakia and Poland.²

After World War II the Czechoslovak government was committed to restoration of the pre-Munich borders of Czechoslovakia,³ which implied transfer of Upper Orava and Spiš to Poland. The Polish government wanted to restore the Polish borders as of 1 September 1939, which implied Poland would keep Upper Orava and Spiš, the Tešín district (*Zaolzie* in Polish) and the Slovak territories seized in 1938. Ambassadors of Czechoslovakia and Poland in Moscow, Zdeněk

¹ The districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland comprise the territory detached from the territory of Slovakia (Czecho-Slovakia) after 1920 and incorporated in Poland. The territory covers 584 km², with 25 villages and 24,700 inhabitants. The following communes formed the districts - in Spiš: Jurgov, Repiska, Čierna Hora, Tribš, Vyšné Lapše, Nižné Lapše, Lapšanka, Nedeca, Kacvín, Fridman with its settlement of Falštín, Krempachy, Durštín, and Nová Belá; and in Orava: Chyžné, Jablonka, Nižná Lipnica, Vyšná Lipnica, Nižná Zubrica, Horná Zubrica, Harkabúz, Srnie, Bukovina-Podsklie, Pekelník, Podvlk, and Orávka.

² Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, *The Lust for Power: Nationalism, Slovakia, and the Communists 1918-1948*, (Boulder, CO: Columbia University Press, 1983), 116.

³ Edvard Beneš considered restoration of the pre-Munich border and the resettlement of the Germans as the two basic questions of utmost importance. See Notes of F. T. Gusev [Soviet Envoy] - E. Beneš, J. Masaryk discussion, London, 17 March 1945, *Sovetskij faktor v Vostochnoj Evrope 1944-53* (hereafter *SFVE*) vol. 1, no. 46, 173.

Fierlinger⁴ and Stefan Jędrychowski,⁵ discussed the common borders in early January of 1945. The debate revealed an important psychological effect of the Czech-Polish border in the Tešín district on the fate of the districts of Orava and Spiš transferred to Poland after World War I and the shape of the Slovak-Polish border in Orava and Spiš. Jędrychowski stressed the undeniability of ethnically compact Polish areas in the Tešín district. Fierlinger recalled the population transfer agreement with the Soviet Union and alluded to possible transfer of “the several ten thousands of Poles” from Czechoslovakia, which would be necessary to repopulate the Oder borderland of Poland. Fierlinger stressed that the Tešín district had the colossal importance for Czechoslovakia from an economic and psychological point of view and its psychological importance concerned mainly “those few Slovak villages.”⁶

In January 1945 the Czechoslovak government in London decided to recognize the Polish provisional government in Lublin.⁷ Zdeněk Fierlinger, Czechoslovak Ambassador in Moscow, met on 2 January 1945 with Józef Olszewski, Polish Chargé a.i. in Moscow to discuss the conditions for

⁴ Zdeněk Fierlinger (1891 - 1976) - Czech politician, Czechoslovak Prime Minister (1945 - 1946), Czechoslovak Ambassador in Moscow (1941 - 1945).

⁵ Stefan Jędrychowski (1910 - 1996) - Polish politician and journalist, Ambassador in Moscow (1944 - 1945), Ambassador in Paris (1945).

⁶ Notes of Jędrychowski - Fierlienger discussion, Moscow, 2 January 1945, in Wiesław Balcerak and Viktor Borodovčák, eds., *Dokumenty a materiály k dějinám československo-polských vztahů v letech 1944-1948* [Documents and Materials to the History of the Czecho-Slovak - Polish Relations in 1944 - 1948] (hereafter *CSPL 44-48*) (Praha: Academia, 1985), Doc. No. 11, 35ff. Fierlinger did not elaborate why the Tešín district had colossal importance for Czechoslovakia from psychological point of view in relation to the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland (“those few Slovak villages”). Poland would have welcomed self-determination (plebiscite) in the Tešín district and in the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš, as Warsaw did not fear a loss of the Tešín district and, with a gain therein, it could probably reconcile a loss of Orava and Spiš with Slovak majority. Prague, on the other hand, feared losing the Tešín district with Polish majority, and cared less about the fate of the districts of Orava and Spiš. Czechoslovakia, or Prague, needed to keep the Tešín district, and therefore to prevent a plebiscite there, otherwise it risked to lose the Tešín district and the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš. Hence, Fierlinger’s allusion to the Tešín district’s colossal psychological importance, the *status quo* in the Tešín district conserved the best possible outcome for Prague.

⁷ The Polish Committee of National Liberation (*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego - PKWN*), formed 21 July 1944, transformed itself into the Provisional Government of the Polish Republic (*Rząd Tymczasowy RP*) on 31 December 1944. Marek K. Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990), 32.

recognizing the Polish Provisional Government. Olszewski refused that Poland would have to condemn Jozef Beck's annexation in 1938 for Czechoslovakia's recognition. During the debate Fierlinger proposed Olszewski to solve the outstanding border issues through a transfer of the population. Fierlinger met the same day with Zorin, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, who also rejected the idea of Polish declaration.⁸ Condemnations of the territorial acquisitions in 1938 and 1939 served to both sides to distance themselves from the acts of their predecessors and/or political adversaries. Czechoslovak representatives in London attempted to link the recognition of the Polish government with explicit condemnation of the annexations in 1938.⁹ Hubert Ripka, Czechoslovak Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, informed Fierlinger that London proposed to condemn the aggression and the territorial acquisition of "the so-called Slovak government"¹⁰ against Poland in 1939, which made it easier for Poland to reject the aggression and territorial acquisitions against Czechoslovakia/Czecho-Slovakia in 1938. The Czechoslovak government in London had assurances of the Soviet Union to recognize Czechoslovakia after the war in its borders of 1938. But in general, the Soviet Union maintained rather flexible view regarding the borders issues and remained the

⁸ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 32-33.

⁹ The Czechoslovak government in London found it easier to condemn the annexation of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš by the Slovak government in 1939 than the Polish government in London to condemn its predecessor's action in 1938. The Slovak annexation of 1939 was portrayed as an act of injustice committed in collusion with Germany. The Polish government in London condemned the Polish annexations of 1938 as an aggression against Czecho-Slovakia, but at the same time, the government viewed it as justified rectification of ethnic imbalance. The same argument, however, was neglected with regard to the Slovak annexation of 1939, where the Slovak government was viewed as an enemy.

¹⁰ The Slovak Republic in 1939-1945 was referred to derisively by Marxist and Czechoslovakist historiographies as "the so-called Slovak state" or as a "clerico-fascist" state. Karen Henderson explains that "the Communist description of it as a 'clerico-fascist' state was an attempt to taint Catholicism with Nazi crimes, rather than a technical description of its functioning." See Karen Henderson, *Slovakia, The escape from invisibility* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 13. For more on 'Czechoslovakism,' see Elisabeth Bakke, "Czechoslovakism in Slovak history" in *Slovakia in History*, eds. Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč and Martin D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 247-268.

ultimate arbiter in the border questions between Czechoslovakia and Poland.¹¹ The Soviet Union recognized the Polish Provisional Government on 4 January 1945 and made it known that Czechoslovakia should do the same.¹² The Czechoslovak government in London discussed the recognition for the first time on 9 January 1945, but the government did not rush as it intended the Poles to accept certain conditions.¹³ Edvard Beneš instructed Fierlinger, on the modalities of recognition; he proposed Czechoslovakia could condemn Slovakia's actions in 1939. Beneš proposed, should Poland abandon its claim on Tešín Silesia, to return Upper Orava and Spiš acquired by Slovakia in 1939. He thus established equality between Tešín Silesia and Upper Orava and Spiš.¹⁴ Czechoslovakia recognized the Polish Provisional Government on 30 January 1945. Beneš understood any further delay could endanger Czechoslovakia's prospects in Tešín Silesia. Czechoslovakia's recognition, before the Yalta Conference, strengthened the position of the Polish Provisional Government and the Soviet Union. The Polish Government started to establish its diplomatic relations. Subsequently, the Polish government-in-exile in London broke diplomatic relations with the Czechoslovak government-in-exile on 2 February 1945.¹⁵

The members of the Polish provisional government presented their views on the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland at a press conference in Warsaw on 2 February 1945. Bolesław Bierut,¹⁶ President of the Polish provisional government, clarified the position of its government on

¹¹ H. Ripka to Z. Fierlinger, London, 26 January 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 15, 40-41. Ripka wrote to Fierlinger in Moscow: "...we are ready to accept opinions and advise of the Soviet government, since we know that the Soviet government supports our borders from 1938, including the borders with Poland, and we shall make the final decision accordingly." *Ibid.*

¹² Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 36.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁴ Kamiński argues that Beneš established equality between Tešín Silesia, a territory with a Polish majority of the population and Upper Orava and Spiš, "territories where the Polish population had not developed national self-consciousness." Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 44.

¹⁵ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 50-52.

¹⁶ Bolesław Bierut (1892 - 1956) - President of the Polish Provisional government (the Lublin government).

the territories occupied by Poland during Czechoslovakia's disintegration in 1938: "We are resolutely against the method employed by the previous government. We demand categorically all territories with the Polish majority of population."¹⁷ Bierut's government thus explicitly rejected automatic return to *status quo ante* and hoped to reach a friendly agreement with Czechoslovakia based on the principle of national majority of the population including the city of Tešín. Bierut wanted to solve the Tešín problem in a friendly agreement with Czechoslovakia.¹⁸

When the Red Army expelled the Germans from Upper Spiš, a few days before the end of January 1945, and from Upper Orava, on 30 January, it opened a question of sovereignty over these districts.¹⁹ The Slovaks and the Poles tried to make the most out of existing circumstances and establish their own *faits accomplis*. An attempt to introduce the Polish administration in Upper Spiš in mid-February 1945 failed due to resistance of the local Slovak population and their militias. The local Soviet military commander, who believed a resolution should be left until after the war, ordered the Slovak militias to control the border established in 1939.²⁰ The Czechoslovak government in London had little authority and influence in liberated Slovakia. In early February 1945 the local Slovak administration started collecting signatures in Spiš and Orava supporting their remaining in Czechoslovakia. 98 percent of the local population supported it.²¹ On 1 March 1945 a small detachment of Slovak militias attacked Polish militias stationed in Nižné Lapše. The Polish militias had to withdraw from Nižné Lapše and from Jurgov, because they were told these areas

¹⁷ Press conference of B. Bierut, E. Osóbka-Morawski, M. Zdziechowski, Warsaw, 2 February 1945, *CSPL* 44-48, Doc. No. 19, 43-45.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Similarly, when the Red Army expelled the Germans from Silesia at the end of March 1945, it opened a question of sovereignty over the Racibórz, Głubczyce, Kłodzko districts, which Czechoslovakia claimed. For more see Piotr Pałys, *Czechosłowackie roszczenia graniczne wobec Polski 1945-1947. Racibórz, Głubczyce, Kłodzko* (Opole, 2007).

²⁰ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 55.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

belonged to Slovakia. Slovak militias, border guards and the army entered the districts of Orava and Spiš on 9 April 1945. During the accompanying skirmishes a part of the Polish population abandoned their homes and left to Poland. All these actions of Slovak detachments had full support of the local Soviet detachments.²²

The post-war period brought political, administrative and economic dislocation to the districts of Orava and Spiš returned to Slovakia in 1939. In the first months after the war the local authorities in the Nowy Targ sub-prefecture in Poland denied existence of the Slovaks in the districts of Orava and Spiš returned to Slovakia in 1939. The authorities admitted only existence of the Spiš - Orava population gravitating towards Slovakia and speaking with its own local dialect, but they denied Slovak character of this population.²³ Local Polish administration blamed the central administration for its passivity on Orava and Spiš.²⁴ The Polish authorities attributed “gravitation” towards Slovakia to the economic situation in the districts of Orava and Spiš during 1939 - 1945 and hoped the improved economic situation would weaken what they perceived as the pro-Slovak orientation. In fact, the population of the districts returned to Slovakia in 1939 cherished the memories of relatively prosperous life in 1939-1945. The Polish authorities believed that the Slovak population of these districts linked the post-war economic hardship with the transfer of their territories to Poland.²⁵

²² Julian Kwiek, *Z dziejów mniejszości słowackiej na Spiszu i Orawie w latach 1945-1957* [From A History of the Slovak Minority in Spiš and Orava in 1945 - 1957] (Kraków: Towarzystwo Słowaków w Polsce, 2002), 8.

²³ Kwiek, *Z dziejów mniejszości słowackiej na Spiszu i Orawie w latach 1945-1957*, 20.

²⁴ Kamiński argues that Warsaw maybe wanted this ambiguous situation to last until a liberation of Tešín Silesia. This could give a strong argument for not returning Tešín Silesia to Czechoslovakia. Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 56.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 23. Kamiński also writes that “the local population” in Upper Orava and Spiš, i.e. not the local Slovak population in Upper Orava and Spiš, feared worsened living conditions in new Poland, therefore it resisted the Polish administration and actively supported the Slovak militias. Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 55.

After its recognition by Czechoslovakia, the Polish Provisional Government believed that it would achieve its goals vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia through bilateral Polish-Soviet talks.²⁶ Until the reorganization of the Czechoslovak government in March 1945, the Poles were reluctant to deal with Beneš, who in fact had little authority in Slovakia.²⁷ From February 1945 until the German capitulation in May 1945 the relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia remained in a provisional period.²⁸ The Czechoslovak exiles from London and Moscow discussed program and composition of the post-war government in Moscow on 22 - 28 March 1945. The delegates of the Slovak National Council (*Slovenská národná rada*, hereafter referred to as the SNR) took part at the talks when dealing with Slovakia. The post-war Czechoslovak government was agreed upon on 28 March 1945. The government was appointed in liberated Czechoslovakia, in the town of Košice, Slovakia, on 4 April 1945. The “Košice government” left for Prague on 10 May 1945.²⁹ The Slovak exiles in London, who opposed the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, as well as the Slovak National Council, appealed the Western allies to maintain Slovakia’s independent status and to deal with its borders at the peace conference.³⁰

The Slovaks in the district of Orava returned to Slovakia in 1939 resolutely resisted attempts to introduce the Polish administration after the war. On 5 April 1945 the Slovaks clashed with and defeated the newly-installed Polish militias. The Soviet Army, surprised by this conflict between its

²⁶ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 52.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁹ For more see Národní archiv Prague, UPV 1945-53, Sign. 24/3, Box No.4. Národní archiv [the National Archives] Prague will hereafter be referred to as NA Prague.

³⁰ Conseil National Slovaque de Londres [Peter Pridavok and Karol Vychodil] to Georges Bidault, London, 14 March 1945, Archives diplomatique, Ministère des Affaires étrangères (hereafter AD/MAE) Paris, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 74, 136-142. Peter Pridavok and Karol Vychodil wrote on 14 March 1945, on behalf of the *Conseil National Slovaque de Londres*, to the allied foreign ministers and asked them to deal with the borders of Slovakia at the peace conference. *Ibid.*

two allies, tried to establish the facts. The Soviet and Polish representatives visited the district of Orava claimed by Poland.³¹ The Soviet Army also conducted, at the end of April 1945, its own “census” where only 1% of the population claim the Polish nationality. Therefore, the Soviet Army retreated to the 1939-1945 Slovak - Polish border.³² The Soviet military authorities decided to respect the status quo of 1939.³³ On 11 April 1945 the Czechoslovak government started a recruitment campaign into the Czechoslovak army on liberated territory and the campaign took part also in the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš. Czechoslovakia thus, with Soviet acquiescence, asserted its sovereignty over the districts of Orava and Spiš previously incorporated into Poland.³⁴ The Polish administration in Nowy Targ appealed the local population not to join the Czechoslovak army.³⁵ Interestingly, approximately around the same time, on 15 April 1945, Ferdinand Machay wrote to the Polish authorities in Warsaw that close to 150,000 Poles lived in the Spiš, Orava and Čadca regions. Machay admitted that the local population had weak Polish national consciousness and claimed that the most aware of its Polish character was the population in Orava, significantly less

³¹ The Soviet and Polish authorities, accompanied by the local Slovak authorities from Trstená, Orava, visited on 23 April 1945 the town of Jablonka, which was on the territory claimed by Poland. The delegates inquired of the locals whether they preferred Poland or Czechoslovakia. Upon hearing what was going on, the crowd grew larger and larger, and packed a local town square. When the Polish Mayor of Nowy Targ attempted to address the crowd in Polish, he was booed. The Slovak, Soviet and Polish delegates came the next day, on 24 April 1945, to Orávka. The local population noisily interrupted a session of the visiting delegates with the local priest, who was of Polish nationality, fearing he would provide biased information regarding the population's preferences. The visiting delegates had to come out and calm down the gathered crowd and promised their township would remain in Czechoslovakia. Possibly, based on similar demonstrations, the Soviet Army evacuated Upper Orava and Upper Spiš and retreated to the border of 1940. See “The Record of the Conversation with the Upper Orava Delegation,” Presidium of the Slovak National Council, Bratislava, 18 June 1945, c. 1369/45-U, Archiv Ministerstva zahraničných vecí [Archives of the Foreign Ministry] (hereafter AMZV) Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

³² Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 21; Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 70.

³³ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 70.

³⁴ Matej Andráš, *Severné hranice Slovenska. Slovenskí Goralí* [The Northern Border of Slovakia. The Slovak Gorals] (Bratislava: Kubko Goral, 2007), 83.

³⁵ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 70.

aware is Spiš, and even less in Kysuce (*Czadecki*).³⁶

The local Slovak population in the districts of Orava and Spiš returned to Slovakia in 1939 feared the eventual transfer of their districts to Poland after the war.³⁷ The Slovaks of Orava and Spiš wished to maintain territorial *status quo* and appealed for help; they issued resolutions, memoranda and appeals, and appeared before Czechoslovak and foreign government officials. In 1945, as in the 1920s, the most effective help came from Slovak Americans.³⁸ The Slovaks in North America reactivated the Spiš-Orava Committee, now known as the American Liberation Committee for Spiš and Orava,³⁹ and appointed Jozef Mat'ášovský, a veteran of the 1920 American Delegation for the Spiš-Orava plebiscite, to lead the Liberation Committee, which rallied support of Slovak Americans and Canadians to the cause of Orava and Spiš.⁴⁰

In April 1945 the local Slovak administration intensified its activities for maintaining a *status quo* of 1939. The delegation from Upper Orava met on 7 April 1945 in Košice with President Beneš, Prime Minister Fierlinger and the Slovak National Council. On 21 April 1945 a delegation from Spiš and on 26 April 1945 a delegation from Orava submitted to President Beneš memoranda demanding

³⁶ Machay to Bierut, 15 April 1945, in *Orawa* 1990, Nos. 4-5, 16-17; quoted in Michał Jagiełło. *Słowacy w polskich oczach: obraz Słowaków w piśmiennictwie polskim* [The Slovaks in Polish Eyes. Picture of the Slovaks in the Polish Literature], vol. 2 (Warsaw-Nowy Targ: Biblioteka Narodowa - Podhalańska Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa, 2005), 383.

³⁷ Eduard Pavlík analysed the Polish influences in the Spiš Magura region of Slovakia. Pavlík personally witnessed the pleas of the citizens from Lehnica, which belonged to Poland in 1938-1939. When the locals heard in 1945 that they could be transferred to Poland once again, their delegates came to Spišská Nová Ves to plea the district authorities "not to give them to the Poles." Pavlík and his colleagues were deeply moved to see the Lehnica delegates to present their demands kneeling and with praying hands. See Eduard Pavlík, "Poľské vplyvy a Spišská Magura," [Polish Influences and Spišská Magura] *Spiš* 2 (1968): 103.

³⁸ Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948* (S.l.: Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, 2008), 27.

³⁹ The local branches of the American Liberation Committee for Spiš and Orava were formed in the United States, Canada and also in Trstená, Slovakia. The Slovak League of America, and especially the bilingual Slovak weekly, *Slovak v Amerike* [Slovak in America], assisted the press campaign. See Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948*, 27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

permanent territorial sovereignty of Czechoslovakia over their districts.⁴¹ The President told them their status could not be permanently decided until the Peace Conference and advised not to abandon their Slovak districts. Beneš encouraged the Slovak militias to fulfil their nationalistic and patriotic duties and to defend the local population.⁴² The President's assurances contradicted his long-standing policy of Czechoslovakia's pre-Munich borders, which would transfer the districts of Orava and Spiš to Poland.⁴³ It appears that Beneš tactically supported the claims of the Slovaks from the districts of Orava and Spiš in order to avoid antagonizing the Slovak population.⁴⁴

On 28 April 1945 the Fourth Ukrainian Command of the Soviet Army asked the Polish authorities to temporarily occupy the districts of Orava and Spiš returned to Slovakia in 1939.⁴⁵ The Czechoslovak government resolved the question of the Slovak - Polish border in Orava and Spiš on 5 May 1945 in Košice. The government acknowledged the Slovak character of the districts of Orava and Spiš, nevertheless it decided to transfer them to Poland. This decision was adopted without any preconditions addressed to Poland and in line with the exile policy of restoration of Czechoslovakia in its pre-Munich borders. The Czechoslovak government and President Beneš were fully aware of the pro-Czechoslovakia sympathies of the local Slovak population.⁴⁶

The Polish government urged the Czechoslovak government to transfer the districts of Orava and Spiš to Poland. Consequently, Vladimír Clementis, Czechoslovak Deputy Foreign Minister, sent on 9 May 1945 an instruction to the Praesidium of the Slovak National Council (SNC) concerning

⁴¹ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 69.

⁴² Kwiek, *Z dziejów mniejszości słowackiej na Spiszu i Orawie w latach 1945-1957*, 10; "Report of Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky on his fall 1946 mission to Europe," in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 130.

⁴³ Kwiek, *Z dziejów mniejszości słowackiej na Spiszu i Orawie w latach 1945-1957*, 10.

⁴⁴ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 69. Kamiński argues that Prague could wait to see these territories returned to Poland until the Germans were expelled from Tešín Silesia (*Zaolzie*) on 3-5 May. *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴⁵ Kwiek, *Z dziejów mniejszości słowackiej na Spiszu i Orawie w latach 1945-1957*, 10.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

the border in the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš. Clementis informed the Czechoslovak government respected the pre-Munich borders. Therefore, Clementis demanded the SNC to inform, immediately, the border control in Orava and Spiš to withdraw to the pre-Munich border.⁴⁷ The SNC delegated its Deputy Chairman, Major Milan Polák, to complete the transfer of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš to Polish jurisdiction. The decision of the Czechoslovak government was so sudden and unexpected that it surprised the Polish authorities. The commander of the Soviet border guards in Nowy Targ informed the Nowy Targ sub-prefecture about the transfer only on 20 May 1945. The Polish delegates had to come the same day to Trstená in Orava, where the representatives of both sides signed a protocol between Czechoslovakia and Poland on the transfer of the districts of Orava and Spiš to Poland on 20 May 1945 in Trstená, Slovakia (see Map 12). The Polish government could show some success in its relations with Czechoslovakia.⁴⁸ The transfer was effected despite the fact that 3,000 Slovaks protested in Jablonka against the transfer of the districts to Poland (see Map 13 and Map 14). The rapid transfer of the districts of Orava and Spiš strengthened the claim of Czechoslovakia to Tešín Silesia and weakened the claim of Poland to its 1 September 1939 borders.⁴⁹ The Czechoslovak government demonstrated its commitment to the pre-Munich borders and could demand the same from Poland. In addition, Prague was aware of difficulties of the Polish administration in Upper Spiš and Orava.⁵⁰ Prague informed the Soviet

⁴⁷ Clementis to the Praesidium of the Slovak National Council concerning the Spiš and Orava regions, Bratislava, 9 May 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 23, 58-59. The aide-mémoire, dated 31 May 1945, summarized the events in May of 1945: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded the Slovak National Council to release the territories of Upper Orava and Spiš incorporated into Slovakia in 1939 at the expense of Poland. The Slovak National Council complied immediately, despite numerous interventions of the local population, which asked to do everything possible for their retention within Czechoslovakia...." See "Aide-mémoire," Prague, 31 May 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

⁴⁸ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 82.

⁴⁹ Julian Kwiek, *Z dziejów mniejszości słowackiej na Spiszu i Orawie w latach 1945-1957*, 11-12.

⁵⁰ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 83. Only three days after the transfer, the Deputy Mayor in Nowy Targ asked Cracow to dispatch the Army to Upper Orava and Spiš due to a very tense situation. *Ibid.*

government about the transfer of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš to Poland on 31 May 1945.⁵¹

The delegates from thirteen Slovak villages in the district of Spiš incorporated into Poland protested on 29 May 1945 against their transfer to Poland and demanded the Czechoslovak government take into consideration the will of the local population: “...we are against being torn away from Czecho-Slovakia again. This is against our will. ...[we] request the Czecho-Slovak government to take our stance and determination into consideration....”⁵² The delegates from the district of Orava incorporated into Poland met with Karol Šmidke, Chairman of the SNC, on 18 June 1945 and pleaded for support of the Slovak authorities to return the territories incorporated into Poland:

...Our first and utmost desire is to remain, permanently and forever, a part of Slovakia within Czechoslovak Republic. This desire is fully justified and supported by many facts. According to the population census in 1940, 98 % of the population in Upper Orava is Slovak. These Slovaks demonstrate their belief and desire to remain in Slovakia at every available opportunity. ...after liberation ... the population of Upper Orava conducted a “census” to determine the number of Slovaks and a support for Slovakia. ...98 % of the population declared itself Slovak and asked not to be transferred to Poland, but remain within Slovakia....⁵³

The local Slovak population resisted the introduction of the Polish administration and military control in Orava and Spiš in the summer of 1945 and in the village of Podvln military

⁵¹ Notes of Clementis - Zorin discussion, Prague, 31 May 1945, in Karel Kaplan and Alexandra Spiritová, eds., *ČSR a SSSR 1945-1948. Dokumenty mezivládních jednání* [the ČSR and the USSR 1945-1948. Documents On the Intergovernmental Negotiations] (hereafter *CSSO 45-48*) (Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 1996), Doc. No. 18, 45-46. Cf. AMZV Prague, GS-A 1945-54, Fasc.149, No.11985/45, Box No.187. On 31 May 1945 Clementis handed Zorin an *aide mémoire* concerning the districts of Orava and Spiš returned to Slovakia in 1939. For Clementis-Zorin discussions see also AMZV Prague, GS-A 1945-1954, Fold. 149, Box No. 187.

⁵² Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spis and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948*, 28. For a text of the resolution see *ibid.*

⁵³ See “The Record of the Conversation with the Upper Orava Delegation,” Presidium of the Slovak National Council, Bratislava, 18 June 1945, c. 1369/45-U, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

clashes occurred.⁵⁴ Consequently the local Polish authorities had to appeal for military assistance.⁵⁵

The Polish army entered the incorporated district of Spiš on 17 July 1945 and the incorporated district of Orava on 14 August 1945 and occupied the Slovak - Polish border. Even after the arrival of the Polish army to the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland the local Slovaks considered the new Slovak - Polish border only as a temporary one.⁵⁶

In June and July of 1945 the Czechoslovak government and the Slovak government faced deteriorating situation in the districts transferred to Poland.⁵⁷ The Slovak National Council set aside the 1,000,000 Crowns to alleviate the situation of the Slovak refugees from the districts. Some Slovaks preferred to leave rather than to remain in Poland. One delegation from Orava demanded the repatriation of 1,211 families with 5,219 members, should it not be possible to remain in Czechoslovakia.⁵⁸ The local branches of the Committee for Spiš-Orava Refugees distributed the aid provided to the refugees.⁵⁹ The question of the Slovak refugees from the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland grew out of a terror reigning in those territories and from the position of the Czechoslovak authorities, which hoped to brush aside the issue through repatriation of the local

⁵⁴ For more on Slovak resistance to the introduction of the Polish administration and military control in Orava and Spiš in 1945 and the armed clashes in Podvlnk in July of 1945, see Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 28-31.

⁵⁵ The Polish administration was introduced in Upper Spiš and Orava only in July after the failed Moscow talks. Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 83.

⁵⁶ Kwiek, *Z dziejów mniejszości słowackiej na Spiszu i Orawie w latach 1945-1957*, 14.

⁵⁷ Czechoslovak Aide-mémoire, dated 31 May 1945, summarized the situation in the districts incorporated into Poland: "...After departure of the Slovak administration the Slovaks in these districts face terrorist actions by Polish irregular units, which steal their property. The Czechoslovak government contemplates some solution of this situation and instructed its Ambassador to the Polish government to demand alleviation of the situation...." See "Aide-mémoire," Prague, 31 May 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek. See also "Situation on the territories of Upper Orava and Spiš attached to Slovakia at the expense of Poland in 1939," Prague, c.: 2403-II/2-1945, 8 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek; "Situation on the territories of Upper Orava and Spiš," Warsaw, No. 32/45 duv., 12 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek; Note by the Legation of Czechoslovakia to Mr. Michal Zymierski, acting Polish Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, 17 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

⁵⁸ See "The Record of the Conversation with the Upper Orava Delegation," Presidium of the Slovak National Council, Bratislava, 18 June 1945, c. 1369/45-U, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

⁵⁹ Minutes of the Committee for Spiš-Orava Refugees, Trstená Branch, Trstená, 8 September 1946, Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 53.

Slovak population.⁶⁰

The Czechoslovak government discussed the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland on 8 June 1945. Deputy Foreign Minister Clementis informed the government about the latest Polish correspondence regarding the Tešín district. Czechoslovakia continued to refuse any comparison between the incorporation of the Tešín district to Czechoslovakia in 1920 and the incorporation of the districts to Poland in 1938. For Czechoslovakia there did not exist any “Tešín question,” therefore the Polish proposal to set up a commission to inquire into this “question” was unacceptable.⁶¹ Czechoslovakia could only accept a commission to study the questions of the former German territories ceded to Poland.⁶² Minister A. Procházka expressed surprise regarding the Polish correspondence in a view of conciliatory position, which the Czechoslovak government adopted recently on the issue of the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated to Slovakia in 1939. Deputy Prime Minister Msgr. Dr. J. Šrámek supported the maximum Czechoslovak territorial demands in

⁶⁰ The Czechoslovak government considered repatriation of the Slovak population of the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland even prior to a transfer of these two districts to Poland. Clementis informed Hejret in Warsaw on 5 May 1945 that the population of the disputed townships in Orava and Spiš asked to keep them in Czechoslovakia and it was probable that many of them would rather emigrate than to stay in Poland. Clementis instructed Hejret to inquire, informally, what would be the position of Warsaw on the eventual emigration of the Slovak population. Hejret should simultaneously indicate Prague would help Poles who would like to emigrate from Tešín Silesia. See Clementis “Incidents on the Polish border,” Clementis to Hejret, Košice, 5 May 1945, c.j. 101/B/1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek. Heidrich inquired on 8 June 1945 whether Envoy Hejret had negotiated voluntary emigration of the Slovaks from the concerned territories. Czechoslovakia would wish that the Slovaks from the townships involved be allowed to take everything with them and expected Warsaw would authorize that and that the Slovaks, who would opt for emigration, would not face any repercussions from various groups operating there. See “The situation on the territories of Upper Orava and Spiš attached to Slovakia at the expense of Poland in 1939,” Prague, c.: 2403-II/2-1945, 8 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek. Envoy Hejret informed on 12 June 1945 about his informal negotiations with Minister Rzymowski and Deputy Minister Berman on possibilities of emigration of the Slovaks from the territories of Upper Orava and Spiš. Berman noted problems regarding the transfers in Tešín Silesia some National Committees allowed Poles to take with them only 20 kilograms. Rzymowski confirmed that an agreement on these issues, based on reciprocity, would not cause problems. See “Situation on the territories of Upper Orava and Spiš,” Warsaw, No. 32/45 duv., 12 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

⁶¹ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 87.

⁶² After the war Germany ceded a part of its territory to Poland. Czechoslovakia raised claims to the Kladsko, Hlučínsko and Ratibořsko regions, the former German territories ceded to Poland after World War II.

Kladsko,⁶³ Hlučínsko⁶⁴ and Ratibořsko,⁶⁵ and lamented a lack of influential personalities in the United States, who could support Czechoslovakia's territorial claims. Ultimately, the government decided to inform Poland that Czechoslovakia would not discuss any territorial adjustments in the district of Tešín.⁶⁶

In June 1945, Czechoslovakia and Poland briefly faced a possibility of military conflict over the Tešín district.⁶⁷ When Czechoslovak troops entered the Ratibořsko district on 10 June 1945, Poland protested two days later with a note demanding immediate withdrawal. Poland requested immediate withdrawal within 24 hours, otherwise force would be used.⁶⁸ Poland presented Czechoslovakia, on 15 June 1945, an ultimatum to establish a bilateral commission to solve the Tešín issue within 48 hours.⁶⁹ Poland threatened to use all means available in case of Czechoslovakia's failure to reply favourably. The Soviet Union, the new dominant power in Central

⁶³ *Kłodzko* in Polish.

⁶⁴ *Głubczyce* in Polish.

⁶⁵ *Racibórz* in Polish.

⁶⁶ Notes of the 28th meeting of the Czechoslovak government, Prague, 8 June 1945, *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. No. 22, 50-56. Cf. *Národní archiv* [the National Archives] (hereafter NA) Prague, AUV KSC, f.100/24, Fold. 137, No. 1494. For more reports on the situation on the Czechoslovak - Polish borders see NA Prague, UPV 1945-1951, Nos. 4496, 4497, 4536, 5640, 5776.

⁶⁷ Poland addressed Czechoslovakia three notes (6 June, 12 June and 13 June 1945) to state its concern on the Tešín issue. See "Translation of the Polish Note, dated 15 June 1945," Warsaw, 15 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek; "Polish proposal to solve the border questions," Warsaw, 6 June 1945, c.j. 23/duv/45, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek. See also "V.Clementis-S.Wierblowski conversation," Prague, 14 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

⁶⁸ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 90-91.

⁶⁹ The Polish government proposed to set up a mixed commission to administer Tešín Silesia and propose, within a month, a solution to the Tešín issue reflecting its national structure. Poland expected Czechoslovakia to accept this proposal within 48 hours after its delivery. Should this proposal be unacceptable, the Polish Provisional government, would disclaim any responsibility for any course of events and the government would use all means at its disposal to protect the Polish population and order in Tešín Silesia. See "Translation of the Polish Note, dated 15 June 1945," Warsaw, 15 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek. Acting Foreign Minister Berman and Speaker of Sejm Zymierski presented the note to Envoy Hejret. Hejret raised objection to the note, but Zymierski pointed to movements of the Polish Army and threatened by a military intervention. Zymierski insisted on transferring Polish-dominated areas of Tešín Silesia to Poland. See The Hejret-Berman-Zymierski Conversation, 15 June 1945, Warsaw, Hejret to MFA, Prague, 16 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

Europe, was able to defuse a conflict and invited both sides to Moscow to settle all their disputes.⁷⁰

In the meantime, even in the tense days of June of 1945, Czechoslovakia and Poland exchanged their ambassadors, Vladislav Hejret⁷¹ and Stefan Wierblowski,⁷² and normalized their diplomatic relations.⁷³ Czechoslovakia also consented to the establishment of the Polish consulates in Bratislava and Moravská Ostrava in the summer of 1945.⁷⁴

The border between Czechoslovakia and Poland in Orava and Spiš came to a forefront in June of 1945. Czechoslovakia started to criticize Poland for the unsatisfactory situation of the Slovaks in Upper Orava and Spiš. The Czechoslovak note of 11 June 1945 appealed to Warsaw to let those Slovaks wishing to emigrate to allow them to leave with their property. The note stressed that the Slovaks should not be persecuted by the various bandits in the region.⁷⁵ The Slovak National Council urged the Czechoslovak government to formulate its territorial claims against Poland to the extent the interests of Czechoslovakia and Slovakia would require it:

...As regards the territorial claims against Poland, the Slovak National Council is of the opinion, that the territory in North-Eastern Orava and North-Western Spiš, which was attributed [to Poland] in 1920 or which we have released under the circumstances after the

⁷⁰ For example see a report on Czech-Polish border misunderstandings, Moravská Ostrava, 14 June 1945, *CSSO* 45-48, Doc. No. 23, 56-58. Cf. AMZV Prague, GS-Zourek 1945-54, Fold. No. 3, Box No. 2. Clementis and Fierlinger discussed a brewing crisis between Czechoslovakia and Poland with the Soviet Ambassador in Prague. The Czechoslovak government rejected the Polish ultimatum. See "Conversation with the Soviet Ambassador, 22:30 - 23:40, 15 June 1945," Prague, 15 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek; Clementis-Zorin conversation, Prague, 15 June 1945, *CSSO* 45-48, Doc. No. 24, 58-59.

⁷¹ Josef Hejret - Czechoslovak Ambassador in Warsaw (1945-1948).

⁷² Stefan Wierblowski (1904 - 1977) - Polish Ambassador in Prague (1945-1947).

⁷³ Clementis received a new Polish ambassador, Stefan Wierblowski, on 14 June 1945. See Clementis-Wierblowski conversation, AMZV Prague, GS-Zourek 1945-54, Fold. No.16, Box No.1. The Speaker of the Polish Parliament received a new ambassador, Vladislav Hejret, on 15 June 1945. See Report of Hejret, Warsaw, 15 June 1945, AMZV Prague, GS-Zourek, 1945-54, Fold No. 15, Box No.1.

⁷⁴ Masaryk to Wierblowski, Prague, 25 July 1945, *CSPL* 44-48, Doc. No. 34, 70.

⁷⁵ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 90. Kamiński argues the equalizing the situation of the Polish population in Zaolzie and the population of Upper Orava and Spiš was without a ground but provided a propaganda value. In Zaolzie the Czech administration systematically fought the Polish element, in Upper Orava and Spiš the Polish administration did not yet assume control, therefore it could not control anti-governmental partisans targeting the segments of the population in Orava and Spiš, who after living few years in Slovakia considered themselves the Slovaks. *Ibid.*, 90.

liberation of the republic, be ceased to the republic. We base this claim on the fact, that almost 98 per cent majority of the population support attachment to the Czechoslovak Republic....⁷⁶

The Czechoslovak government discussed the very tense situation in the Těšín district on 18 June 1945. During the debate Vladimír Clementis observed that the Poles were ready to make concessions in other border questions, should they achieve Czechoslovakia's concessions in the Těšín district. Minister H. Ripka believed that Czechoslovakia had already accepted a compromise in the Těšín district in 1920, which was unfavorable. The government also discussed cession of the Subcarpathian Ukraine to the Soviet Union.⁷⁷ Deputy Prime Minister K. Gottwald expressed certain concerns regarding the upcoming negotiations with Poland in Moscow. In his view, only cession of the Subcarpathian Ukraine to the Soviet Union could improve Czechoslovakia's position and would equalize it with position of Poland, which transferred large territories to the Soviet Union.⁷⁸ The Czechoslovak government decided to accept the Soviet invitation to come to Moscow to negotiate with Poland all outstanding issues. The government also agreed that the pre-Munich border in the

⁷⁶ See "Presidium of the Slovak National Council to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague," Bratislava, 20 June 1945, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

⁷⁷ The Soviet Army started to liberate the territory of the Subcarpathian Ukraine in 1944. The 1st congress of the National Committees of the Subcarpathian Ukraine adopted, on 26 November 1944, a Manifesto, demanding incorporation of the Subcarpathian Ukraine into the Soviet Union. See *SFVE*, vol. 1, note no. 2, 133. E. Beneš and J. V. Stalin tried to clarify the issue of the Subcarpathian Ukraine in January of 1945. See J. V. Stalin to E. Beneš, Moscow, 23 January 1945, *SFVE*, vol. 1, no. 34, 132-133. The Czechoslovak government declared in the article VII of its "Košice Program" in April 1945 to solve the issue of the Subcarpathian Ukraine according to the democratically expressed wishes of its population and in accordance with the friendship between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. The government accepted in June 1945 Gottwald's view that the Soviet Union would be more conciliatory to Czechoslovakia regarding Poland should Czechoslovakia cede the Subcarpathian Ukraine. See *CSSO 45-48*, 66, n. Cf. NA Prague, AUV KSC, Fold.100/24, Unit No.137, No. 1494.

⁷⁸ Notes of the 31st meeting of the Czechoslovak government on the situation in the Czechoslovak - Polish borderland, Prague, 18 June 1945, *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. No. 25, 60. Cf. NA Prague, AUV KSC, Fold. 100/24, Unit No.137, No. 1494. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared a detailed analysis of the situation in the Těšín region ("*Poznamky cs. vlády k vytkám pl.vlády, týkajícím se incidentu na uzemi cs.Tesinska*"), see AMZV Prague, GS-Zourek, Fold. 16, No. sine, Box No.2. See also Notes of the Czechoslovak government meeting on cession of the Subcarpathian Ukraine to the Soviet Union, Prague, 18 June 1945, *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. No. 26, 63-65. Cf. NA Prague, AUV KSC, Fold. 00/24, Unit No.137, No. 1494..

Tešín district would not be discussed in Moscow, that the Czechoslovak territorial claims to the former German territories should not be linked with the Tešín issue and that the Orava and Spiš issue, as well as that of the Poles in Tešín, would be considered from the population transfer perspective.⁷⁹

The Czechoslovak delegation, led by its Prime Minister, Zdeněk Fierlinger, conducted bilateral negotiations with Poland in Moscow from 25 to 30 June 1945.⁸⁰ The Soviet leader J. V. Stalin received the Czechoslovak delegation on 28 June 1945 and the following day Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union signed a treaty on the cession of the Subcarpathian Ukraine to the Soviet Union. The cession of the Subcarpathian Ukraine during the Moscow talks with Poland was received in Czechoslovakia with some scepticism.⁸¹ Czechoslovakia departed from its policy of the pre-Munich borders and the Subcarpathian Ukraine was transferred without any compensation and

⁷⁹ Keller, French Chargé d'affaires a.i. in Prague, reviewed on 19 June 1945 the Czechoslovak strategy for the Moscow talks. He observed that the talks would deal with the rectification of the border in Ratibor and Leobschutz, as well as the transfer of the Poles from Tešín Silesia and "the Slovaks from Zakopané." See Keller to MFA, Prague, tel. no. 7, 19 June 1945, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 52, 28. Keller wrote more the upcoming negotiations between Czechoslovakia and Poland in Moscow on 20 June 1945. Clementis explained him that only the questions of Zakopané, Teschen, Ratibor and Luebschütz would be discussed. Clementis added that after its arrival to Košice the Czechoslovak government received Slovak delegations from Jablonka and Jurgov. The government refused their demands to rectify the border established after 1919. In this context Clementis referred to the hesitation of Warsaw to evacuate Tešín Silesia. Clementis stated that the question of Zakopané would be solved by Prague's offer to evacuate all Slovaks. Keller concluded this offer should invite Warsaw to evacuate the Poles from Tešín Silesia. "Conférence tchéco-polonaise à Moscou (Teschen, Luebschütz, Ratibor, Zakopané)," Prague, tel. Europe no. 35, 20 June 1945, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 52, 32-34. For more on the border rectifications with Hungary and Germany see "Record of the session of the Ministerial Commission for the Border Rectifications," Prague, 20 June 1945, AMZV Prague, Navrhy do vlády (Žourek).

⁸⁰ See "Record of the 1st Czechoslovak - Polish negotiations at the Polish Embassy on 22 June 1945," AMZV Prague, Navrhy do vlády (Žourek); "Record of the 2nd Czechoslovak - Polish negotiations at the Polish Embassy on 25 June 1945," AMZV Prague, Navrhy do vlády (Žourek). The members of the Czechoslovak delegation to Moscow were: K.Gottwald, J.Ursíny, L.Svoboda, H.Ripka, Z.Nejedlý, A.Procházka and V.Clementis.

⁸¹ The only exception were the districts of Orava and Spiš, where the local population viewed with optimism the example of the Subcarpathian Ukraine, which was attached to the USSR, based on the will of its local population. In February 1945, in the local referenda in Orava and Spiš on the territorial question, more than 98% votes were cast in favour of Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia submitted these results at the Moscow conference. Goetel, Polish representative at the conference, dismissed the results with a certain dose of cynicism: "...Poland would collect more votes for Poland in the Slovak town of Ružomberok with police and army assistance if allowed only one week of jurisdiction over the respective territories." Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 20-21.

without a plebiscite. The only satisfaction left was that the Soviet Union pledged to support Czechoslovakia's territorial claims to the Kladsko region and the Soviets reassured of their understanding of Czechoslovakia's position on the Tešín issue.⁸²

Czechoslovak and Polish governments tried to resolve bilaterally their outstanding issues in Moscow, but the negotiations could not change the stalemate. The delegations also discussed a possibility of population exchanges, which could include Upper Orava and Spiš. Gomulka stated readiness to accept a population exchange, mentioned earlier by Clementis, if a commission of experts would established that the *Zaolzie* Silesia population was a majority Czechs. Ursíny resolutely refused the expert commission.⁸³ Poland claimed parts of the Tešín district (*Zaolzie*) and Silesia on ethnic grounds and insisted on a right of self-determination for its populace. Poland perceived good neighbourly relations with Czechoslovakia through the problem of *Zaolzie*.⁸⁴ Czechoslovakia viewed the Tešín question as closed. The Tešín region (*Tešínsko*) was historically a Czech region, already divided in 1920 and Prague accepted this solution.⁸⁵ In spite of the apparent failure to break the stalemate Czechoslovakia and Poland preferred to avoid internationalization of their differences.⁸⁶ The problem of *Zaolzie* remained the only point of discord between

⁸² See "Review of Internal Affairs (1.-15.7.1945)," *Tři roky. Přehledy a dokumenty k čs. politice v letech 1945 až 1948* [Three Years. Reviews and Documents to the Czecho-Slovak Politics in 1945-1948], vol.1 (Brno: MU Brno, 1990), 30-31.

⁸³ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 107-110.

⁸⁴ Vice-Chairman of the Polish Provisional government Władysław Gomułka commented to the press on the Tešín question. The government of national unity maintained that large parts of the Tešín region and Silesia were Polish, the government wanted to build a homogeneous state and believed the principle of self-determination should apply in this case. See Reuters report on the negotiations, Moscow, 27 June 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 30, 64-65.

⁸⁵ See Reuters report on the negotiations, Moscow, 27 June 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 30, 64-65. Czechoslovak Prime Minister Fierlinger categorically rejected any territorial concessions to Poland. He admitted only possibility of the mutual transfer of the population. *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Vice-Chairman of the Polish Provisional government Władysław Gomułka declined proposal of solving the Tešín/*Zaolzie* conundrum through the international peace conference: "The Polish government and the Polish population are of the opinion that all Slav nations should settle their problems among themselves. This is the best way of establishing good neighbourly relations." See Reuters report on the negotiations, Moscow, 27 June 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 30, 64-65.

Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁸⁷

The Czechoslovak Prime Minister Fierlinger informed the government about the Moscow talks on 2 July 1945. The Soviet authorities (Molotov and Stalin) supported the pre-Munich borders between Czechoslovakia and Poland as a point of departure for any eventual negotiations between the two countries. These borders could be modified only by mutual bilateral agreement or by a decision of the peace conference. Fierlinger admitted a failure of the negotiations with Poland, the Poles refused to discuss individual incidents, considering them mere consequences of the unresolved Tešín question. Minister Ripka observed that the Soviet representatives were impressed by the fact that the Slovak members of the delegation in Moscow, Ján Ursíny⁸⁸ and Vladimír Clementis, unanimously defended the importance of the Tešín district for Slovakia. Ursíny and Clementis explained to the Soviet representatives that Czechoslovakia made concessions to Poland in the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš in the interest of peace and friendly coexistence between Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁸⁹ Ursíny stressed that Czechoslovakia did not open the question of Upper Orava and Spiš, inspite of the fact that a delegation of the local population demanded attachment of these territories to Czechoslovakia.⁹⁰ The Polish Prime Minister Osóbka-Morawski stated that a peace between Czechoslovakia and Poland was impossible without a solution of the Tešín question. Czechoslovakia already accepted self-determination on an ethnic basis and transferred the Subcarpathian Ukraine to the Soviet Union. Although Poland could hurt

⁸⁷ Polish Prime Minister E. Osóbka-Morawski echoed disappointment in the *Sejm* on the Tešín issue: "The only dark spot in this area is a failure to settle our relations with brotherly Czechoslovak nation. The problem of Zaolzie must be settled in accordance with the principle of self-determination of nations." E. Osóbka-Morawski in the *Sejm (Głos Ludu)*, Warsaw, 2 July 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 33, 69.

⁸⁸ Ján Ursíny (1896- 1972) - Slovak politician, Czechoslovak Deputy Prime Minister (1945 - 1947).

⁸⁹ Report on the Czechoslovak - Polish negotiations in Moscow, 25-30 June 1945, *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. No. 36, 80-90. Cf. NA Prague, AUV KSC, Fold.100/24, Unit No.137, No. 1494.

⁹⁰ Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 110.

Czechoslovakia economically, Poland would support Czechoslovakia economically and remained flexible on other border issues.⁹¹

The Czechoslovak delegation sought and received in Moscow support of the United States and British ambassadors in the Soviet Union on the Tešín issue. Fierlinger informed the Czechoslovak government that the Soviet Union already transferred the former German territories (Kladsko, Ratiborsko and Hlučínsko) to the Polish military administration. Deputy Minister Clementis informed that the ministerial commission prepared on 20 June 1945 a memorandum with the maximum territorial demands. The Czechoslovak government agreed to appoint a commission⁹² to investigate the local conditions in the Tešín district.⁹³

Czechoslovakia continued to claim parts of German territories and a rectification of the borders with Poland despite the outcome of the Potsdam Conference.⁹⁴ Deputy Minister Clementis presented the Czechoslovak claims to Soviet Ambassador Zorin on 13 August 1945 and asked for the Soviet support. Zorin declined the Soviet involvement into this bilateral issue: “We would not interfere in this question and would not support your claims.”⁹⁵ Zorin said that the border revision was possible only through bilateral agreement with the Poles, who linked it with the Tešín question, where Czechoslovakia was inflexible. Clementis used the meeting with Zorin to convey a protest against the persecution of the Slovaks: “I inform [you] about terrorist methods employed by the

⁹¹ The Polish delegates argued that Czechoslovakia transferred the Subcarpathian Ukraine to the Soviet Union because it respected a self-determination on an ethnic basis. The Czechoslovak delegates objected that an ethnic principle was already applied in the Tešín question in 1920.

⁹² The Tešín commission composed: J. David, K. Gottwald, V. Široký, Fr. Hála, dr. Nejedlý and dr. Ferjenčík.

⁹³ Report on the Czechoslovak - Polish negotiations in Moscow, 25-30 June 1945, *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. No. 36, 80-90. Cf. NA Prague, AUV KSC, Fold.100/24, Unit No.137, No. 1494.

⁹⁴ The Potsdam Conference, held from 17 July to 2 August 1945, approved the new German-Polish borders and sanctioned the Polish administration over the areas claimed by Czechoslovakia. Edmund Jan Osmańczyk, *The Encyclopedia of The United Nations and International Relations*, 2d ed. (New York/London/Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis, 1990), s.v. “Potsdam Conference, 1945.”

⁹⁵ Clementis - Zorin conversation, Prague, 13 August 1945, *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. No. 45, 108-110. Cf. AMZV Prague, GS-A 1945-54, Fasc.149, No. 20371, Box.187.

Poles against the Slovaks in Upper Orava and Spiš.”⁹⁶ Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk criticized Poland for the situation in the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland in September of 1945: “We want and will live in peace with all neighbours, ... but what is going on in Orava and Spiš, does not help to achieve it.”⁹⁷

Czechoslovakia and Poland signed on 21 September 1945 an agreement on repatriation of their citizens.⁹⁸ The agreement regulated problems related to displacement of population as a consequence of war operations or violence by occupying forces.⁹⁹ However, it was a question of the expulsion of the Germans from Czechoslovakia and the question of population exchange between Slovakia and Hungary, which pre-occupied the Czechoslovak and Slovak governments in the fall of 1945 and afterwards.¹⁰⁰

After the Potsdam Conference Czechoslovakia toned down its territorial claims against Poland in the Kladsko, Hlučínsko and Ratibořsko areas. Poland continued to push the Tešín question

⁹⁶ Clementis - Zorin conversation, Prague, 13 August 1945, *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. No. 45, 108-110. Cf. AMZV Prague, GS-A 1945-54, Fasc.149, No. 20371, Box.187.

⁹⁷ “Review of Foreign Affairs (15.-27.9.1945),” *Tři roky. Přehledy a dokumenty k čs. politice v letech 1945 až 1948*, Vol.1 (Brno: MU Brno, 1990), 112.

⁹⁸ The transfer of the populations seemed an acceptable solution in the fall of 1945 and the Czechoslovak government offered Warsaw to solve the issues of Orava and Spiš, as well as the issue of the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia through the population transfers. The French embassy in Prague observed on 7 September 1945 that the Polish argument, based on ethnic considerations, did not count a lot, in an era of population transfers. The Embassy recommended that France should seek economic stability in Central Europe, a condition of the worldwide peace. “Teschén et les différends polono-tchéques,” Prague, 7 September 1945, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, *Tchéco-Slovaquie*, vol. 52, 106-113.

⁹⁹ Agreement between Poland and Czechoslovakia on Repatriation, Prague, 21 September 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 38, 74-79.

¹⁰⁰ Slavomír Michálek, “Dohoda o výmene obyvateľstva s Maďarskom [Treaty on Population Exchange with Hungary],” in *Juraj Slávik Neresnický, od politiky cez diplomáciu po exil (1890-1969)* [Juraj Slávik Neresnický, From Politics Through Diplomacy to Exile], ed. Slavomír Michálek and others, with a Foreword by B. Lichardus, M. Bútora and V. Bystrický (Bratislava: Prodama, 2006), 256.

“Research Institute for Minority Studies on Hungarians Attached to Czechoslovakia and Carpatho-Ruthenia” alluded in its publication *Hungarians in Czechoslovakia* to a population exchange between Czechoslovakia and Poland: “In May, 1948, the Communist Party of Slovakia through official channels proposed an Agreement on Population Exchange to Juliusz Znamierowski, in charge of the Polish Consulate General in Pozsony [Bratislava] to get rid of the Poles, too.” See *Hungarians in Czechoslovakia* (New York: Research Institute for Minority Studies on Hungarians Attached to Czechoslovakia and Carpatho-Ruthenia, Inc., 1959), 34. The author could not substantiated the said claims.

to the forefront of the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland, because the question of Zaolzie (Tešín) remained very much alive in Poland: “The question of the Zaolzie region casts shadow on the neighbourly relations of our nations. It is with pain that we think now about some statements of Czech reactionaries and chauvinists who are trying to irritate the Polish - Czech relations....”¹⁰¹

On 5 November 1945 the Polish government officially expressed its disappointment with the quality of the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland, which were burdened by unsolved territorial issues.¹⁰² In the diplomatic note to the Czechoslovak government the Polish government observed with “its utmost disappointment continuing deterioration of mutual relations as a consequence of the unsolved border questions, particularly the border delimitation of the territories inhabited for ever by the purely Polish population....”¹⁰³ The note expressed concerns that continuing deterioration of mutual relations could create mutual national prejudices damaging the future of both countries. The Polish government stressed that it abstained from internationalizing the bilateral dispute with Czechoslovakia and agreed with bilateral negotiations in Moscow in June of 1945. Poland proposed to Czechoslovakia a new round of bilateral negotiations in order to “discuss the range of border, political, economic, cultural and other questions.”¹⁰⁴

Czechoslovakia accepted the Polish proposal for new bilateral negotiations in a letter of the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister J. Masaryk dated 24 November 1945 and suggested Prague as a venue for the negotiations.¹⁰⁵ But the Czechoslovak government made it clear that the planned negotiations could not start from a point of cession of a part of Czechoslovak territory. Czechoslovakia considered it helpful to leave aside the questions on which the positions of the two

¹⁰¹ *Głos Ludu*, Warsaw, 28 October 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 39, 79-80.

¹⁰² Kamiński, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki polityczne 1945-1948*, 165-166.

¹⁰³ S. Wierblowski to J. Masaryk, Prague, 5 November 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 40, 80-1.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ J. Masaryk to S. Wierblowski, Prague, 24 November 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 42, 83.

governments differed.¹⁰⁶ The Czechoslovak government restated its consistent position of inviolability of the pre-Munich borders between Czechoslovakia and Poland.¹⁰⁷

In the fall of 1945 Bishop Ján Vojtaššák¹⁰⁸ and his Polish partners dealt with the consequences of the transfer of the districts of Orava and Spiš to Poland. The agreement between the Bishop of Spiš and the Metropolitan Curia in Cracow on 21 October 1945 confirmed the transfer of the Orava and Spiš decanates under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Cracow. Consequently, the Slovak clergy left the district of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland at the end of November in 1945.¹⁰⁹ František Móš,¹¹⁰ a Slovak priest from Nová Belá¹¹¹ in the incorporated district of Spiš, publicly challenged Polish political and ecclesiastical authority over the district, claiming that Spiš “does not belong to Poland neither from a political point of view, nor from an ecclesiastical one.”¹¹²

Polish Cardinal Hlond, Archbishop-Primate in Poznań wrote to Bishop Ján Vojtaššák on 24 October 1945 to inform him about the decree, which removed from the jurisdiction of the Spiš Diocese the parishes and deaconates of the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland. The decree stated that the said parishes and deaconates would be under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Krakow from 1 November 1945. Vojtaššák replied to Hlond on 29 December 1945 and challenged Polish claims to the districts, that in his view, never in history had the territories of these deaconates belonged to Poland, either politically or ecclesiastically, with the exception of the interval between

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ This principle of inviolability of the pre-Munich border of Czechoslovakia had, however, one exception, that is the border with the Soviet Union and the transfer of the Subcarpathian Ukraine to the Soviet jurisdiction. Czechoslovakia ceded the Subcarpathian Ukraine to the Soviet Union by a treaty signed on 29 June 1945.

¹⁰⁸ Ján Vojtaššák (1877 - 1965) - Bishop of Spiš, member of the Slovak State Council in the Slovak Republic during 1939-1945, jailed for his pro-Slovak orientation, condemned in political monster process in 1950.

¹⁰⁹ Kwiek, *Z dziejow mniejszosci slowackiej na Spiszu i Oravie w latach 1945-1957*, 19.

¹¹⁰ František Móš (1891 - 1971) - Slovak priest, Nová Belá (Nowa Biała).

¹¹¹ *Nowa Biała* in Polish.

¹¹² Kwiek, *Z dziejow mniejszosci slowackiej na Spiszu i Oravie w latach 1945-1957*, 19.

1920 and 1939. Vojtaššák asked Hlond to let the Polish government restore the proper Slovak boundary, the boundary respected for centuries.¹¹³

The Czechoslovak Foreign Minister J. Masaryk commented on the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland in the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament on 20 December 1945.¹¹⁴ Masaryk explained, that the Czechoslovak government, because of its position of maintaining pre-Munich borders, “transferred to Poland, as an act of goodwill, certain territories in Orava and Spiš, which had been attached to the Slovak Republic in 1939.”¹¹⁵ The Czechoslovak government considered the issues of Orava and Spiš, as well as that of Tešín, closed.¹¹⁶ Ambassador Wierblowski replied, on behalf of the Polish government, to Minister Masaryk’s November letter on 27 December 1945. Wierblowski wrote that “the critical situation of the Poles in Zaolzie is known” and that “semblance of their tolerant treatment cannot hide the real nature of things.”¹¹⁷ The Polish government avoided to comment this problem earlier, but now demanded bilateral negotiations to create an objective picture of the situation.¹¹⁸ Warsaw considered it useful to discuss all questions, including the question of borders.¹¹⁹ Warsaw blamed Prague for avoiding discussion of issues, which Poland considered vital issues of mutual interest, including the question of Zaolzie (Tešín). The government in Warsaw hoped its partner would realize its mistake of avoiding discussion and wanted to solve “once and for all the problems concerning Poland, including the

¹¹³ Bishop Vojtaššák’s message to Cardinal Hlond, Archbishop-Primate in Poznań (Poland), Spišská Kapitula, 29 December 1945, in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 76-79.

¹¹⁴ See “Déclaration de M.Masaryk sur la politique étrangère,” Prague, tel. no. 1392, 21 December 1945, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 53, 193-196.

¹¹⁵ *CSPL 44-48*, 92-3.

¹¹⁶ Masaryk informed the Foreign Affairs Committee that the Tešín question has been definitely resolved by the Confence of Ambassadors in 1920. Déclaration de M.Masaryk sur la politique étrangère,” Prague, Tel. No. 1392, 21 December 1945, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 52, 193-196.

¹¹⁷ Wierblowski to Masaryk, Prague, 27 December 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 45, 90-92.

¹¹⁸ See S. Wierblowski to J. Masaryk, Prague, 5 November 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 40, 80-1.

¹¹⁹ Wierblowski to Masaryk, Prague, 27 December 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 45, 90-92.

question of Zaolzie (Těšín), on the basis of friendly accord, justice and self-determination.”¹²⁰ Poland was prepared to negotiate the border rectifications, but Czechoslovakia refused any territorial cessions to Poland.¹²¹

At the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in December of 1945,¹²² Czechoslovakia presented the results of a census conducted by the local national committees throughout the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš in the spring of 1945. The “census” was conducted to support the request that the districts transferred to Poland in 1920 and in 1939 remained in Czechoslovakia. According to the “census” 98% of the local population declared for Czechoslovakia.¹²³

Czechoslovakia and Poland interpreted differently the events in 1938 and 1939 and their consequences for both countries.¹²⁴ The Polish, Slovak and Czech interpretations of the events and actions related to the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš, in the Javorina valley and in the Tešín district in 1938-1939 varied.¹²⁵ In February of 1946 Czechoslovakia and Poland concluded an agreement on mutual restoration of the confiscated property during the war. For the sake of this agreement both countries had to define the wartime period. The agreement resolved that the wartime

¹²⁰ Prime Minister E. Osóbka-Morawski, Warsaw, 29 December 1945, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 46, 92-3.

¹²¹ See “Review of Foreign Affairs (10.10.-6.12.1945),” *Tři roky. Přehledy a dokumenty k čs. politice v letech 1945 až 1948*, Vol.1. (Brno: MU Brno, 1990), 185.

¹²² The Postdam Conference of the Big Three decided to establish a Council of Foreign Ministers (hereafter CFM) composed of the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, China and France. The CFM drafted peace treaties with ex-enemy states. For more see Stephen Kertesz, *The Last European Peace Conference: Paris 1946 - Conflict of Values* (New York/London: University Press of America, 1985), 17-27.

¹²³ “Memorandum of the People of Upper Orava and Northern Spiš” in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 36.

¹²⁴ For Czechoslovak point of view see “Tešínsko /Legal and Political Aspects of the Polish Action in 1938/, Prague, c.2551/ duv.45, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

¹²⁵ The difference of opinions on the interpretation of the events of 1938-1939, at least between the Slovak and Polish historians, continues. For the Polish perspective see Łukasz Kamiński, “Klęska czy zwycięstwo - koniec II wojny światowej z perspektywy polskiej i słowackiej” [Defeat or Victory - the End of the World War II from the Polish and Slovak Perspective], in *Stosunki polsko-słowackie w I połowie XX wieku* [Polish-Slovak Relations in the 1st Half of the 20th Century], ed. Joanna Głowińska (Wrocław: IPN Wrocław, 2006), 111-112.

period would start for Czechoslovakia on 17 September 1938 and for Poland on 1 September 1939.¹²⁶

The bilateral negotiations between Czechoslovakia and Poland in Prague from on 17 - 24 February 1946 included the question of Tešín Silesia, but the talks ended without any results.¹²⁷ The Polish side raised the issue of the savings of the population from the districts of Orava and Spiš transferred to Poland in 1945, which were deposited to the Czechoslovak financial institutions. The Czechoslovak side excluded concessions, the said savings were subjected to the monetary reform in Czechoslovakia.¹²⁸

The Slovak Americans maintained a very critical view of the Czechoslovak government's lack of initiative regarding the districts of Orava and Spiš transferred to Poland in 1945. The American Liberation Committee for Spiš and Orava, formed by the Slovak Americans, remained the only outspoken critic of passivity of the Czechoslovak authorities regarding persecution of the Slovaks in the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš. The Czechoslovak authorities believed they were "undertaking all possible steps in the interest of the Slovaks in Spis and Orava."¹²⁹ When some Polish representatives hinted abroad to possible plebiscites in the disputed districts these pronouncements reinforced the suspicion of the Slovak Americans towards the Czechoslovak

¹²⁶ Agreement on mutual restoration of property confiscated after the outbreak of the war, Prague, 12 February 1946, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 50, 107-110.

¹²⁷ Notes of Czechoslovak - Polish negotiations, Prague, 16 February 1946, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 51, 111-115.

¹²⁸ Session of the joint Czechoslovak - Polish economic committee, Prague, 12 March 1946, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 59, 132-134. The decree of the Czechoslovak President No. 91/1945 dealt with the monetary reform in Czechoslovakia.

¹²⁹ Personal Secretary to the Slovak National Council President to Joseph Matasovsky, 16 February 1946, Bratislava, in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 117. The Slovak newspaper *Čas* (Time) wrote on 14 February 1946 about the persecution of Slovaks in the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš. The Slovak deputies at the Provisional National Assembly interpellated the Foreign Minister: "Is the Minister willing to request an international commission for this territory which would prevent the violence until the final resolution of the border question?" "Persecution of Slovaks in Upper Orava and Spis," *Čas* (Time), 14 February 1946, Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 118-119.

government.¹³⁰

Generally, the American Liberation Committees for Spiš-Orava considered the Czechoslovak government was stonewalling the issue of the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland. The Committees blamed the government and authorities for accepting the *status quo* in the hope that after some time the population of these villages would adapt and the citizens of Czechoslovakia would forget the entire matter.¹³¹ The Czechoslovak government, in fact, did its utmost to conceal the situation in Orava and Spiš. Prague exercised maximum restraint in order not to unnecessarily burden the mutual relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland, and in hope of achieving Warsaw's remedy. However, it was very difficult to maintain this ambiguity. Familiarity with violence in Orava and Spiš grew, as demonstrated by the parliamentary interpellations, and the arrival of a delegation of the Slovak-Americans, invited by desperate appeals of the Slovak population in Upper Orava and Spiš, to improve the situation.¹³²

The 1946 parliamentary elections campaign resuscitated further the issue of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš. The Deputy Speaker of the Slovak National Council, Ivan Horváth, criticized the situation in the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated in Poland at the National Assembly in Prague. Horváth claimed the plebiscite in the Slovak townships in Orava and Spiš demonstrated their will to remain in Czechoslovakia. He regretted the incoming news of terror and assassination attempts against the Slovaks. Horváth believed, however, that these acts of violence

¹³⁰ In the spring of 1946, Polish Minister Michael Szisko toured the United States and in Pittsburgh, at one of his press conferences, he stated Poland's support to plebiscites to determine the borders between Poland and Czechoslovakia and that the Poles wanted a plebiscite in Spiš and Orava. Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 97-100.

¹³¹ The American Liberation Committees for Spiš-Orava to the Czecho-Slovak authorities, Pittsburgh, PA, 25 February 1946, in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 97-100.

¹³² See "Orava and Spiš," Prague, after 11 July 1946, AMZV Prague, Navrhy do vlády (Žourek).

occurred against the intentions of Warsaw.¹³³ In the spring of 1946 tensions between the Slovaks and Czechs related to the border issues, Tešín, Orava and Spiš, eased.¹³⁴ The first year of Polish administration over the districts of Orava and Spiš transferred to Poland portrayed a worrying summary: 14 murdered, 216 seriously injured and 566 imprisoned Slovaks, in addition to several thousand refugees fleeing to Czechoslovakia.¹³⁵

During the electoral campaign the Czech Socialist Party advocated a rectification of the borders between Czechoslovakia and Poland.¹³⁶ Czechoslovakia pleaded for a border rectification in Kladsko, Hlubčicko and Ratibořsko, and submitted an official request to the Paris Council of Foreign Ministers in the spring of 1946. Warsaw qualified this request as a demonstration of Czechoslovakia's hostility towards Poland.¹³⁷

The Soviet Union urged Czechoslovakia to conclude a treaty of friendship with Poland throughout 1946. The Soviet Chargé d'affaires a.i. in Prague wrote to Prime Minister Gottwald on 27 July 1946 when the Soviet government sent its memorandum with its arguments in favour of a treaty of friendship between Czechoslovakia and Poland.¹³⁸ President Beneš replied to the Soviet proposal in his letter to Stalin on 30 July 1946. Beneš informed Stalin about ongoing negotiations

¹³³ "Discours de M. Ivan Horváth du 8 Mars devant l'Assemblée Nationale à Prague," E. Manach (Consul General in Bratislava) to Georges Bidault (Minister), Bratislava, tel. Europe no. 13/4, 21 March 1946, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 74, 297-299.

¹³⁴ See the report of the French Embassy in Prague "Tchèques et Slovaques," Ambassador to MFA, Prague, tel. Europe no. 657, 7 May 1946, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 74, 391-34.

¹³⁵ See "Orava and Spiš," Prague, after 11 July 1946, AMZV Prague, Navrhy do vlády (Žourek).

¹³⁶ See "Review of Internal Affairs (6.-12.5.1946)," *Tři roky. Přehledy a dokumenty k čs. politice v letech 1945 až 1948*, Vol.1. (Brno: MU Brno, 1990), 370.

¹³⁷ See "Review of Foreign Affairs (8.4.-16.5.1946)," *Tři roky. Přehledy a dokumenty k čs. politice v letech 1945 až 1948*, Vol.1 (Brno: MU Brno, 1990), 370 passim. Polish Prime Minister Modzelewski commented the Czechoslovak territorial demands in Polish Silesia as "an act of open hostility," to which Poland would respond appropriately. *Ibid.* Matuschak wrote that the Poles have been extremely uncompromising and when Czechoslovakia made claim to Ratibor and Kladsko, Poland branded these claims openly as 'unfriendly acts.' Poland made formal diplomatic protests and Czechoslovakia withdrew its claims. "Report of Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky on his 1946 mission to Europe" in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 136.

¹³⁸ Soviet Chargé d'affaires a.i. to Gottwald, Moscow, 27 July 1946, CSSO 45-48, Doc. No. 118, 261. Cf. AMZV Prague, SSSR 1945-59, Fold.1, No.142365/46, Box.21.

with Poland and expressed his surprise over the Polish territorial demands in the Tešín district. Beneš argued in favour of rectification of the border between Czechoslovakia and Poland in Polish Silesia. In Beneš's view the population of Czechoslovakia would welcome the signing of a friendship treaty with Poland with greater enthusiasm, if Czechoslovakia received at least a smaller part of the former German territories, which were and potentially still remained Czech.¹³⁹

The Paris Peace Conference took place from 29 July to 15 October 1946 and 21 participating states, including Czechoslovakia, discussed peace treaties with Germany's allies in Europe.¹⁴⁰ The Conference revived the hopes that the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš could be returned to Czechoslovakia or, at least, that a plebiscite could be conducted to determine their fate. The American Liberation Committees for Spiš and Orava appealed, on the eve of the peace conference, the Czechoslovak and allied governments to review the issue of the districts in Orava and Spiš incorporated in Poland after the war. The Committee requested the United Nations to intervene in the Spis-Orava case, demanded the Polish troops and militia evacuate that territory and asked the United Nations to return "this native land of our brothers and sisters."¹⁴¹

The Slovak deputies, Dr. Bohm, Dr. Linczenyi, Jan Balaz and Visnovsky, and the delegation of the Spiš-Orava Committees met with Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk on 9 July 1946. The delegates submitted a request that the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland be returned to Czechoslovakia. Masaryk informed the delegates about the activities to resolve the issue

¹³⁹ E. Beneš to J. V. Stalin, Sezimovo Ústí, 30 July 1946, *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. No. 119, 262-263. Cf. AMZV Prague, SSSR 1945-59, Fold. No.1, No. 142355/46, Box No.21.

¹⁴⁰ The peace treaties were signed on 10 February 1947 in Paris and they entered into effect on 15 September 1947. For more on the Paris Peace Conference in 1946 see D. M. Krno, *Pripravoval sa mier s Maďarskom* [We Prepared the Peace with Hungary] (Bratislava: Stála konferencia slovenskej inteligencie Slovakia Plus, 1996).

¹⁴¹ "Resolution adopted at a rally held in behalf of Spis and Orava, Sunday May 26, 1946 in Chicago, IL.," American Liberation Committee for Spis and Orava, Chicago, IL to Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Paris, Chicago, IL, 24 June 1946, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tcheco-Slovaquie, vol. 53, 148- 149.

in favor of Czechoslovakia. Masaryk expressed the view that the districts would become a part of Slovakia in a short time.¹⁴²

The mayors of twenty-five towns in the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš prepared a Memorandum on Orava and Spiš for the Paris Peace Conference. The Memorandum observed the Polish delegation at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference claimed that agreement between Poland and Czechoslovakia could be possible only when the boundaries should be defined on an ethnographic basis.¹⁴³ Ultimately, the Czechoslovak delegation decided not to press the issue of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš in Paris and the Memorandum was not presented at the international level.¹⁴⁴

In Paris, however, the Czechoslovak delegation discussed the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland. Clementis met with Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov on 24 August 1946 and informed him that the Poles in Czechoslovakia, unlike the Slovaks in Poland, enjoyed practically all rights, with exception of those which would conflict with the political and economic structure of a new Czechoslovakia.¹⁴⁵

The Czechoslovak delegates Jan Masaryk, Vladimír Clementis and Juraj Slávik, met in Paris with Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky, despatched by the American Liberation Committee for Spiš and

¹⁴² Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 96.

¹⁴³ "Memorandum of the People of Upper Orava and Northern Spiš," in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 33-36.

¹⁴⁴ Jozef A. Mikuš, *Pamäti slovenského diplomata* [Memoirs of Slovak Diplomat] (Middletown PA: Jednota, 1978), 211. Mikuš wrote that Alojz Miškovič, a native of Jurgov in the incorporated district of Spiš, asked his assistance to translate the said Memorandum into French in the summer of 1946, before the Conference. Miškovič wanted to submit the Memorandum to Foreign Minister Masaryk. Mikuš wrote that Masaryk showed the Memorandum to the head of the Soviet delegation at the Conference. The Soviet delegate advised Masaryk not to submit the Memorandum to the Conference, since the Soviet Union intended to mediate this border dispute itself. Masaryk allegedly accepted the Soviet proposal, but the Soviets shelved the issue. Thus the Memorandum was not submitted to the Conference and the issue of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš was not discussed at the Paris Peace Conference. *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Clementis - Molotov discussion, Paris, 24 August 1946, *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. No. 126, 279-280. Cf. AMZV Prague, GS-A 1945-54, Fold. 149, Doc. No. 122/A/46, Box No. 187.

Orava to Europe. The delegates informed Matasovsky that Czechoslovakia needed the cooperation of Poland at the Conference and therefore could not antagonize it by the issue of Orava and Spiš.¹⁴⁶

The delegates argued that Orava and Spiš could not be discussed now, the Conference was limited to the peace treaties with Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, Italy and Hungary, but it could be discussed later within a peace treaty between Poland and Germany.¹⁴⁷

Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky visited Czechoslovakia in the second half of 1946 and met with the Czechoslovak and Slovak authorities in Bratislava and in Prague and with the refugees from Orava and Spiš.¹⁴⁸ Persecution and eviction of the Slovaks in the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland intensified in August through September of 1946 and the number of refugees in Slovakia reached almost six thousand (out of a total of 30,000 of the population).¹⁴⁹ This critical situation led to an appeal by Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky addressed to the Czechoslovak and

¹⁴⁶ Czechoslovakia needed support of Poland on the issue of the border with Hungary.

¹⁴⁷ Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 39, 41. The author believes the Czechoslovak delegates were to some extent disingenuous with Matasovsky, as it is difficult to see why Poland, or any other delegation for that matter, would discuss the issue of the districts of Orava and Spiš, i.e. the borders with Czechoslovakia, during the negotiations on a peace treaty with Germany.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 42-43. Matasovsky met with the following representatives: the Slovak ministers (trustees) R.[F]Rastacky (Trustee-Food Supply), Dr. G. Husak (President of Assembly of Trustees), Dr. M. Kvetko (Trustee, Agriculture), General Feriencik (Trustee of the Interior), Dr. Jozef Lettrich (President, Slovak National Council); Dr. Andras (Foreign Ministry, Prague), Professor Miskovic, Jan Badurik (President of the Czecho-Slovak Liberation Committee), Reverend Joseph Vojtas and the teachers from the incorporated districts, Kudzbel, Giegler and Kovacik. *Ibid.* Matasovsky met in September of 1946 with Czechoslovak Deputy Prime Minister, Ján Ursíny. Ursíny claimed that during Mikolajczyk's regime, there was talk about discussing the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš, but window of opportunity was closed now. Matasovsky presented Ursíny with copies of illegal letters of the Polish "Armija Krajowa," which threatened the Slovak villagers. The letters carried the signature "Ogień - Odziel Partyzanski Blyskawica." Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 47.

¹⁴⁹ The Czechoslovak analysis of the situation of the Slovak population in the districts incorporated into Poland observed: "...The results of one year of terror against the defenceless Slovak population of this region are unheard of. There were fourteen murders and several hundred Slovaks were subjected to harsh torture and imprisoned. There are 6,000 refugees, due to a lack of even the most elementary personal and property security and protection against continuous looting by paramilitary units in military uniforms with Polish insignia. ...The Slovak population is severely discriminated in its rights. Since recently, the armed groups which act against the Slovaks, expel them under death threats and demand, under the most cruel threats, large financial sums from townships and individuals. ...The numerous interventions regarding the protection of the Slovak population in Polish Orava and Spiš brought Polish reply, that certain administrative mistakes were rectified and Minister Modzelelewski informed Envoy Hejret that the district administrator was replaced." See "Spiš and Orava," Prague (?), after 15 October 1946, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

Slovak authorities on 10 September 1946, which called for an immediate solution.¹⁵⁰ The appeal informed about the disbanded Home Army (*Armija Krajowa*)¹⁵¹ and the partisan band *Blyskawica* led by *Ogień*,¹⁵² which evicted, under penalty of death, the Slovaks from the districts in Orava and Spiš.¹⁵³ The undersigned applicants warned the authorities to air the situation before the world press and at the international forum, should the relevant authorities fail to act immediately.¹⁵⁴ Matasovsky's mission yielded the first result when on 16 September 1946 the Foreign Ministry sent a strong note of protest against the persecution of the Slovaks in Orava and Spiš.¹⁵⁵ Roman

¹⁵⁰ Appeal by Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky, 10 September 1946, Prague, in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 104-106. The joint appeal by the Committee for Spiš-Orava Refugees and the American Liberation Committee for Spiš and Orava addressed the President of Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak government, the Czechoslovak delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, the President of the Parliament, the President of the SNR, *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ The Home Army, *Armija Krajowa (AK)* in Polish, formed during the German occupation of Poland, was the largest underground organization in the whole of occupied Europe, a veritable citizen army. Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 264-265. On 12 January 1945, General Okulicki, commander of the AK, gave an order dissolving the wartime AK. A. J. Prażmowska, *Civil War in Poland, 1942-1948* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 112. Ex-AK guerillas and other armed groups hostile to the new regime continued their struggle against Soviet security forces and those of their Polish allies. *Ibid.*, 280.

¹⁵² Józef Kuraś (*Ogień*) (1915 - 1947) - Polish resistance fighter. His role is a subject of controversy in Poland and Slovakia. Kuraś personifies the famous dictum of the former U.S. President Ronald Reagan: "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." For more on Kuraś see Jerzy Latka; Bolesław Dereń, *Józef Kuraś "Ogień" partyzant Podhala*. [Józef Kuraś "Ogień" Partisan of Podhale] (Warszawa: Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego, 2000). The organization of Slovaks in Poland, the Union of Slovaks in Poland (*Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku - SSP*), objects to glorification of Józef Kuraś, whom the Slovaks in Poland consider a terrorist. The SSP laid a wreath at the memorial of the Slovaks assassinated by a terrorist group "Ogien" during the Days of Slovaks Abroad (*Dni slovenského zahraničia*) in 2010.

¹⁵³ According to analysis of situation of the Slovak population in the districts of Orava and Spiš: "...a partisan band *Blyskawica*" imposed financial penalties upon the local Slovak population for their "cooperation with Slovakia." See "Spiš and Orava," Prague (?), after 15 October 1946, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek. Bohuš Chňoupek describes atrocities committed by the fleeing bandits after the war in the Slovak - Polish borderland. He writes about an incident in the Slovak village of Kolbasov, where the bandits killed 11 villagers in December 1945. The raid was attributed to the Bandera bandits coming from Poland and Ukraine. See the chapter "Pogrom" in Bohuš Chňoupek, *Pogrom. Na sny sa nezomiera* (Bratislava: Knižné centrum, 2003), 77-89.

¹⁵⁴ The appeal was signed by Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky, Jan Badurik, President of the Committee for Spiš-Orava Refugees in Czechoslovakia; Ladislav Giegler, Secretary, Committee for Spiš-Orava Refugees in Czechoslovakia and Jozef Vojtas, Alojz Miskovic, Florian Gajniak, the representatives of the occupied territories. See Appeal by Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky, 10 September 1946, Prague, in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 104-106.

¹⁵⁵ See Diplomatic note addressed to Dr. Roman Stankiewicz, Legal Counsel, the Polish Charge d'Affaires in Prague, Czechoslovakia, 16 September 1946, in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 106-108. The note called attention to the fact that not only had the terror against the Slovak inhabitants of Spis and Orava not stopped, but rather it had intensified and continued to intensify. *Ibid.*

Stankiewicz, Polish Chargé d'affaires in Prague, informed Matasovsky that it should not be expected that Poland would give up something for nothing. Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš received Matasovsky on 25 September 1946. Beneš claimed he worked for a just resolution of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš in 1920 and blamed the Poles for refusing to negotiate the return of the districts.¹⁵⁶ Matasovsky's mission ended without significant breakthrough, officially the Czechoslovak authorities maintained distance from the issue of the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland; unofficially, they seemed resigned to the *status quo*.¹⁵⁷ Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky left Europe with the impression that the question of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš was a taboo in Czechoslovakia and, in fact, the entire question of Spiš and Orava was "buried" due to Slavic loyalty to Poland. While there was some truth in this, Czechoslovakia actively pursued the questions of Kladsko, Hlubčicko and Ratibořsko, which had equally antagonizing potential on the bilateral relations with Poland.¹⁵⁸

In the fall of 1946 the Slovak Americans tried to bring the issue of the districts of Orava and Spiš to the attention of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in New York in November and December of 1946 and the Conference of the Deputy Foreign Ministers, on 14 - 25 February 1947 in London.¹⁵⁹ Czechoslovakia submitted its own Memorandum to the Conference, but omitted any reference to the territorial demands, including the Kladsko, Hlubčicko and Ratibořsko areas. Deputy

¹⁵⁶ Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 47-48.

¹⁵⁷ "Report of Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky on his 1946 mission to Europe," in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 137. Matuschak wrote that a high Czech official in Washington offered Matasovsky the following bitter explanation: "We were friendly to the USSR. The Poles are traditionally anti-Russian and especially anti-Soviet. We are doomed to lose Spis-Orava and the rest because of that friendliness. They believe we are better able to stand a loss than the unstable Poles.... We are paying Poland for territory Russia took from her in the east!" *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁸ Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 49. Matasovsky observed that although the book *Severné hranice Slovenska* [The Northern Boundaries of Slovakia] [by Andrej Bielovodský in 1946] had some reviews in the European press and the Catholic newspaper published the letter of Bishop Vojtaššák [29 December 1945, but aside from this, the entire question of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš was buried. *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁹ *CSPL 44-48*, 221, n.

Foreign Minister V. Clementis explained that Czechoslovakia would negotiate with Poland bilaterally. This strategy was questioned in Czechoslovakia, because Poland continued to talk not only about the Polish Kladsko, but also about the “Polish” Tešínsko and Bohumínsko.¹⁶⁰ The Slovak deputies at the Czechoslovak Parliament questioned Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk about diplomatic activities concerning the Slovaks on the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš.¹⁶¹

The Soviet Union signed the treaties of friendship with Czechoslovakia (December of 1943) and Poland (April of 1945)¹⁶² and J. V. Stalin urged them to conclude a treaty of friendship between themselves in July of 1946.¹⁶³ In February of 1947 Stalin and Molotov sent a telegram to Czechoslovak Prime Minister Gottwald, urging him to conclude the treaty of friendship with Poland: “...It is necessary to find a compromise and sign the treaty in the coming days.”¹⁶⁴ At its closed meeting on 3 March 1947 the Czechoslovak government discussed the report prepared by the Foreign Ministry, which informed about the Soviet pressure to conclude the treaty with Poland.¹⁶⁵

Finally, Czechoslovakia and Poland signed the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance on 10 March 1947. Additional protocol to the Treaty committed both signatories to “solve, on the

¹⁶⁰ See “Review of Foreign Affairs (12.-28.1.1947),” *Tři roky. Přehledy a dokumenty k čs. politice v letech 1945 až 1948*, Vol.2 (Brno: MU Brno, 1990), 448.

¹⁶¹ On 8 February 1947 Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk responded to questions by the deputies at the Parliament in Prague concerning the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš. See “J. M. Matasovsky’s Mission Report (1946)” in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 135. Masaryk replied to the interpellation of the Slovak deputies, Dr. Ludovít Linczenyi and Jozef Balaz: “1.) - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now aware of the conditions under which the population of Spiš and Orava, who are Slovaks, are living. 2.) - The Delegate of the American Slovaks, Joseph Miloslav Matasovsky, who visited the Republic last year, negotiated with the Foreign Office and submitted certain memoranda concerning this issue to the governmental departments concerned. The memoranda are receiving attention. 3.) - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall conscientiously continue to stand up for the rights of the Slovak population of Spiš and Orava, and will work for the just solution of their problem, and its fundamental elimination, during Polish - Czechoslovak negotiations.” See “Report from Prague - 8 February 1947,” *Ludový Denník* [The Peoples’ Daily], 5 March 1947, in Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 119.

¹⁶² The Soviet government and the provisional Polish government signed the Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Postwar Cooperation on 21 April 1945.

¹⁶³ See *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. Nos. 118, 119 and 120.

¹⁶⁴ Stalin-Molotov Telegram to Gottwald, Moscow, 25 February 1947, *CSSO 45-48*, Doc. No. 144, 332. Cf. NA Prague, AUV KSC, f.100/24, sv.99, a.j.1143.

¹⁶⁵ See NA Prague, AUV KSC, sb.83, a.j.296.

basis of mutual understanding, within two years since the signing of the Treaty of friendship and mutual assistance of all territorial questions, which exist between these two countries.”¹⁶⁶ The protocol committed its signatories to guarantee the Slovaks and Czechs in Poland and the Poles in Czechoslovakia, within the existing legal framework and on a mutual basis, opportunities of national, political, cultural and economic development.¹⁶⁷ The Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance of 1947 sealed the common anti-German alignment of Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk informed the Parliament on 20 March 1947 about the activities of his department. In relation to Poland, Masaryk reminded the parliament about the need to solve some territorial questions within two years as stipulated by the Friendship Treaty.¹⁶⁸ The Czechoslovak government recommended its ratification to the Parliament on 6 April 1947. The critics argued that the Treaty deprived Czechoslovakia of its territorial demands, as Czechoslovakia agreed to resolve its issues bilaterally with Poland and discarded an alternative of appealing international fora. Whereas the territorial issues hampered the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland, the real value of the Treaty was dubious.¹⁶⁹

The *Sejm* discussed the ratification of the Friendship Treaty with Czechoslovakia from on 16 - 17 April 1947. Foreign Minister Zygmunt Modzelewski¹⁷⁰ informed the *Sejm* that the Minister of Enlightenment had already issued a directive permitting education in the Slovak language in the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland where the Slovak population would demand it.

¹⁶⁶ The Friendship Treaty between Czechoslovakia and Poland, Warsaw, 10 March 1947, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 86, 200-203.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* The Slovak population in the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland had no Slovak school. The Polish government claimed its support to opening Slovak schools, but argued a lack of Slovak teachers prevented it. See “Spiš and Orava,” Prague (?), after 15 October 1946, AMZV Prague, 1945-54, GS, Žourek.

¹⁶⁸ Jan Masaryk at the Parliament, Prague, 20 March 1947, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 94, 211-214.

¹⁶⁹ See “Review of Foreign Affairs (2.4.1947),” *Tři roky. Přehledy a dokumenty k čs. politice v letech 1945 až 1948*, Vol.2 (Brno: MU Brno, 1990), 553.

¹⁷⁰ Zygmunt Modzelewski - Polish Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1947-1951).

Modzelewski expressed hope that enough Slovaks and Czechs would benefit from education in its own language. Modzelewski noted existing goodwill to solve all outstanding questions between Czechoslovakia and Poland and expressed his firm belief that all pending questions would be solved within two years.¹⁷¹ Some deputies expressed optimism that the Polish conciliatory policy towards the Slovaks and Czechs in Poland would convince Czechoslovakia to adopt the same action towards the Poles in Czechoslovakia.¹⁷²

The Czechoslovak parliament discussed the ratification of the Friendship Treaty with Poland on 14 May 1947. Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk highlighted a new spirit in the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland. Both sides committed themselves to guarantee mutually - to the Slovaks and the Czechs in Poland and to the Poles in Czechoslovakia - within their existing legal frameworks all possibilities of national, political, cultural and economic development.¹⁷³ Furthermore, both sides agreed to resolve all their outstanding territorial questions within two years and by consensus.¹⁷⁴ Masaryk announced that the Polish side had already adopted measures that would allow opening of the Slovak schools in Upper Orava and Spiš. These new measures should permit to accord to the

¹⁷¹ Z. Modzelewski at the *Sejm*, Warsaw, 16 April 1947, *CSPL 44 - 48*, Doc. No. 97, 215-221.

¹⁷² Statements at the *Sejm*, Warsaw, 17 April 1947, *CSPL 44 - 48*, Doc. No. 102, 231-232. S. Dobrowolski, on behalf of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated: "The Polish action announced yesterday by the Minister Modzelewski, that should organize minority schools on the territory of Spiš and Orava, eventually among the 'Moravians' in the district of Kladsko, allows us to hope, that Czechoslovak side would make the same action towards Polish worker and farmer in Zaolzie." Statements at the *Sejm*, Warsaw, 17 April 1947, *CSPL 44 - 48*, Doc. No. 98, 222-223. Deputy Jagusz, on behalf of the Polish People Party's club stated: "The case of our countrymen in Zaolzie was always close for us. We are not forgetting it now. However, we are of the view, that this case cannot become a source of hatred or permanent disputes between Poles and Czechs. We hope, that until this question is completely solved in accordance with the wishes of the people living there through direct friendly neighborly negotiations, the arrangements of the treaty give our brothers beyond the Olsa river all possibilities of national, political, cultural and economic development." Statements at the *Sejm*, Warsaw, 17 April 1947, *CSPL 44 - 48*, Doc. No. 102, 231-232.

¹⁷³ Jan Masaryk at the Parliament, 14 May 1947, *CSPL 44 - 48*, Doc. No. 111, 248-257.

¹⁷⁴ The consensual treaty-making, is a condition *sine qua non* in international relations and as a such cannot be interpreted in this case as a negotiating success of neither of our two sides. Under existing circumstances, however, the agreement to change existing territorial *status quo* between Czechoslovakia and Poland by consensus gave Czechoslovakia a *de facto* veto power over any undesired territorial changes in the Tešín area. Thus, Czechoslovakia successfully stopped any Polish hopes of modifying the 1920 border settlement in the Těšín area.

Slovak cultural centers in Poland the privileges enjoyed by the Polish cultural centers in the Tešín area of Czechoslovakia.¹⁷⁵ Some Slovak deputies expressed hope that the Treaty could improve the situation of the Slovaks living in Poland. Štefan Baštovanský, rapporteur of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stressed that the Slovaks and the Czechs in Poland and *vice versa* the Poles in Czechoslovakia, would have guaranteed “possibilities of national, political, cultural and economic development....”¹⁷⁶ Gustáv Husák noted that the Additional Protocol to the Treaty contained arrangements which would open new possibilities of national, political, cultural and economic development for “thousands of Slovaks in the Upper Orava and the Upper Spiš, who had repeatedly asked for it....”¹⁷⁷ Husák believed that the existing situation troubled the Slovaks and the complaints of their compatriots irritated the friendly atmosphere, therefore he hoped the earliest implementation of the Protocol would be a blessing for the Slovaks of the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš.¹⁷⁸

On 19 June 1947 Polish Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz¹⁷⁹ informed the *Sejm* that the government took steps to assure that the “groups of the Czech and Slovak people in Poland have all guarantees of their development....”¹⁸⁰ The Liberation Committee for Spiš and Orava criticized both the Czechoslovak and Polish governments and their attitudes to the Slovaks in the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš even after the signing of the Friendship Treaty. The Committee claimed in July of 1947 that the Slovak minority in Poland did not receive any minority rights and criticized Prague: “...It seems to us that the more we call for help, the further from us the help is; the more documents we present to the officials in Czechoslovakia concerning the suffering of the Slovak

¹⁷⁵ J. Masaryk at the Parliament, 14 May 1947, *CSPL 44 - 48*, Doc. No. 111, 248-257.

¹⁷⁶ Š. Baštovanský at the Parliament, 14 May 1947, *CSPL 44 - 48*, Doc. No. 110, 243-248.

¹⁷⁷ Gustáv Husák at the Parliament, 14 May 1947, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. 112, 257-260.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Józef Cyrankiewicz (1911 - 1989) - Polish Prime Minister (1947 - 1952, 1954 - 1970).

¹⁸⁰ J. Cyrankiewicz at the *Sejm*, Warsaw, 19 June 1947, *CSPL 44-48*, Doc. No. 113, 261.

people in Poland, the less interest is manifested about Spiš and Orava.”¹⁸¹ The Czechoslovak government curtailed activities related to the incorporated districts of Orava and Spiš and dissolved the Committee for Refugees of Spiš-Orava in Czechoslovakia on 31 March 1948.¹⁸² The American Liberation Committee For Spis and Orava tried to bring the issue of the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland to the attention of ministerial conferences dealing with the post-war settlement, but without any success.¹⁸³

The Polish authorities tried to contain the pro-Slovak sentiments among the Slovaks in the districts of Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland, but due to the Additional Protocol to the Friendship Treaty of 1947 Warsaw had to agree to the creation of Slovak schools.¹⁸⁴ The Slovaks in Poland gained concessions in the field of education and to pressed for other minority rights.¹⁸⁵ But Warsaw continued to build Poland as a monolithic state and various adverse practices hampered and

¹⁸¹ “Report from Slovakia by the Liberation Committees for Spis-Orava,” Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 101-102. The Liberation Committee pointed out that border crossing between Czechoslovakia and Poland was normalized by the so-called Krakow Protokół, signed on 6 May 1924. In July of 1947, four months after the signing of the Friendship Treaty, the Polish officials refused to issue permits or identification cards necessary to cross the border, and as a result, the Slovaks were forced to cross the border illegally. *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones*, 110. Some activists for the cause of Upper Orava and Spiš continued their work in Czechoslovakia as a branch of the Slovak League.

¹⁸³ The American Liberation Committee For Spis and Orava wrote to foreign ministers of the Big Four on the eve of their conference dealing with Germany and demanded to discuss and to recommend the return of the territories of northern Spis and Orava from Poland to Czechoslovakia. See Letter by the American Liberation Committee For Spis and Orava to A. Schuman, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chicago, IL., 17 May 1949 Letter by the American Liberation Committee For Spis and Orava to A. Schuman, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chicago, IL., 17 May 1949, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 54, 379-381. For a pamphlet by the American Liberation Committee “Justice for the Slovaks in Orava and Spis/Spravedlivost’ Slovákovi v Orave a na Spiši,” see “Justice for the Slovaks in Orava and Spis/Spravedlivost’ Slovákovi v Orave a na Spiši,” AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 54, 382. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs formally replied to the above letter. He would have supported examination of the letter of the American Liberation Committee For Spis and Orava but it seemed impossible to discuss the border between Czechoslovakia and Poland within the conference dealing with Germany. See Reply by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs to the American Liberation Committee For Spis and Orava, Chicago, IL., 5 June 1949, Direction d’Europe no. 1882, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 54, 383.

¹⁸⁴ Julian Kwiek, *Żydzi, Łemkowie, Słowacy w województwie krakowskim w latach 1945 – 1949/1950* [Jews, Lemkos, Slovaks in the Voivodship of Cracow in 1945 - 1949/50] (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 1998), 214.

¹⁸⁵ The French Embassy in Prague reported in March of 1949 presence of 20,000 Slovaks in Poland. See “Deux années d’alliance polono-tchécoslovaque,” Prague, No. 208/EU, 24 March 1949, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 54, 300-307.

discouraged the activities of ethnic minorities, including the Slovaks.¹⁸⁶

The end of military operations in Europe in 1945 left Poland stripped of almost half of its pre-war territory, Slovakia welcomed the end of war in reconstituted Czechoslovakia with the territorial losses in the form of Trans-Carpathia (*Zakarpacie*).¹⁸⁷ In 1945 Czechoslovakia and Poland had to reconcile their conflicting border claims. Prague wished to recover its pre-Munich borders, whereas Warsaw insisted on its borders as of 1 September 1939. Both scenarios implied that the districts of Orava and Spiš returned to Slovakia in 1939 would be transferred back to Poland. These districts remained within the Slovak Republic in 1939 - 1945 and its Slovak population manifested its overwhelming desire for this *status quo* to continue after the war. The Slovak population of the districts of Orava and Spiš returned to Slovakia in 1939 resisted reintroduction of the Polish political and ecclesiastical jurisdictions and demonstrated its almost unanimous, Slovak national consciousness or pro-Czechoslovakia position. The Czechoslovak government did not wish to admit the ethnic self-determination principle into the border questions in Orava, Spiš and Tešín. Nevertheless, Czechoslovakia claimed parts of the former German territories, which were transferred to Poland, demonstrating their Czech ethnic character. The Polish government repudiated its forceful annexation of the Czecho-Slovak territories in 1938, yet viewed them as justifiable acts given the

¹⁸⁶ Kwiek, *Żydzi, Łemkowie, Słowacy w województwie krakowskim w latach 1945 – 1949/1950*, 214. Kwiek argues that the main tenet of the policy was never spelled out explicitly, yet there could be little doubt that the aim was to build Poland as a monolithic state. *Ibid.* For more on post-war Poland and its minority policies, see Jerzy Lovell, *Polska, jakiej nie znamy. Zbiór reportaży o mniejszościach narodowych* [Poland We Do Not Know. Collection of Reports on National Minorities] (Cracow: Wydawnictwo literackie, 1970). Lovell writes about the Slovak minority in Poland in his chapter “Na Spiszu i Orawie” [In Spiš and Orava], 105-121.

¹⁸⁷ Łukasz Kamiński, “Klęska czy zwycięstwo - koniec II wojny światowej z perspektywy polskiej i słowackiej” [Defeat or Victory - the End of the World War II from the Polish and Slovak Perspective], in *Stosunki polsko-słowackie w I połowie XX wieku* [Polish-Slovak Relations in the 1st Half of the 20th Century], ed. Joanna Głowińska (Wrocław: IPN Wrocław, 2006), 111. Łukasz Kamiński argues that the Trans-Carpathian areas (*Zakarpacie* in Polish), which Slovakia lost after World War II, never formed an integral part of the state, neither in historical nor cultural sense. Kamiński’s argument, applied to the districts of Orava and Spiš transferred to Poland in 1945, is tenuous, in the author’s view.

ethnic character of these territories. Poland called for an application of ethnic self-determination principle in the border between Czechoslovakia and Poland, but the demands fell on deaf ears on the other side of the borders.¹⁸⁸ The Soviet Union, a new power broker in Central Europe, abstained from taking side in the polemic between Czechoslovakia and Poland, but both countries were compelled to sign in February 1947 a treaty of friendship guaranteeing minority rights to the Slovaks, Czechs and Poles. The 1947 Treaty of Friendship and the new people's democratic regimes in Warsaw and Prague toned down the role of the border differences between Czechoslovakia and Poland and remodeled a framework for existence of the national minorities in both countries. The new border rectifications (Glatz, Ratibor and Leobschutz), the old disputes over the districts of Orava, Spiš and Tešín or the situation of the Polish minority in Silesia and the Slovak minority in Orava and Spiš vanished from the controlled press, which avoided any criticism of new friends and allies.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Poland continued to raise the question of Tešín in bilateral relations with Czechoslovakia. On 19 June 1948, Czechoslovak Envoy informed Molotov that the Polish government informally raised the question of Tešín during the visit of Fierlinger in Poland. Czechoslovakia declined to open the issue and sought Soviet understanding. See Notes of V. M. Molotov [Soviet Foreign Minister] - B. Laštovička [Czechoslovak Envoy] discussion, Moscow, 19 June 1948, *SFVE*, vol. 1, no. 213, 619-621. L. Borkowicz, Polish Envoy in Czechoslovakia, qualified Tešín as Polish, due to its indigenous Polish population and, because it belonged until the 18th century to Poland. The Poles proposed the Czechs [Czechoslovakia] to extend current *status quo* in Tešín for additional two years, but it was refused. It was Stalin himself who agreed with Poland, but he also stressed that Tešín remained in Czechoslovakia. Poland and Czechoslovakia accepted extension of the current situation in Tešín Silesia. See Notes of M. A. Silin [Soviet Envoy] - L. Borkowicz [Polish Envoy] discussion, Prague, 29 March 1949, *SFVE*, vol. 2, no. 2, 80-81.

¹⁸⁹ "Deux années d'alliance polono-tchécoslovaque," Prague, No. 208/EU, 24 March 1949, AD/MAE, Z-Europe 1944-1949, Tchéco-Slovaquie, vol. 54, 300-307.

9.

CONCLUSION.

I must say that our today's meeting which started in Jaworzyna, or Jaworyna [Javorina] in the Slovak language, proves that gradually and steadily we strengthen our relations with Slovakia.... For me, close relations with Slovakia are only natural. Lack of historic conflicts, similar languages, friendship which was sometimes disguised under, one could say, not entirely true costumes reflected in the saying: "Polish, Hungarian, two good friends", essentially meant friendship between Polish and Slovak nobility. To put it briefly, all issues mentioned above provide splendid basis for good relations. Moreover, our common membership of NATO and the European Union lays excellent foundations for co-operation. If several years ago my approach towards euroregions was quite reserved, I did not mean by it Polish – Slovak euroregions. I was thinking about those laying elsewhere. Whereas when it comes to the Tatra Euroregion, then I must say it has always been a justified idea since the Tatra Mountains are located mostly in Slovakia and a smaller part of them belongs to Poland. In the geographical sense it is one single region. It affords to us a common opportunity as this is a highly attractive part of Europe. To be honest, such areas do not exist in their plenty throughout Europe. We are obviously aware of the fact that we are not going to win with the Alps but the Tatra Mountains are still very attractive, judging by high numbers of tourists currently visiting both the Polish and Slovak part of the region.

The President of the Republic of Poland Mr Lech Kaczyński, commenting upon his meeting with President of Slovakia Mr Ivan Gasparovič in Tatranská Javorina, Slovakia, 3 December 2007.

Historians, as diplomats, should pour a "clean glass of wine" to their respective audience.¹

Historians' task is to record the past deeds, whether positive or negative, in order that we should not forget them. Otherwise, we are deemed to relive them once again. In examining the delimitation of the Slovak - Polish border in Orava and Spiš in 1918 - 1947, it is clear that the problem had been an extremely complicated one. The decision of the Conference of Ambassadors of 28 July 1920 detached from Slovakia 584 km² and 24,700 of the population and modified the border, which served its purpose well for over 700 years and the adopted change disrupted old economic and cultural

¹ Magda Vášáryová, Slovak Ambassador to Poland in 2000-2004, observed on the 1939 - 1941 period, a painful chapter in the Slovak - Polish relations, the following: "It is essential, for our [Slovak] diplomacy, to pour a "clean glass of wine." It is not necessary for us [Slovaks and Poles] to remind each other the sentiments of wrongdoing and injustice, or to apply them mechanically to current political projects, but we should not forget them. Otherwise, we are condemned to remain again naive." Magda Vášáryová, *Polnočný sused* [Midnight Neighbour] (Bratislava: Kalligram, 2008), 102. For more on the 1939 - 1941 period see Vášáryová, *op. cit.*, 98-102.

structures.² Polish historian Józef Zieliński characterized the story of Orava and Spiš in the period of 1918-1945 as an “unusually difficult and complex” subject.³ Upper Orava and Spiš incorporated into Poland became a source of disagreement between Czechoslovakia and Poland since 1918.⁴

The relatively stable Slovak - Polish border, formed by the Carpathian mountains, became in 1918, as a part of the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, an object of dispute. The regions along the Slovak - Polish linguistic border became, before World War I, a focus of the so-called “awakening” aspirations of the Galician activists, who wanted to awaken Polish national consciousness of the local mountaineers.⁵ The demise of Austria - Hungary in 1918 permitted the questioning of the existing frontiers between the countries and lands, the borders of new or renewed states sought international recognition at the Paris Peace Conference. Czecho-Slovakia wished the Conference would confirm the historic borders of its constituent lands, which, in the Slovak - Polish portion, would mean the former international border between Galicia and Hungary. Poland desired the Conference would authenticate the frontiers of a reconstituted Polish state “containing territories inhabited by an indubitably Polish population.”⁶

² Andrej Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska* [The Northern Boundaries of Slovakia] (Bratislava: Ústredná správa Slovenskej ligy, 1946), 16-18.

³ Józef Zieliński, “Spisz i Orawa w latach 1918-1945” [Spiš and Orava in 1918-1945], in *Podhale w czasie okupacji 1939-1945* [Podhale during the Occupation 1939-1945], 2d ed., ed. Janusz Berghauzen (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1977), 124. Józef Zieliński argued the subject was unusually difficult and complex. This question was not completely elaborated in the Polish historical or sociological literature, perhaps from military and diplomatic point of view. The press articles on this subject appeared to be subjective experience of individuals, who often argued in defense of supposedly ‘wronged’ nationality.” *Ibid.*

⁴ Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, *The Lust for Power: Nationalism, Slovakia, and the Communists 1918-1948* (Boulder, CO: Columbia University Press, 1983), 116.

⁵ Polish author Michał Jagiełło would call these activities “*polskim poszukiwaniem Polaków na Słowacji*” [Polish search for Poles in Slovakia]. See Michał Jagiełło, *Słowacy w polskich oczach: obraz Słowaków w piśmiennictwie polskim* [The Slovaks in Polish Eyes. Picture of the Slovaks in the Polish Literature], vol. 1 (Warszawa-Nowy Targ: Biblioteka Narodowa - Podhalańska Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa, 2005), 16.

⁶ President Wilson stated in the point XIII of his Fourteen Points Address of 8 January 1918: “There should be erected a Polish State, containing territories inhabited by indubitably Polish population. ...” See *PWW*, Vol. 45, 534-39.

The Tešín question, the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in Tešín Silesia, a region of high economic value, strategic importance and with predominantly Polish population, became an apple of discord between two countries. The Tešín question incorporated the question of Orava and Spiš, the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in these two regions.⁷ The destiny of Orava and Spiš was thus linked with the destiny of the Tešín region.⁸ The Tešín question developed into a protracted dispute and left a bitter legacy for the mutual relations of the Slovaks, Czechs and Poles.

Czecho-Slovakia had made elements of the Tešín question - control over the Bohumín-Košice railroad and the Karvín coalmines - the question of its survival, which was detrimental to Orava and Spiš. The Slovak population of Orava and Spiš manifested its Slovak national consciousness and its sympathies for Czecho-Slovakia. However, the Czecho-Slovak delegation in Paris did not show an unyielding position on Orava and Spiš as in the case of Tešín. Czecho-Slovakia downplayed the ethnographic factor in the dispute with Poland, which would support the interests of the Orava and Spiš populations, due to unfavourable ethnic balance in Tešín, where the Polish population dominated. Later, the difficulties in the Tešín territory during the plebiscite campaign, the tensions and persistent problems, led to the cancellation of a plebiscite, which

⁷ The question of the Slovak - Polish border in Orava and Spiš was dealt with at the Paris Peace Conference within the question of Teschen [Tešín]. Jules Laroche explained the Tešín problem concerned not only the solution of the Tešín question itself, but also the problem of the two territories of Orava and Spiš. Laroche argued territorial importance of Orava and Spiš was less important and the problem of the three regions received the name "the Question of Teschen." Jules Laroche, "La Question de Teschen devant la Conférence de la Paix en 1919-1920," *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, LXII (1948): 8-27.

⁸ Some authors believed that linking the destiny of Orava and Spiš with the destiny of the Tešín region was detrimental to the two Slovak districts. Marián Hronský wrote that "the destiny of Orava and Spiš was dangerously linked with the destiny of the Tešín region." See Marián Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920* (Bratislava: Veda, 2001), 223. Juraj Žudel argued that "it became fatal to the Upper Orava villages, that they were considered together with the Tešín regions." See Juraj Žudel, "Stanovenie čs. - poľskej hranice na Orave [The Delimitation of the Czecho-Slovak - Polish Border in Orava]," in *Politické a právne dejiny hraníc predmnichovskej republiky (1918-1938)* [Political and Legal History of the Pre-Munich Republic's Boundaries (1918-1938)], Jozef Klimko (Bratislava: Veda, Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1986), 128.

influenced the fate of Orava and Spiš. The centralist character of the Czechoslovak state, dominated by the Czechs and underpinned by the “Czechoslovakist” philosophy,⁹ further reduced effective political leverage of the Slovak districts of Orava and Spiš.

The most consistent and persistent lobbying in favour of the Slovak districts in Orava and Spiš came from abroad. The Slovak-Americans questioned the sacrifice of thirty thousand Slovaks in Orava and Spiš to compensate Poland for the Tešín territory: “Did the Czecho-Slovak government abandon the thirty thousand Slovaks for the coal of Tešín ...?” They believed Czecho-Slovakia could obtain the coal without the sacrifice of thirty thousand Slovaks.¹⁰ When Poland received parts of Orava and Spiš in 1920, the Polish government did not recognize Slovak national consciousness of the local population. This situation aroused anger in Slovakia and also among the Slovak-Americans with ancestral links to Orava and Spiš.

The decision of the Conference of Ambassadors in 1920, which resolved¹¹ the border between Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, left open the possibility for local territorial adjustments. Poland, disappointed by the decision on Tešín, tested the sincerity of Czechoslovakia for mutual rapprochement in the dispute over Javorina. The Javorina dispute, a typical border dispute, had much greater importance than the geographical size of the disputed region could indicate.¹² The dispute

⁹ For more on ‘Czechoslovakism,’ see Elisabeth Bakke, “Czechoslovakism in Slovak history” in *Slovakia in History*, eds. Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč and Martin D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 247-268.

¹⁰ Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spiš and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948* (S.l.: Irene Matasovsky Matuschak, 2008), 10.

¹¹ Bielovodský [Miškovič] argued that the Conference of Ambassadors by its decision of 28 July 1920 to divide Orava and Spiš, did not solve, but in fact created a problem, which has been waiting for its rectification since. Bielovodský, *Severné hranice Slovenska*, 164.

¹² Zbigniew Kazimierz Cesarz, *Polska a Liga Narodów. Kwestie terytorialne w latach 1920-1925. Studium prawnopolityczne* [Poland and the League of Nations. Territorial Questions in 1920-1925. A Legal-Political Study] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1993), 130-131.

turned into a “long-drawn, hard-fought and irrational” quarrel,¹³ which traumatized the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland and torpedoed the attempted rapprochement.

The diplomatic war over Javorina exposed certain inconsistencies in the previous positions of Czechoslovakia and Poland. The proposals for territorial adjustments in Orava and Spiš, which supposed to exchange several villages for scarcely inhabited territories cast some doubt on the sincerity of the previous claims to integrate the local population.¹⁴

Between 1918 and 1939, Prague and Warsaw competed for a “*principe organisateur*” in the east of Europe and for a primacy among France’s East European allies.¹⁵ This “beauty contest” in Central Europe complicated mutual relations, which suffered from a lack of understanding on both sides. The efforts of Czechoslovakia and Poland to reconcile their strategic objectives with their territorial claims were comparable to the squaring of a circle.

The “cold war” in the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland in the early 1920s became even more pronounced after 1926. Prague curbed activities of the Polish population in Tešín Silesia. There was growing tendency to differentiate between the Slovaks and the Czechs in Warsaw. The so-called Slovak Question, the position of Slovakia and the Slovak - Czech relations represented an internal issue that Poland could exploit, which was perceived by Prague as an interference in internal affairs.¹⁶ Bratislava tried to benefit from balancing between Prague and Warsaw. The

¹³ Ewa Orlof described the dispute over Javorina as “przewlekły, zacięty i irracjonalny spor.” Ewa Orlof, *Dyplomacja polska wobec sprawy słowackiej w latach 1938-39* [Polish Diplomacy and the Slovak Question in 1938-39] (Kraków: Wydawn. Literackie, 1980), 34.

¹⁴ Polish Prime Minister Paderewski protested on 30 July 1920 against the Spa decision on grounds that it would leave several thousands of Poles in Orava and Spiš in Czecho-Slovakia.

¹⁵ M. B. Biskupski, “Marceli Handelsman (1882-1945),” in Peter Brock, John D. Stanley and Piotr J. Wróbel, eds. *Nation and History. Polish Historians from the Enlightenment to the Second World War* (Toronto-London-Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 368.

¹⁶ Piotr Stefan Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 387. Wandycz wrote that the Slovak-Czech issue was connected with constitutional problems of the state and the Poles were prone to exploit existing differences. *Ibid.*

Piłsudski régime after 1926 was ill-disposed towards Czechoslovakia and although it did believe, until the end of 1932, in the possibility of improving mutual relations. In the 1930s political scepticism towards Czechoslovakia changed into questioning the *raison d'être* of Czechoslovakia.¹⁷

During the Munich crisis in 1938 the question of the borders of Czechoslovakia came up and Poland reopened its claim to the contested territories. Poland and Czecho-Slovakia might have been able to face Germany better if they had stood together. But, at times, either Czecho-Slovakia or Poland, believed that they were not threatened.¹⁸ The border rectifications in the fall of 1938, a short-lived success for Poland, were reversed one year later in favour of Slovakia and Germany.

After World War II, Czechoslovakia and Poland viewed differently the events in 1938 - 1945. Czechoslovakia and Poland agreed on the immorality of the Polish invasion of the Tešín district in the fall of 1938. The Czechoslovak government condemned as immoral the transfer of the districts of Orava and Spiš to Slovakia in 1939. The Polish government viewed the transfer of the Tešín district and incorporation of the Slovak territories to Poland in 1938 as a rectification of "historical injustice."¹⁹ The Slovak authorities, aware of the wishes of the local population in Orava and Spiš, supported the restoration of Czechoslovakia in its pre-Munich borders.

While Poland showed interest in discussing the border issues after the war, Czechoslovakia remained uninterested. The Czechoslovak government was reluctant to seek rectification of the border with Poland, despite the expressed wishes of the local population in Orava and Spiš, due to

¹⁷ H.Batowski, *Stosunki polsko-czeskie i polsko-slowackie, polsko-czechoslowackie i polsko-czesko-slowackie, 1918-1939*, 12.

¹⁸ Anna M. Cienciala and Titus Komarnicki, *From Versailles to Locarno: Keys to Polish Foreign Policy, 1919-25* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 274-5.

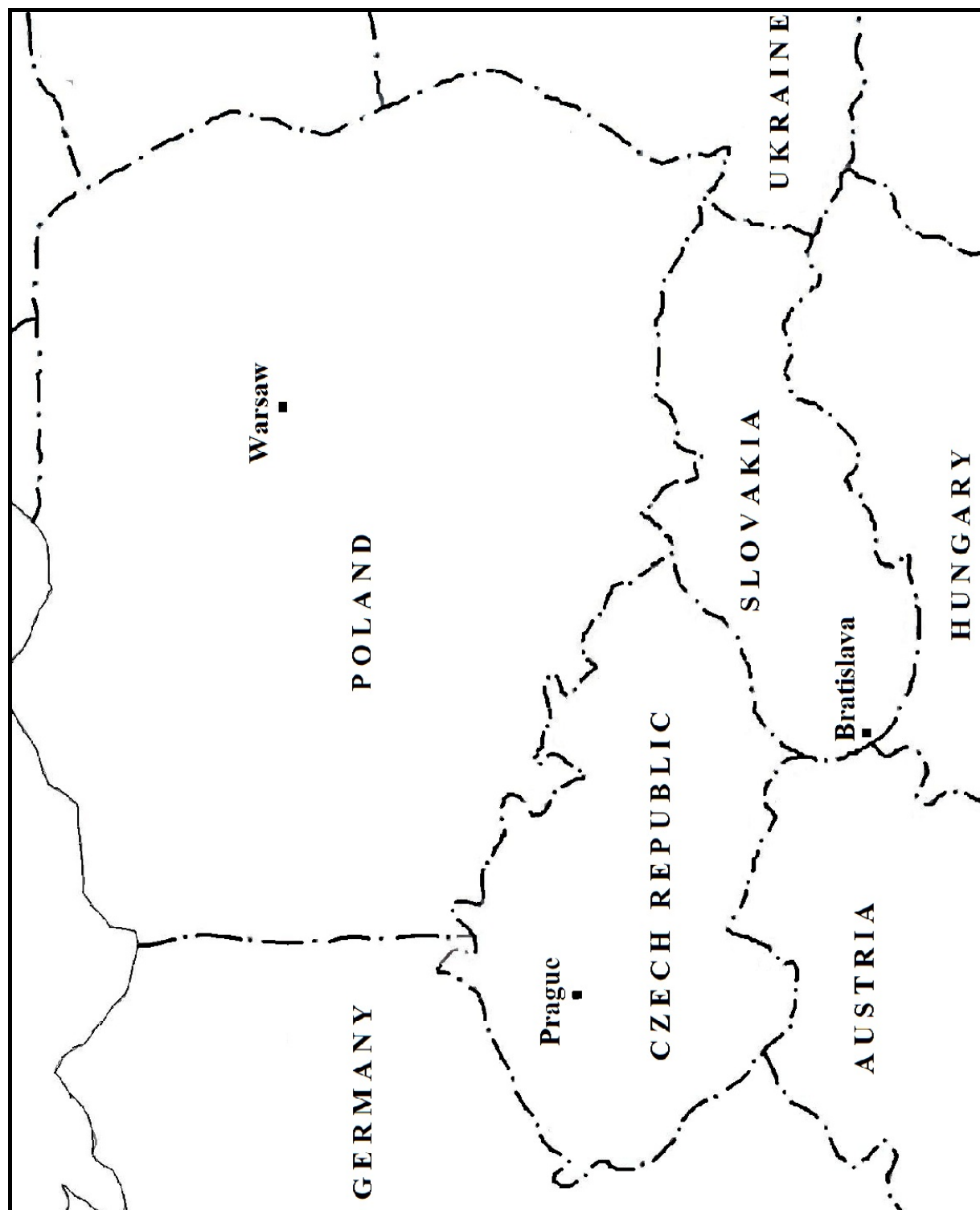
¹⁹ The Quai d'Orsay viewed in 1944 Tešín Silesia as "pierre d'achoppement" in the relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland. Note du Département "Tchécoslovaquie," Direction d'Europe, Paris, 22 novembre 1944. In *Documents diplomatiques français*, 1944, Tome II (9 septembre - 31 décembre), 307.

the fact that it would entail territorial losses in Tešín Silesia.²⁰ The Tešín district had economic importance for Czechoslovakia and, as long as the local *status quo* continued, “those few Slovak villages” in Orava and Spiš remained in Poland.²¹ The Soviet Union eventually suppressed the frictions between Czechoslovakia and Poland and imposed the *Pax Sovietica* upon them.²² In 1945 again, as in 1920, the districts of Orava and Spiš were transferred to Poland without giving the local population the opportunity to express through a plebiscite their preference for Poland or Czechoslovakia (Slovakia).

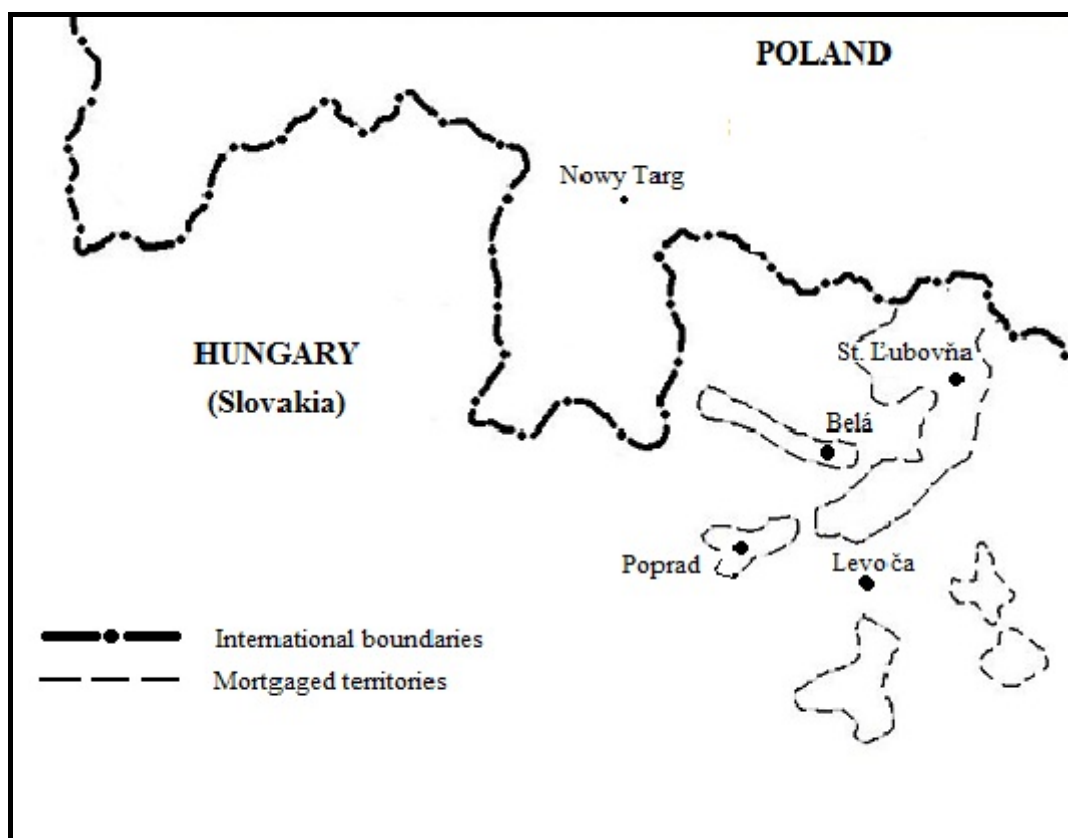
²⁰ Matuschak, *The Abandoned Ones: The Tragic Story of Slovakia's Spiš and Orava Regions, 1919 - 1948*, 95.

²¹ Czechoslovak Ambassador in Moscow, Zdeněk Fierlinger, told Polish Ambassador Stefan Jędrychowski in January 1945 that the Tešín district had the colossal importance for Czechoslovakia from economic and psychological point of view and its psychological importance concerned mainly “those few Slovak villages.” The restoration of the 1920 border in the Tešín district between Czechoslovakia and Poland implied the restoration of the 1920 border in Orava and Spiš, which paralyzed calls for its rectification and “those few Slovak villages” would remain in Poland. See Notes of Jędrychowski - Fierlienger discussion, Moscow, 2 January 1945, in Wiesław Balcerak and Viktor Borodovčák, eds., *Dokumenty a materiály k dějinám československo-polských vztahů v letech 1944-1948* [Documents and Materials to the History of the Czecho-Slovak - Polish Relations in 1944 - 1948] (Praha: Academia, 1985), Doc. No. 11, 35ff.

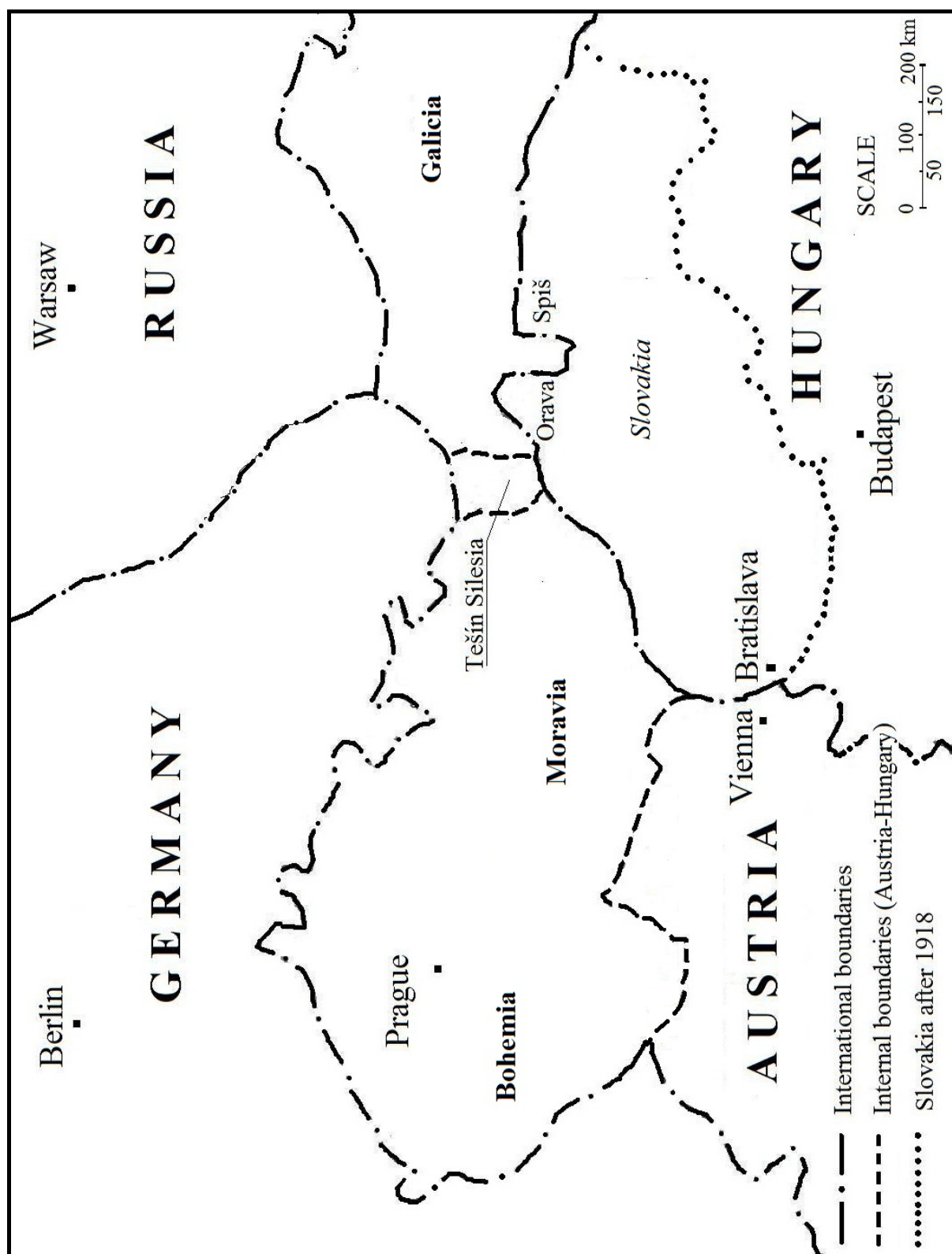
²² Jelinek, *The Lust for Power*, 116.



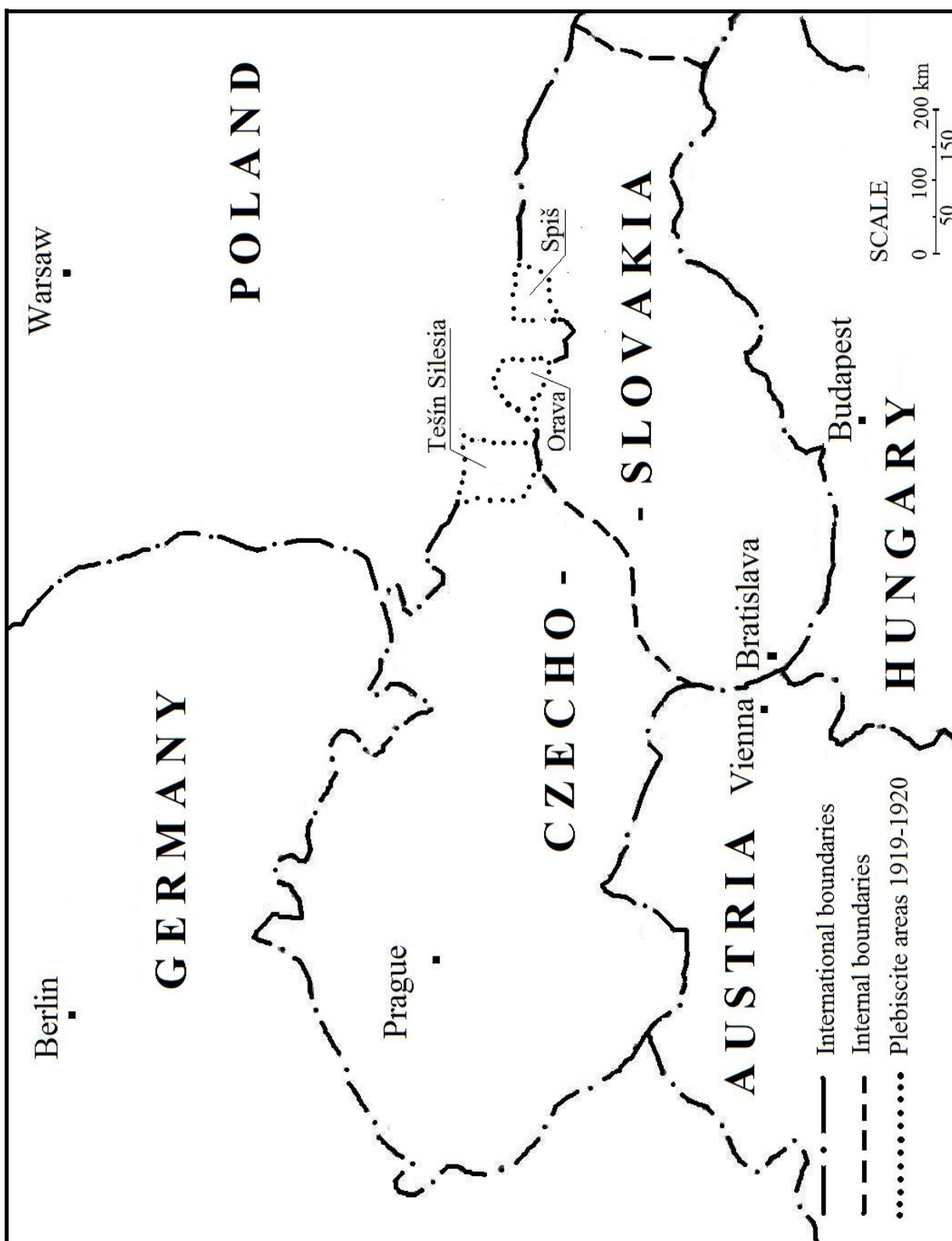
Map 1. Central Europe in 2012



Map 2. The towns and estates in Slovakia mortgaged to Poland in 1412



Map 3. Austria - Hungary after 1867



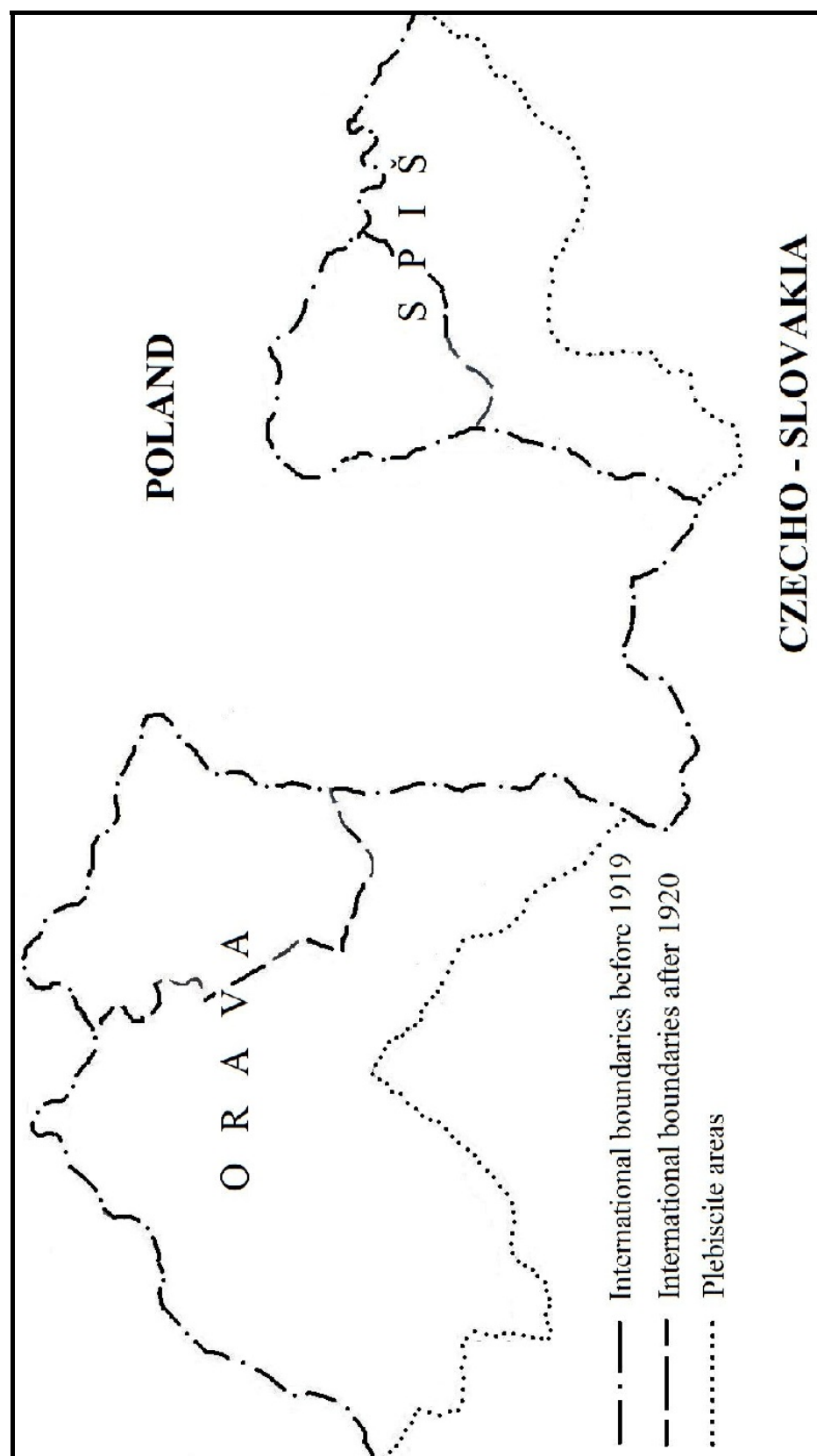
Map 4. Czecho-Slovakia and Poland and the 1919 Paris Peace Conference



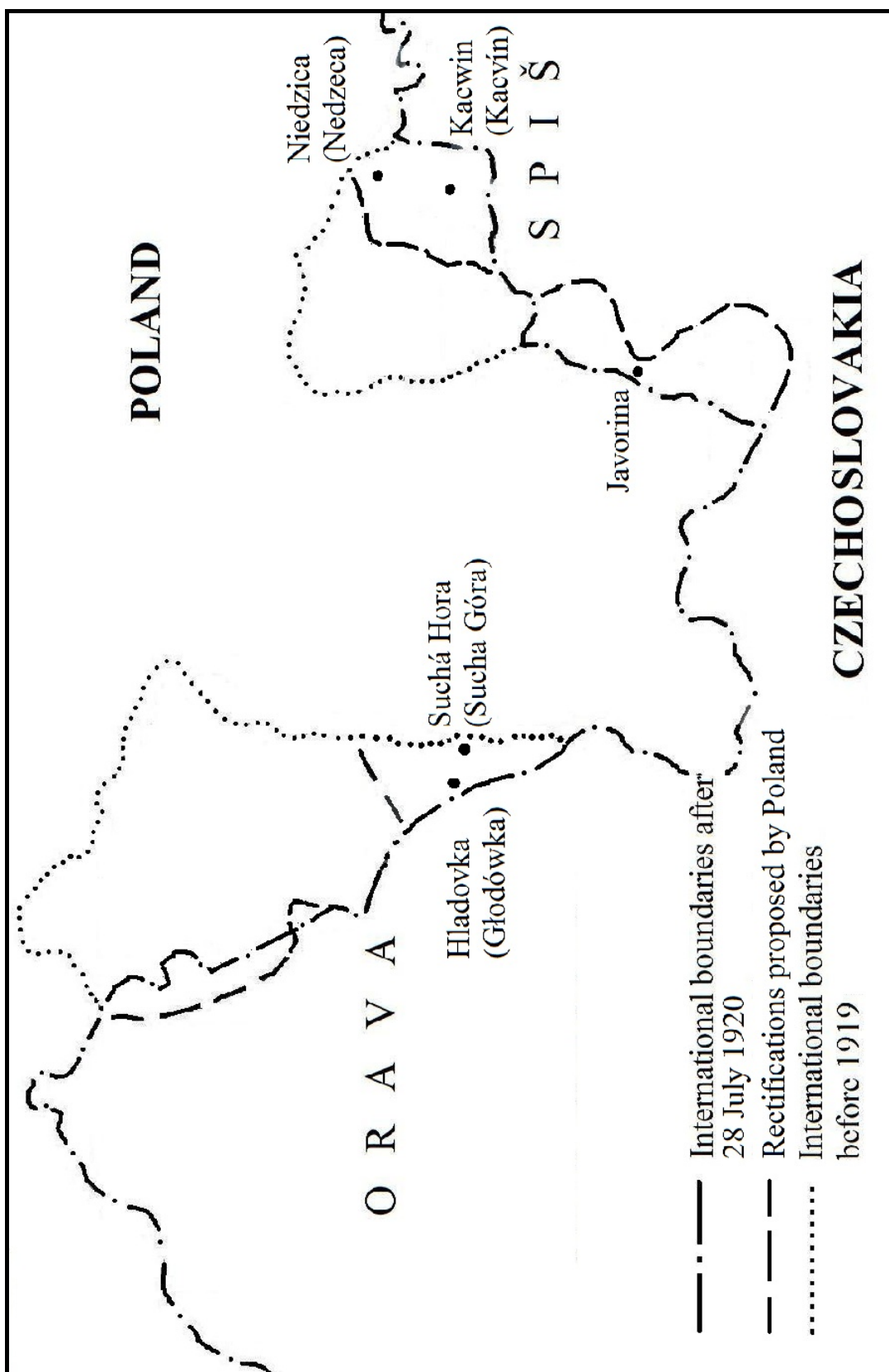
Map 5. Tešín Silesia 1918 - 1920



Map 6. The Orava, Spiš and Tešín plebiscite areas 1919 - 1920



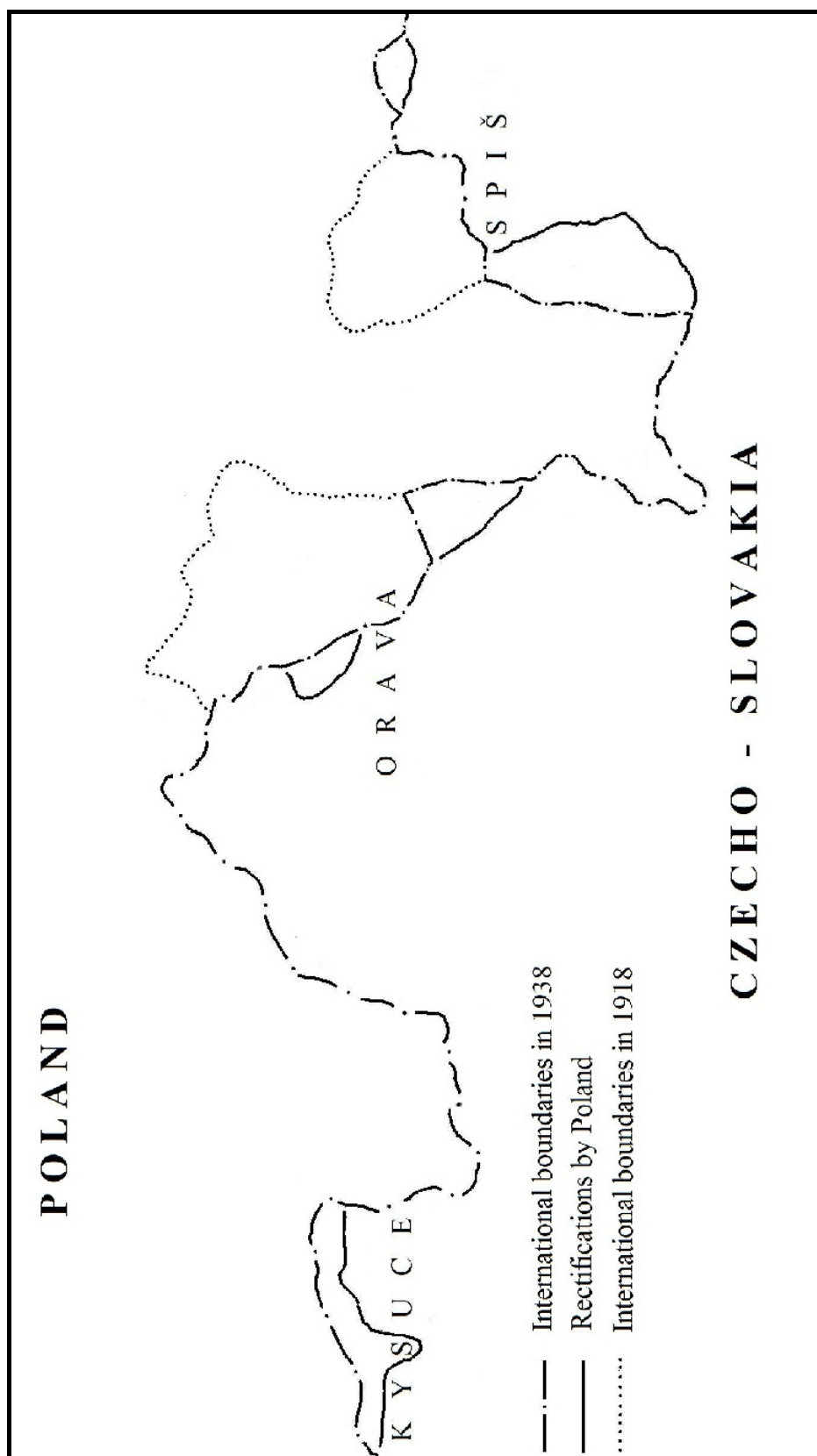
Map 7. Orava and Spiš 1918 - 1920



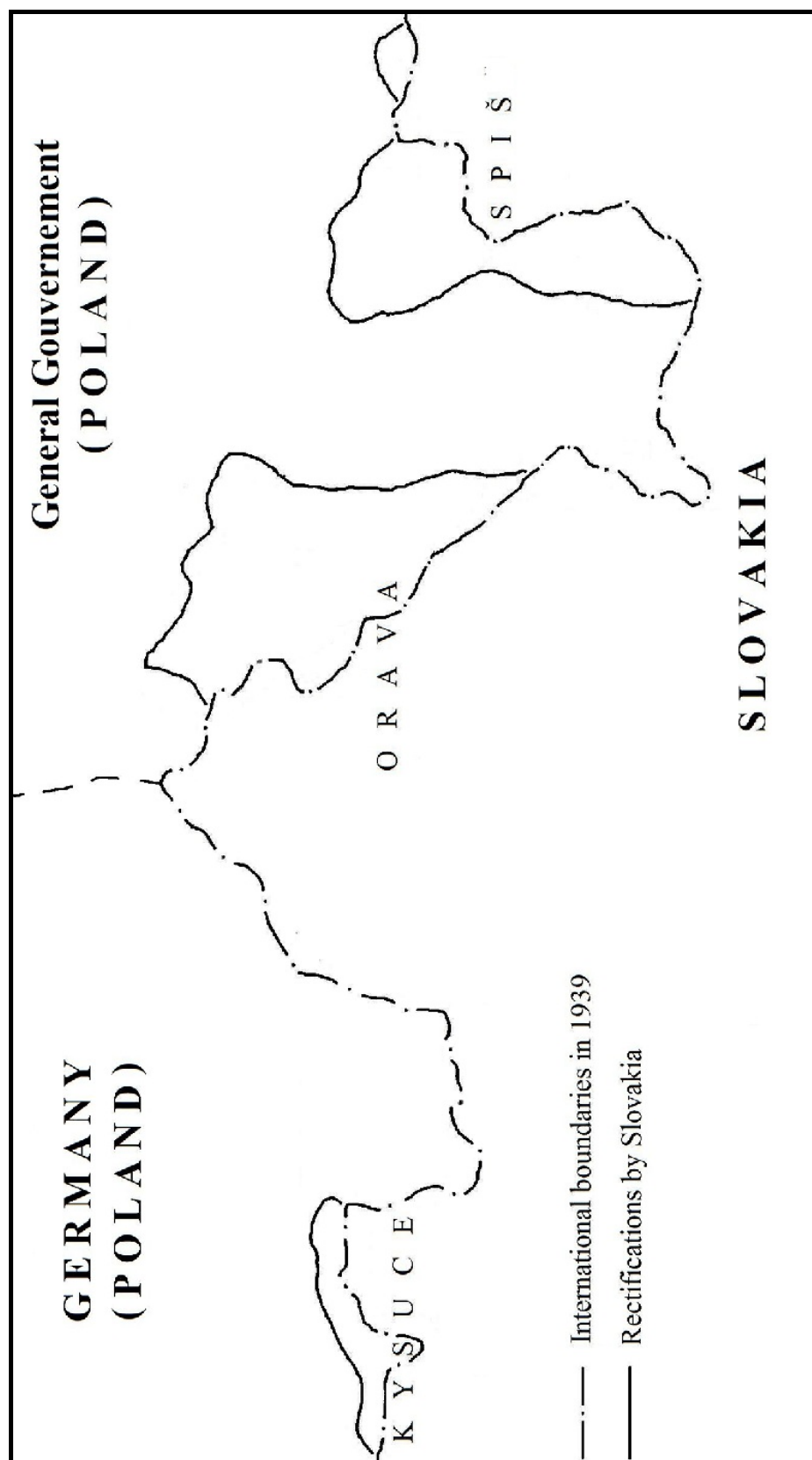
Map 8. Orava and Spiš 1920 - 1924



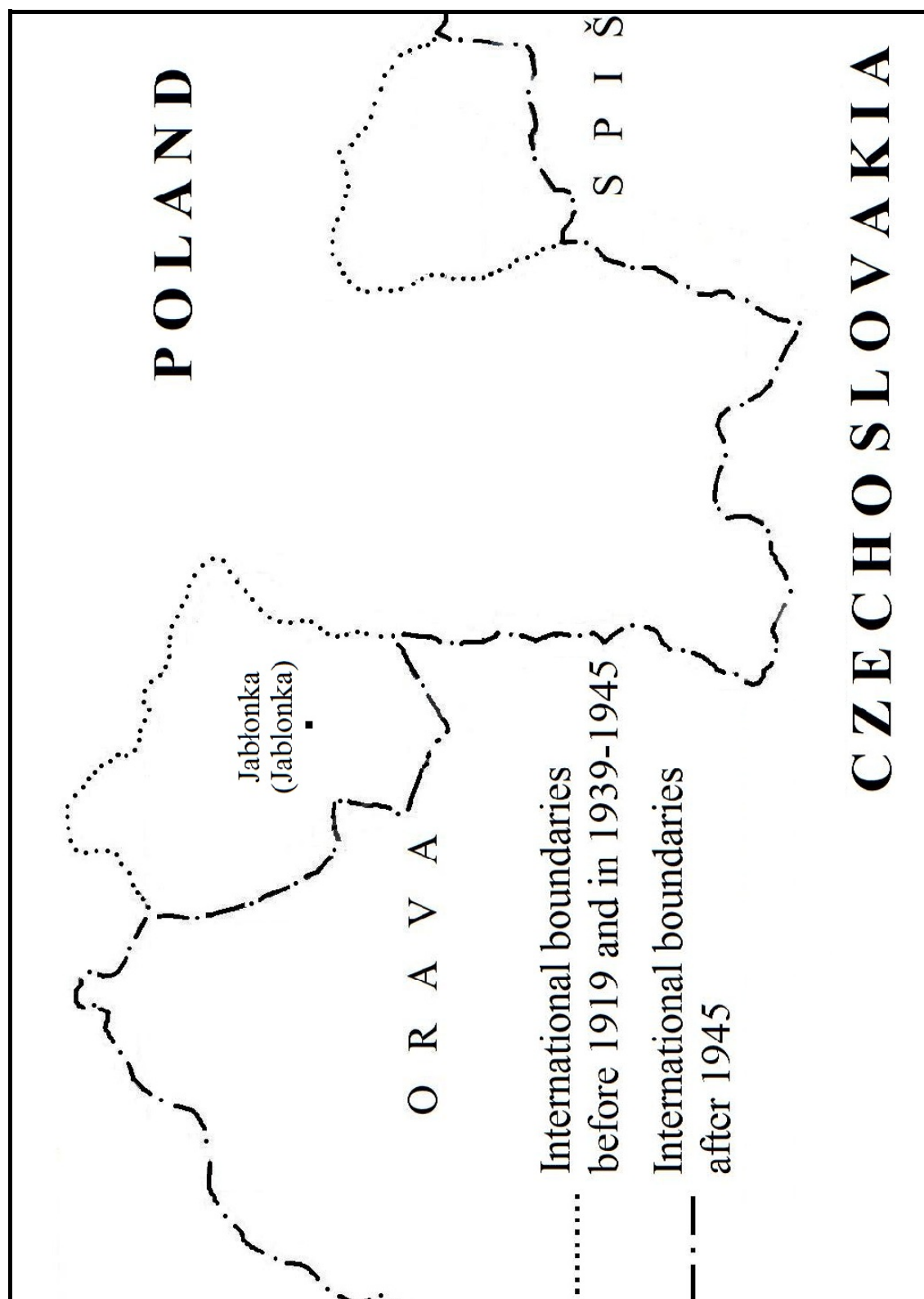
Map 9. Javorina 1920 - 1924



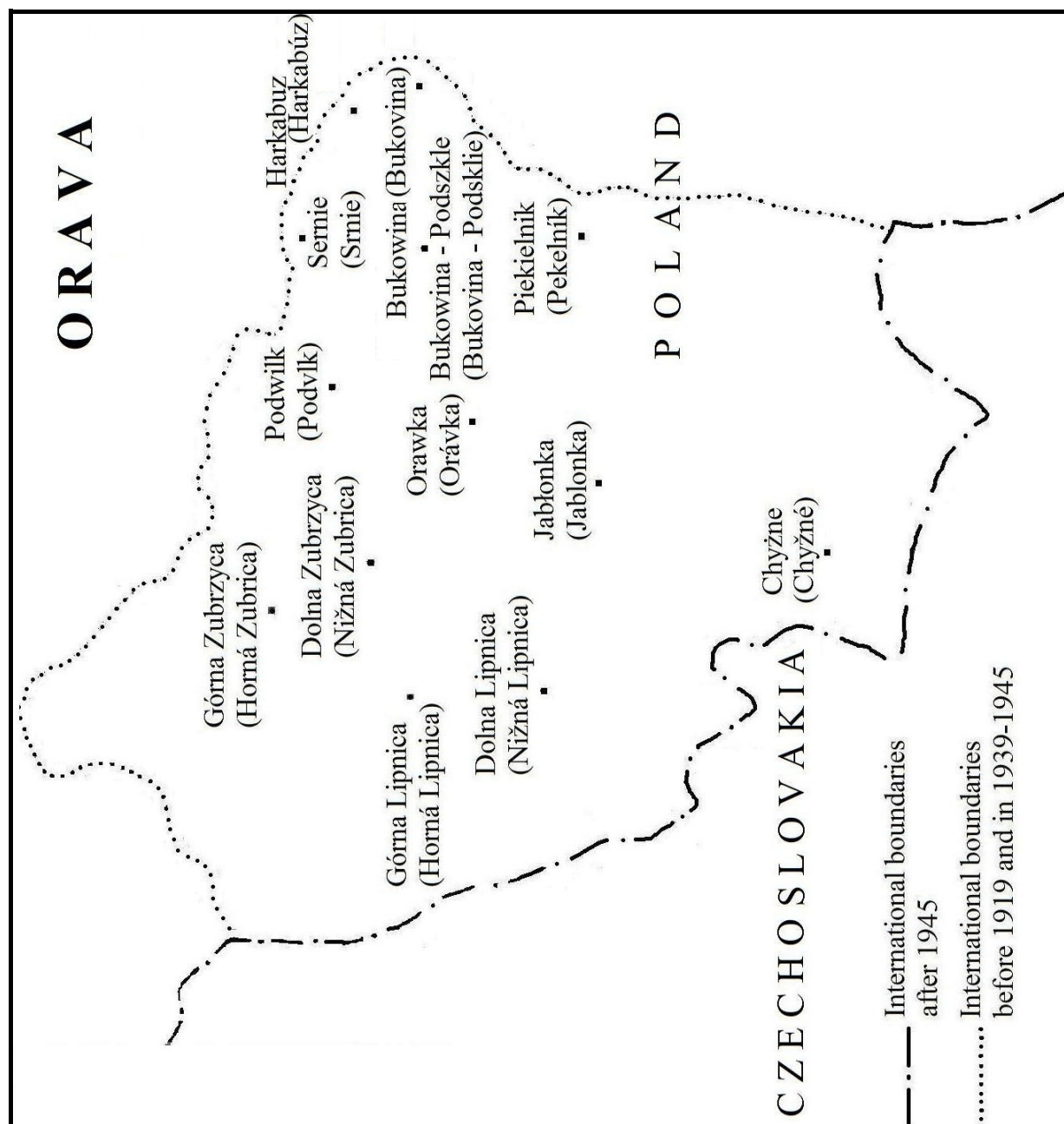
Map 10. Orava, Spiš and Kysuce in 1938



Map 11. Orava, Spiš and Kysuce in 1939



Map 12. Orava and Spiš after 1945



Map 13. Orava



Map 14. Spiš

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ZÚ Francie

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D (důležité)

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Polsko - zprávy vyslan. ve Varšavě aj.

Polsko - zprávy čsl. vyslanectví ve Varšavě

Polsko

Princ Hohenlohe - velkostatek Javorina

Štefan Osuský

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Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych

Czechosłowacja. Stosunki polityczne z Polską, sprawa Śląska Cieszyńskiego, Spisza i Orawy

Czechosłowacja. Umowa likwidacyjna polsko-czechosłowacka - sprawy oszczędności ludności Spisza

Polacy na Słowacji Zachodniej. Problem polskiej świadomości narodowej, akcja kulturalno-oświatowa

Harcerstwo polskie w Czechosłowacji. Zjazd, harcerska akcja na Spiszu, Orawie, na Słowacji i na Śląsku Cieszyńskim

Spisz, Orawa, Czadeckie. Rywalizacja polsko-czechosłowacka w latach 1918-1938. Akcja spisko-orawska

Czechosłowacja. Umowy graniczne z Polską

Słowacja. Nawiązanie stosunków dyplomatycznych z Polską

Słowacja. Sprawy delimitacji granicy z Polską

Słowacja. Stosunki polityczne z Polską

Ambasada RP w Londynie

Ambasada RP w Berlinie

Ambasada RP w Paryżu

Poselstwo RP w Pradze

Ambasada RP w Waszyngtonie

Biuro Prac Kongresowych przy Ministerstwie Spraw Zagranicznych w Warszawie

Delegacja Polska na Konferencję Pokojową w Paryżu
 PRM (Posiedzenia Rady Ministrów)
 Akta Władysława Grabskiego
 Władysław Grabski, Wspomnienia z konferencji w Spa
Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe w Rembertowie (Warsaw)
 Teki Baczyńskiego

SLOVAK

Slovenský národný archív, Bratislava
 Ústredná kancelária pre plebiscit vo Spiši a Orave, Ružomberok
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