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THE TESCHEN QUESTION AT THE PARIS
PEACE CONFERENCE, 1919-1920

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Thomazena Dixon, A. B.

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THE TESCHEN QUESTION AT THE PARIS
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This study is an investigation of the negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 to make a peace in the Duchy of Teschen Silesia 1919-1920. It is concerned with the principle of self-determination as it was applied to Central Eastern Europe in the aftermath of World War I. Moreover, this investigation seeks to explain the fixing of boundary lines in the Duchy of Teschen in the light of the diplomacy of the Allied Powers on the one hand and Poland and Czechoslovakia on the other. This study is an attempt to portray the overall difficulty involved in making a peace in idealistic terms.

Most of the data for this investigation are found in the Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference, 1919. This thirteen-volume work provided an account of the daily minutes of the Supreme War Council, the meetings of the Commissioners Plenipotentiary, and the correspondence of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace. The Lansing Papers 1914-1920 also give an official correspondence of events concerning United States diplomacy.

in middle European Affairs.

The Recueil des Acts da la Conference de la Paix Relatives aux Affairs de Teschen is a source of data which gives a clear indication of the various commissions in their endeavors to fix the boundaries of Teschen. This microfilmed collection presents an account of the many proposed boundary lines which resulted from the varied views held by the commissioners in light of the foreign policy of their respective nations.

The major primary sources covering the historic, economic and geographic arguments of the Czechoslovaks' case were obtained from Delegation Propaganda from the Czech Republic. This propaganda contains a great amount of factual data which substantiate the Czechs' claim to Teschen. The major primary source containing data to legitimize the case presented by the Poles comes from Polish Delegation Propaganda.

The Delegation Propaganda from the Polish Republic and the Czechoslovak State were found to be good source matter. In this literature many of the claims presented in an abbreviated form in the United States Department Publications were dramatized more vividly. This source matter contains statistics which were used to prove or disprove either the Polish or Czech cases. The Czech arguments contain statistics as well as much detailed history upon which the Czechoslovaks used to claim to Teschen; the Polish propaganda made primary use of statistical charts and tables as well as some personal

testimonies from the natives of Teschen to lay the basis for Polish claims.

The Rebirth of the Polish Republic, by Titus Komarnicki, from the Polish point of view, and The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State, by D. Perman, from the Czechoslovak point of view, are secondary sources of great value.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter explains the strategic importance of Teschen Silesia in light of its historical background and setting. The second and third chapters detail the intricacies of peacemaking in Paris and in Teschen Silesia. According to Poland the Teschen problem was one of the first examples of political success attained by forcible fait accompli. Besides, the Principal Allied Powers whose resolutions were decisive at the peace conference, each held a different view of self-determination.

Chapters four and five explain the final settlement of the territorial dispute. The armed conflict which flared up in Teschen Silesia January, 1919, illustrates the complexity of the territorial questions faced by both the Slavic states on the one hand and the Peace Conference on the other. Because Poland in particular, and Czechoslovakia in general were dissatisfied with the settlement, relations between these nations became embroiled to the detriment of both states in the post war era. Borderline disputes prolonged tension between Poland and Czechoslovakia for several years until the Warsaw protocol of May 6, 1924 finally settled the matter.

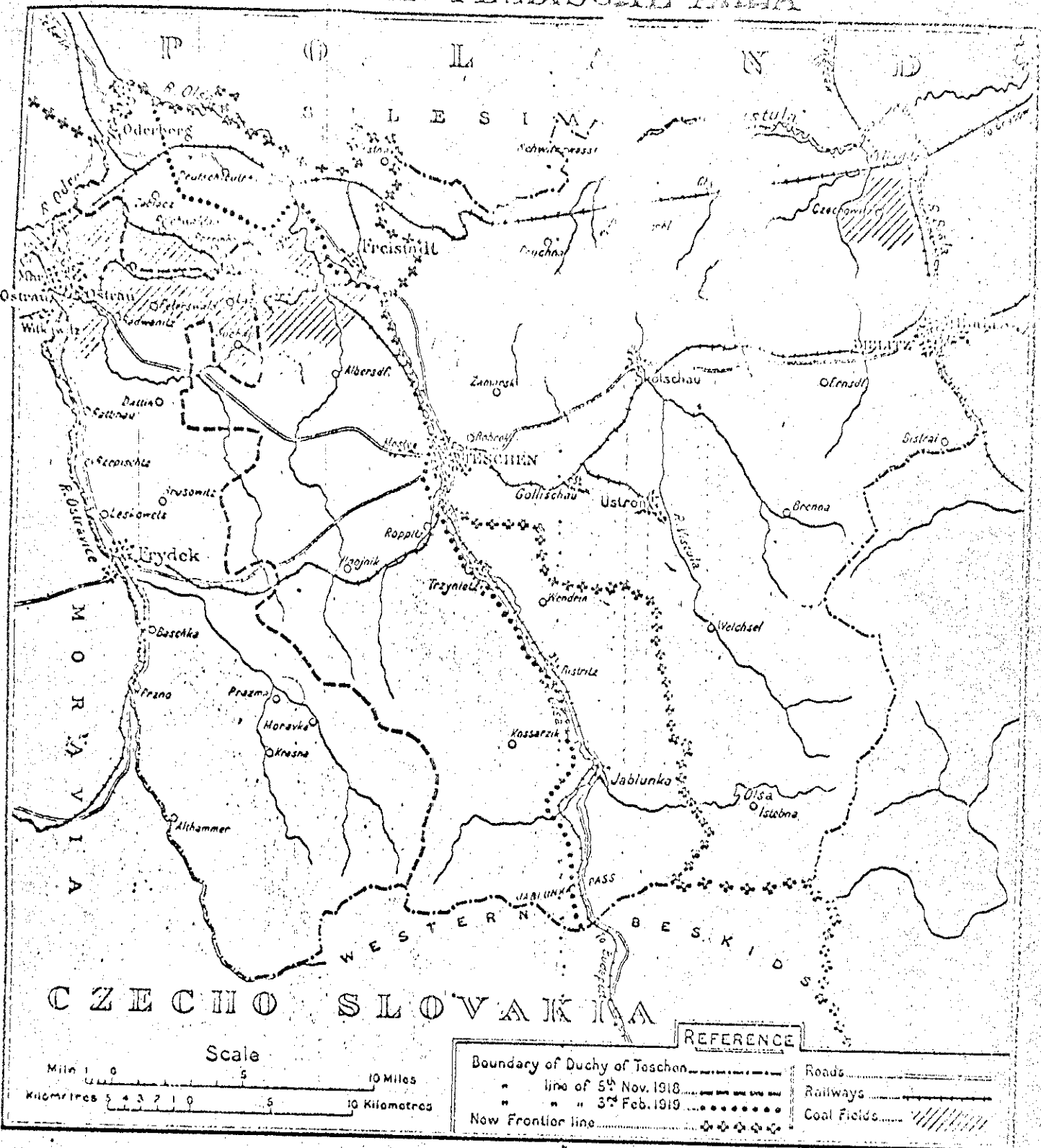
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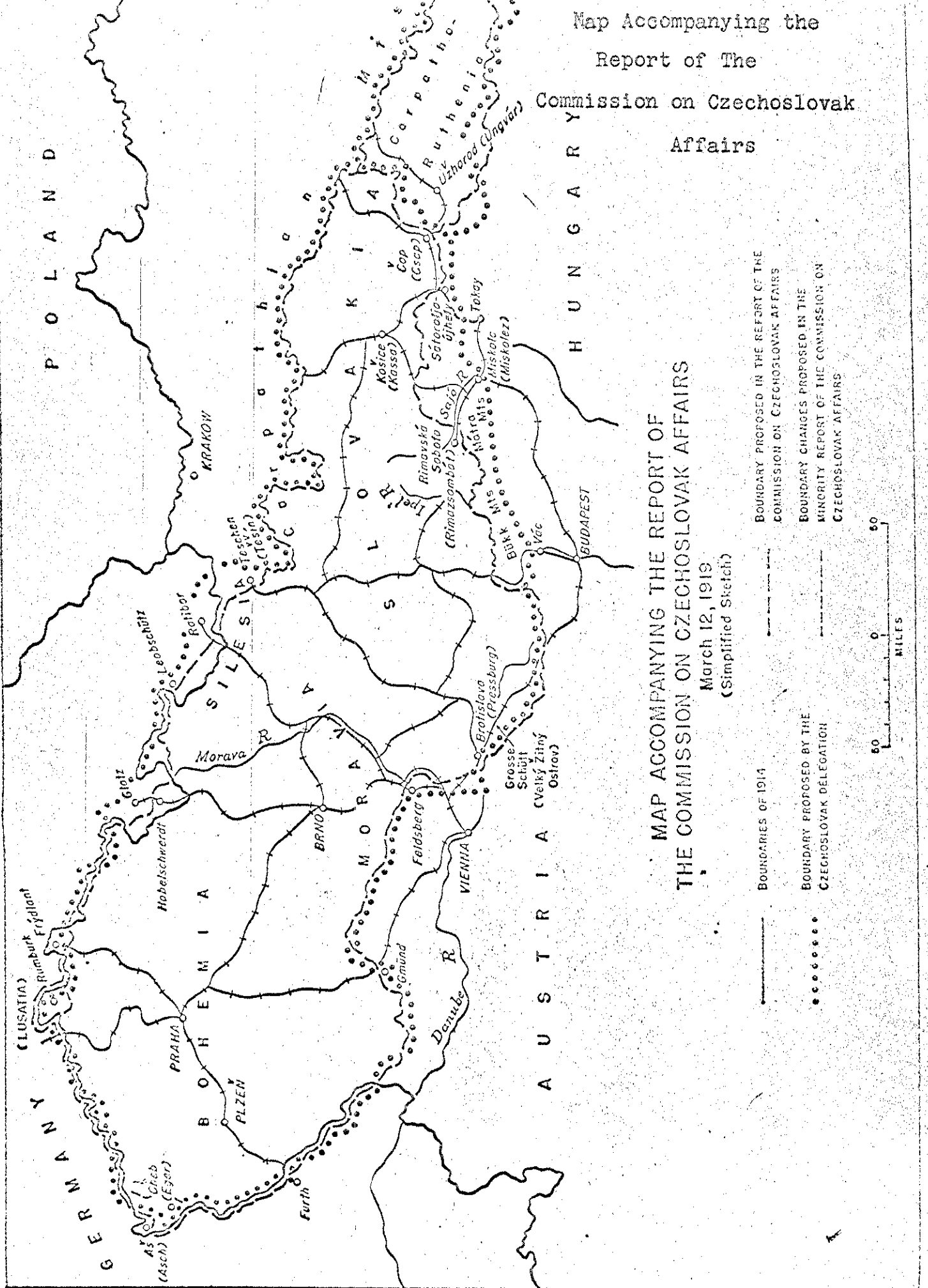
TESCHEN PLEBISCITE AREA



Map Accompanying the
Report of The
Commission on Czechoslovak
Affairs

MAP ACCOMPANYING THE REPORT OF
THE COMMISSION ON CZECHOSLOVAK AFFAIRS

March 12, 1919
(Simplified Sketch)



BOUNDARIES OF 1914
BOUNDARY PROPOSED BY THE
COMMISSION ON CZECHOSLOVAK AFFAIRS
BOUNDARY PROPOSED BY THE
MINORITY REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON
CZECHOSLOVAK AFFAIRS

BOUNDARIES OF 1914
BOUNDARY PROPOSED BY THE
CZECHOSLOVAK DELEGATION

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MILES

THE HISTORIC ETHNOGRAPHIC AND
ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE DUCHY
OF TESCHEN SILESIA

The province of Teschen in Silesia is an area that has been ethnographically mixed for centuries.¹ Located in the southeastern corner of Austrian Silesia, adjoining the Silesia of Troppau, it had been at one time a part of ancient Silesia (now Prussian Silesia). This district had been occupied by Slav tribes as early as the fifth century of the Christian Era.² During the early Middle Ages the area had been sparsely populated by groups of Czechs and Poles who acknowledged the suzerainty of Polish or Bohemian kings.³ In the tenth century the Teschen district was included in the kingdom of Bohemia and the Diocese of Prague.⁴ Toward the end of the same century, however, the Duchy came under Polish rule and was included in the Diocese of Breslau, in which it still remains.⁵ Later, Teschen was reconquered

¹The Czech spelling is "Těšín"; the Polish spelling is "Cieszyn." However, the German spelling "Teschen" was used at the Peace Conference.

²H. W. V. Temperley, A History of The Peace Conference, 6 vols. (London, 1921), IV, 354-55.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 356.

⁵Ibid.

by the Czechs for a few decades during the eleventh century before it again passed to Poland (c. 1054).⁶ The town of Teschen is mentioned in recorded history for the first time in 1155 as the seat of a Polish castellan.⁷ Toward the end of the twelfth century the authority of the Polish king as Dux Maximus of Silesia declined; and by the end of the succeeding century the local principalities including the Czech sources, the Duke of Bohemia became the hereditary monarch of the Bohemian Crown Lands in 1198.⁹ These lands included Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.¹⁰ Other sources indicate, however, that from 1291 onward Bohemian kings gradually established their authority over the entire Silesian province.¹¹ In 1316 Oswiesim (Auschwitz) and Zator were separated from Teschen, and under Duke Kasimir I the principality assumed its present form.¹² In 1327 Duke Kasimir concluded a treaty with the Bohemian king John of Luxemburg, recognizing him as his feudal overlord.¹³ Finally in 1335 Poland relinquished her claims to the Silesian province

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., 357-58

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., 354-56.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

in favor of Bohemia.¹⁴ Then the Roman Emperor, Charles IV, by his rescripts of 1349 and 1355 proclaimed the integrity and individuality of the Czech crown; and he adjoined Lusatia, Silesia (now in part Prussian) and Bohemia.¹⁵ Again, according to Czech sources, the integrity, individuality, and, independence of the Bohemian Crown Lands were sanctioned by King George of Podiebrad (January 13, 1464), by King Vladislau in 1511; by a letter of Ferdinand I of Halisburg (December 13, 1526); and by a decision of the Diet of Moravia in 1612.¹⁶ Nevertheless, suffice it to say here, that between the fourteenth and the eighteenth centuries the Teschen District was regarded as a fief of the Bohemian Crown.

It was in 1526 that the first of the Habsburgs, Ferdinand I, was elected King of Bohemia.¹⁷ He was freely chosen by the different Czech governments as the King of a state declared absolutely independent of all the other territories he could claim as his own.¹⁸ When the ancient ducal house controlling Silesia died out in 1653, the fief escheated to

¹⁴Czechoslovak Republic. Czechoslovak Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, Delegation Propaganda: The Czechoslovaks, (Paris, 1919). (Hereafter cited as Czechoslovak Delegation at the Peace Conference . . .)

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Temperley, History, IV, 354-56; see also Czechoslovak Delegation at the Peace Conference, The Czechoslovaks, p. 5.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

the Habsburg Emperor in his capacity as the king of Bohemia.¹⁹ When, after the contentions between Marié Thérèse and Frederick II, Silesia came to be shared (through the treatise and peace of Hubertsburg in 1763) between Prussia and Austria, the Silesia of Troppau and the Silesia of Teschen remained attached to the Crown of Bohemia and therefore to Austria.²⁰ Marié Thérèse ceded to Frederick "all Silesia except Teschen and the district beyond the River Oppa and the High Mountains."²¹ The cession in question was ratified by the Estates of Bohemia, thus recognizing the rights of the Bohemian Crown over the Silesian lands.²² The remaining districts of Troppau and Teschen were henceforth regarded as an Austrian province.²³ Thus, the Czech State which was composed of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia no longer existed practically, yet it existed legally.²⁴ Later Habsburg monarchs Francis I (1806), Ferdinand V (1848), and Francis Joseph were forced to recognize this fact implicitly in their official acts.²⁵ It is this singular situation which gave the Czechs a powerful position as they began to claim the

¹⁹Temperley, History, IV, 348-409.

²⁰Ibid.; see also Czechoslovak Delegation at the Peace Conference, Delegation Propaganda: The Problem of Teschen Silesia.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

right of liberating their ancient province before the Great War. And, it is the historic significance of this situation that afforded Czechoslovakia a solid position at the Paris Peace Conference.²⁶

If the checkered history of the Teschen Duchy would seem to favor the Czechslovaks in their quest to annex Teschen to their state, then the ethnographic composition of the Duchy certainly would seem a positive argument favoring the annexation of this district to the Polish State. Indeed, at the close of the World War Poland laid her claim to a large part of the district basing such a claim on the principle of ethnic nationality and self-determination.²⁷

The Duchy of Teschen covered approximately 877 square miles and numbered 426,370 inhabitants. The Austrian statistica of 1910 distributed the nationalities in the districts as follows:

Poles	233,850	54.85%
Czecho-Slovaks	115,604	27.11%
Germans	76,916	18.04%

Teschen is subdivided into four districts: Frydek, Frystat, Teschen and Bielitz. Excepting Frydek, whose population is almost entirely Czech, the population of the other three

²⁶Ibid.; see also Poland, Polish Delegation at the Peace Conference, Propaganda: Memoires Concerning the Annexation of Teschen to Poland (Paris, 1919). (Hereafter cited as Polish Delegation at the Peace Conference . . .).

²⁷Ibid.

districts consists of a mixture of Czechs, Poles and Germans.²⁸ Therefore, Teschen is a mixed geographic area inhabited by three nationalities: Czechs, Poles and Germans.²⁹ The Poles argued, however, that since the Polish element is in the majority in the three districts of Bielitz, Frystat and Teschen, these three districts should be separated from the Czechoslovak Republic and annexed to the State of Poland.³⁰ From another source the following analysis was made concerning statistical ratios in Teschen Silesia.

The Austrian statistics for 1900 show a population of 360,662 of whom 218,869 spoke Polish, 85,553 Czech and 56,240 German. The census return of 1910 which probably tended to favor the German element shows a total population of 426,370 . . . The 1910 census showed that the Polish speakers numbered 77.63% of the population in Biala, 76.81% in Teschen and 63.52% in Frystat, while in Frydek the Czech speakers formed 78.16%.³¹

The Polish speakers included the many recent immigrants from Galicia, numbering from 50 to 80 thousand, and about 56,000 native Silesians (Slonzaks, Slazacy), many of whom belonged to the Silesians Peoples' Party, which had been established to oppose the Polonizing efforts of the Galician

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Temperley, History, IV, 351.

³¹Ibid., 353.

Poles.³² According to the Austrian census of 1910, 101,138 persons in the Teschen districts did not possess citizenship rights.³³ Nonetheless, the point of the argument is that the Austrian census indicated that Polish speakers were in a large majority in central and eastern Teschen Silesia.³⁴ On the other hand, the Czechoslovaks contended that the census criterion utilized to obtain this majority--that is, the speech of intercourse--was artificial and in reality did not exist. The Czechs further contended that the speech of intercourse does not necessarily determine one's nationality; the Poles, they claimed, registered the indigenous Silesian population as Polish against its protest.³⁵ The Czechs cited the following statistical analysis to illustrate this contention.

In Ahbrechtitz (Frystat district) in 1880, 1,029 Czechs were registered--no Poles. In 1890, 1,079 Poles and no Czechs. In Rychvald (Bohumin district) in 1900 the census registered 11 Czechs and 4,545 Poles. They registered as Czechs only those who were born in Bohemia; all the indigenous population was declared to be Polish. In 1910, the Poles again took the census, but under the supervision of the Silesian German Government, and the census shows 2,907 Czechs and 3,001 Poles.³⁶

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.; see also, Czechoslovak Delegation at the Peace Conference, Propaganda: The Problem of Teschen Silesia.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

In addition to these arguments the Czechoslovaks emphasized the impact of Polish colonization and immigration as being a factor which contributed to the appearance of a seeming Polish-speaking majority in the Duchy. Due to the tremendous increase in coal production and the industrial development in general of late-nineteenth-century Teschen and nearby Morvsha-Ostrava, there was a great demand for labor, which led to massive immigration of Polish laborers into the Teschen province.³⁷ Polish sources estimated that in the decade of 1810-9, 20,000 Poles from Galicia immigrated to the Duchy. The Polish Journal "Dziennik Cieszynski" reported that in the contested Czech-Polish territory 60% of the population consisted of recent immigrants from Galicia.³⁸ In 1910 74,145 subjects of other Austrian lands and 11,669 foreigners were counted in Silesia. Thus, the Czechs contended that the Polish labor element was one that was not definitely settled in the area "since when the mining of coal shifted from west to east, Polish working population in the west decreased."³⁹ Furthermore, the indigenous inhabitants of Teschen Silesia spoke a dialect having in it both Polish and Czech elements.⁴⁰ These

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Temperley, History, IV, 350.

inhabitants did not speak of their language as "Polish;" they spoke of it as being Moravian.⁴¹ And, they spoke of their culture as being Czech since, for several centuries, Czech was exclusively the language of administration, schools, and churches.⁴² Nevertheless, in the latter half of the nineteenth century the indigenous population of the area had been Polonized through Polish schools and churches, since the immigrants spoke and understood a Moravian dialect related to Polish. Thus, the ethnographical argument for the annexation of Teschen to Poland formed a unique base from which she could maneuver at the Paris Peace Conference. Moreover, though the Polish statesmen were aware that the ethnographic argument would be of significant influence in affecting their claims to Teschen in Paris, they went further and maintained that the Polish State, of necessity, required their district for purely economic reasons.⁴³ Because of this action and the logical reaction from the Czechs, it was the crucial economic position of Teschen that was to be the

⁴¹Czechoslovak Delegation at the Peace Conference, Propaganda: The Problem of Teschen Silesia.

⁴²Ibid.; see also Titus Komarnicki, Rebirth of the Polish Republic (London: 1957), Chapter III.

⁴³Polish Delegation at the Peace Conference, Propaganda: Memoirs Concerning Annexation of Teschen to Poland.

basis for both Slavic states' laying claim to the area at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.

The comparatively small size and ethnic composition of the Duchy of Teschen are in no way a clue as to its strategic, economic, and geographic importance. Forming the eastern part of the Moravian Gap between the plains of the Polish Vistula and the Austrian Danube, Teschen Silesia was a watershed, a portage between these two large river systems. Further evidence of its strategic importance was illustrated when Napoleon's ignorance of the Moravian Gate brought him defeat at the Battle of Nations at Leipzig.⁴⁴ In addition to this aspect of its geographical location Teschen had great economic importance, as it was a great industrial center of central eastern Europe. Extensive coking-coal reserves and mines were to be found there.⁴⁵ These reserves and mines served the entire area of northern Bohemia and Moravia.⁴⁶ Finally, this duchy served as the crossroads of railway lines--lines running north and south through the Danubian area to the basins of the Elbe and the Vistula; from Prague and Berlin to Bratislava and Budapest; and lines running east and west from Bohemia to Slovakia and from Warsaw, Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev to Bruno, Bratislava

⁴⁴R. J. Kerner, Czechoslovakia (Berkeley, 1949) pp. 66-68, 188-190.

⁴⁵S. H. Thomson, Czechoslovakia In European History (Princeton, 1953), p. 354.

⁴⁶Ibid.; see also Temperley, History, IV, 358-60; Kerner, Czechoslovakia, p. 188-190.

and Vienna.⁴⁷

As the historic ethnographic and economic aspects of significance concerning the Teschen Question in 1919 are viewed here, one may conclude that each of these factors--economic, geographic, ethnic, historic--serves as a legitimate basis for the arguments presented by either of the contending states, Czech or Polish, at the Paris Peace Conference.⁴⁸ Moreover, both of these delegations were aware of the legitimate claims to be presented by the other.⁴⁹ And Both of the Slavic states rather early outlined a course of action which would refute the positive claims made by the other. While such a course of action on the one hand resulted in successful territorial faits accomplis for the Slavic state disposed to such method, on the other hand, such a course of action served the purpose of the Allied Powers better when their concerted effort to maintain a balance of power and the peace was paid for at the expense of those nations who would seem to obstruct such noble aims.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Temperley, History, p. 359; see also Hans Roos, A History of Modern Poland: From the Foundation of the State in the First World War to the Present Day (New York, 1966), pp.86-88; see map, p. 89.

⁴⁸Thomson, Czechoslovakia, p. 354.

⁴⁹Kerner, Czechoslovakia, p. 66-68.

⁵⁰David Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Paris Peace Conference, 2 vols., (New Haven, 1939), I, 200-202.

CHAPTER II

EARLY DELIBERATIONS CONCERNING TESCHEN CZECH VERSUS POLE IN TESCHEN AND AT VERSAILLES

For many years the "multi-national empire," Austria-Hungary seemed on the verge of dissolution. Housing within its borders a multiplicity of nations--ethnic groups speaking different languages, having different histories and very many adhering to different religious creeds--the old Habsburg dynasty was nearing the end of its long reign in Eastern Europe. With the First World War, the collapse of this empire was soon to be realized, and many nations once encompassed within the now dead empire arose attempting to establish their historic (or what they thought to have been their historic) territorial boundaries, many doing so by faits accomplis. The fixing of these boundaries more often than not involved frontier disputes; and there were many of them. "Where races [ethnic groups] were mixed near frontiers of states carved out [of] Austria-Hungary the snarling and clawing over territory was deafening."¹ Therefore, at the close of the Great War there was a series of minor wars conducted in Eastern Europe. This narrative is concerned with the post-war settlement of one of these frontier disputes, one which caused a "little war."

When the Great Powers met at Paris in 1919 to make a peace, the formula that Woodrow Wilson, President of the

¹David Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Paris Peace Conference, (New Haven; 1939), pp. 200-02.

United States, Woodrow Wilson, had advocated for a new world order "self-determination" had been accepted, generally, as the basis for the reorganization of Eastern Europe.² Yet even though this basic formula had been supplied the technicalities of application that remained were complex.³ Each of the Principal and Allied Powers sent capable diplomats to Paris to detail the new European order. And, as the delegates undertook the business of making the peace, much of Wilson's original formula was useless or unused; in spite of the formula of "self-determination", the reparations and territorial claims

²Letter, Secretary of State to President Wilson, May 10, 1918. United States Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. Supplement I, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, (2 Vols, Washington, II, 19-32, 126-128, 139-141; (hereafter cited as Lansing Papers); see also, Lloyd George, The Truth About the Peace Treaties (London, 1938), II, 929; Letter, Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs (Benes) to the U.S. Secretary of State, December 20, 1918. United States Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919. Supplement III, Paris Peace Conference 1919, (13 Vols, 1942-47) II, 379-83 (hereafter cited as P. P. C. 1919); D. Perman, The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State, (Leiden, Netherlands, 1962), pp. 99-100.

³This fact is illustrated in the general practice at the Peace Conference of designating commissions to deal with territorial questions (disputes) and further designating committees as the subordinate bodies sitting at the seat of the conference at Paris. The Commissions (mission) were also sent to conduct investigations or to provisionally minister to an area. See summarization of U. S. policy toward "question in regards to disputed territory," Telegram, The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Wallace), July 21, 1920, P. P. C., 1920, Supplement I, I, 50-57.

of the major powers centered around the old European order, the balance of power concept.⁴

When the Supreme War Council met at the Quai d'Orsay on January 19, 1919, their main concern was the German problem. However, the news of the various skirmishes taking place along the borders of the newly formed Eastern European states soon made an important change in the agenda of the Conference.⁵ One of the first frontier disputes to come before the Council was the Question of Teschen; there Czech and Polish troops were engaged in armed border disputes.

During the last years of Austrian rule the Polish members in the Diet (Landtag) of Austrian Silesia supported the historic Czech claims to Teschen.⁶ In 1916 when the Central Powers were making efforts to reconstitute the Polish State, some popular German writers suggested that Biala, Oswiecim and Zator be detached from Galicia and included in German Silesia.⁷ Of course, the Polish residents of these areas raised vigorous protests against such a notion; and, early in 1917 their Central Committee presented a

⁴Edward M. House and Charles Seymour, editors, What Really Happened At Paris, (New York, 1921), pp. 16-19; Lloyd George, Memoirs, Introduction; pp. 52-54; Paul Birdsall, Versailles Twenty Years After (New York, 1941), pp. James T. Shotwell, At the Paris Peace Conference, (New York, 1937), pp. 26-27, Chapter III; Charles Seymour, Geography Justice and Politics at the Paris Conference of 1919 (New York, 1951), pp. 6-9; Edmund Deve Morel, Truth and the War, (London, 1916), Chapter XIV.

⁵H. M. V. Temperley, History of the Peace Conference (6 Vols, London, 1921), IV, 356-57.

⁶Ibid., IV, 355.

⁷Ibid.

memorandum to the Polish Club in the Reichstate in Vienna and to the Austrian Minister for Galicia demanding that the Duchy of Teschen be annexed to Galicia.⁸ The future of this Duchy was later discussed by Thomas Masaryk, the reknowned Czech historian-philosopher who had become leader of the newly formed Leftist-Realist Party, and Ignace Joseph Paderewski, a famous Polish musician prominent among Polish-Americans and was who happened to be an intimate friend of President Wilson's close adviser, Colonel House.⁹ Discussions were held in Washington, D. C., during May and June, 1918, and it was agreed by both parties that a settlement of the Teschen Question should be reached by friendly negotiations between the Czech and Polish Governments in the event of the defeat of the Central Powers.¹⁰ Upon the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Government in October, 1918, two local Silesian organizations, the Polish National Council and the Czech National Local Committee for Silesia, provisionally assumed power in the name of their respective

⁸Ibid.

⁹Robert A. Kann, The Multi-National Empire: Nationalism and Reform for the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848-1918 (New York, 1950), I, 211; Titus Komarnicki, The Rebirth of the Polish Republic (London, 1957), p. 171; see also D. Perman, Czechoslovak, p. 100; Temperley, History, IV, 356-58; and Roman Gorecki, Poland and Her Economic Development (London, 1935), p. 28-30.

¹⁰Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 100; see also statement by M. Dmowski, Polish statesman concerning provisional settlement of Teschen (5 November 1918), Council of Five Great Powers, September 5, 1919, P. P. C., 1919, VIII, 118-119.

states.¹¹ The Polish National Council gained power in Teschen as the established governing body, and it acted in behalf of the Polish state; the authority of this Council was shortly reenforced by the arrival of Polish troops in the area.¹² The Czech National Local Committee for Teschen was formed and functioned with neither the official support of the Czechoslovak Government at Prague, nor with the help of troops.¹³ On November 5, 1918 these two local groups concluded an agreement at Ostrau which fixed a provisional frontier line according to ethnography.¹⁴ This line gave Frydek and the Czech communes of Frystat to the Czechoslovak State, and the districts of Bielitz and Teschen and the

¹¹Temperley, History, IV, 354-358; see Beneš' statement concerning Polish mobilization of Teschen, Council of Heads of Delegations, September 5, 1919, P. P. C., 1919, VIII, 121; also Dmowski's counter statement that "Polish claim based upon national sentiment of populace", ibid.; see also an earlier statement by Dmowski that "inhabitants of Teschen had organized themselves militarily", Council of Ten, January 29, 1919, III, 784.

¹²Ibid.; see also earlier statement by Kramář (tz) Council of Ten, January 29, ibid., III, 783 (concerning Polish mobilization of Teschen and announcement of the proposed January elections).

¹³Temperley, History, IV, 356.

¹⁴Council of Ten, January 29, 1919, P. P. C., 1919, III, 783; see Perman, Czechoslovakia, pp. 98-100 (in footnote (4) quote ". . . Dmowski demanded a division of Teschen according to ethnographic lines but pointed out that such a settlement could be left to a friendly agreement between the Czechs and the Poles."); see also, Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 104-105.

Polish communes of Frystat to Poland.¹⁵ The Polish National Council and the Czech National Local Committee for Teschen further proposed that a central body composed of seven Czechs, seven Poles, and five Germans be organized for the purpose of controlling food supplies for the entire Duchy.¹⁶ By this agreement, racial minorities in both the Polish and Czech zones were protected, and, accordingly in neither sphere was anything to be done which would prejudice the final settlement of this disputed area and its permanent inclusion into either state.¹⁷ The governing bodies concluded further that the coal districts were to be placed under the administration of Mährisch-Ostrau but the Polish National Council was to have the right of nominating a confidential agent to represent them.¹⁸ Finally, the Poles were given ten coal pits and the Czechs were given six.¹⁹

Because the Czechoslovak Government had never formally recognized the local Czech Council as its representative in Teschen, it took little notice of these provisional arrangements, and it reserved the right to modify them.²⁰ Moreover,

¹⁵Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 104-105; see also, Dr. Perman, Czechoslovakia, Chapter V, "The Teschen Incident;" R. Debicki, Foreign Policy of Poland: From the Rebirth of the Polish Republic to World War II, (New York, 1962), pp.16-21.

¹⁶Temperley, History, iv, 356.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

the execution of these provisions proved difficult; both ethnic groups, Czechs and Poles, violated its claims.²¹

This was especially true in the Frystat district where the Polish populace had a highly developed national consciousness, and that district also included a number of advanced social revolutionaries who fomented anti-Czech feeling and discontent.²²

On December 10, 1918 Polish officials announced that the election of deputies to the Warsaw Diet from the occupied portion of Teschen would take place on January 26, 1919. A week later Polish troops mobilized along the provisional boundary line.²³ Anticipating that the Czechs would prepare for a coup de force in Teschen, the Warsaw Government sent a personal letter from its Chief of State, Joseph Pilsudski to President Masaryk of Czechoslovakia.²⁴ This letter proposed that a bi-ethnic Czech-Polish Commission be established for the purpose of reviewing and settling all outstanding issues between the two Slavic states.²⁵ According to Polish sources, this Warsaw delegation arrived in

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.; see text of Letter, Lieutenant Frederic R. King to A. C. Coolidge, American Commission to Negotiate Peace (A.C.N.P.), January 29, 1919, P. P. C., 1919, XII, 324-325; and, Kormanicki, Rebirth, p. 357.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Komarnicki, Rebirth, p. 357.

²⁵Ibid.

Prague on December 17, 1918 where it was informed that the November 5 agreement, signed by the local Czech Council, was not authorized by officials in Prague. The mission was further informed that such proposals were not acceptable to the Czechoslovak State.²⁷ Upon their return to Warsaw, the Polish officials reported that a coup de force by the Czechs was imminent in Teschen Silesia.²⁸ Meanwhile the Prague Government became indignant over the actions of the Polish Mission and it sent an envoy with a memorandum to Warsaw requesting the withdrawal of Polish troops.²⁹ The envoy was arrested at Cracow, however, and he did not reach Warsaw until January 26, 1919.³⁰

In Paris, Polish officials were reluctant to believe that the Czechoslovaks would resort to the use of force in the dispute over Teschen.³¹ Besides, on November 5, Woodrow Wilson had issued a statement implying that the settlement of territorial boundaries would be work reserved to the Peace Conference.³² This statement further suggested that any use of arms by nations involved in frontier disputes would jeopardize those nations' claims.³³ Meanwhile, the

²⁶Ibid., p. 358.

²⁷Ibid. See also Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 99.

²⁸Ibid., p. 358.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

Czech Prime Minister Kramář sent a message to the Czech Foreign Minister, Eduard Beneš, concerning the Teschen dispute. According to Kramář, the Poles wanted all of Eastern Silesia and were mobilized along the border to take it.³⁴ The Poles, he added, were relying on the fact that the Czechs did not have an army.³⁵ Kramář solidified his statement by emphasizing the economic importance of the area; that the Poles only wanted the Kosici-Bohumin railroads and the coal mines at Karvin.³⁶ Kramář further asserted that without these, Czechoslovakia could not exist.³⁷ Although Beneš was quite aware of the economic importance of Teschen, he had not anticipated the conflict.³⁸ Therefore, this situation in Silesia worked to counter the tactics he and Masaryk had planned to use as diplomatic strategy during the weeks following the armistice.³⁹

Beneš and Masaryk had devised a plan aiming toward a coalition of Czecho-slovakia, Poland, Jugoslavia, Roumania

³⁴Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 99. See also Raymond Buell, Poland: Key to Europe (New York, 1939), pp. 338-343; and Letter, A. C. Coolidge to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, January 27, 1919, P. P. C., 1919, XII, 317.

³⁵Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 99.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.; see also Czechoslovak Republic. Czechoslovak Delegation at the Peace Conference. Delegation Propaganda: The Problem of Teschen Silesia, (Paris, 1919).

³⁸Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 99; Komarnicki, Rebirth, p. 357.

³⁹Ibid.

and Greece; this would have improved each country's bargaining position at Paris.⁴⁰ To achieve this goal, however, it was necessary to settle all disputes among the members of this bloc before the convening of the Peace Conference.⁴¹ Thus, Masaryk repeatedly disavowed any knowledge of a major crisis between the Poles and Czechs over Teschen in his effort to sustain this policy.⁴² Beneš sought to establish Czech claims to Teschen in another way; he hoped for the assistance of the Allied Powers.⁴³ He proposed to cede the Eastern district Bielski to Poland and establish the Czech-Polish frontier at the Vistula River. And, for a period of time, Beneš appeared to have been successful in his endeavors.⁴⁴

⁴⁰Frederick G. Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia (Englewood Cliffs, 1966), pp. 125-126; see also, Leo Pasvolksy, Economic Nationalism of Dannehan States (New York, 1928), pp. 74-80, 82-84; Josef Gruber, Czechoslovakia: A Survey of Economic and Social Condition (New York, 1924), Chapter IX; Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 100.

⁴¹Komarnicki, Rebirth, p. 357. See also Letter, A. C. Coolidge to A.C.N.P., January 27, P. P. C., 1919, XII 317-318; Letter, Lieutenant R. C. Foster to A. C. Coolidge, January 27, ibid., XII, 318-322; Perman, Czechoslovakia, pp. 105-107.

⁴²Perman, Czechoslovakia, pp. 105-111; see also, Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 367.

⁴³Komarnicki, Rebirth, p. 367; see also Letter, Lieutenant R. C. Foster to A. C. Coolidge, January 27, P. P. C., 1919, XII, 318-321; Perman, Czechoslovakia, pp. 108-09.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Realizing the diplomatic strategy of the Czechoslovak delegation, the Polish delegates in Paris consolidated their position by emphasizing the importance of the elections scheduled to be held in Teschen and which were to be supervised by Polish administrators. According to Warsaw's strategy, the outcome of those elections would surely stress the Polish character of the area and could be presented at the peace negotiations as an expression of the population's wish to be incorporated in the Polish State.⁴⁶ Thus, the Poles were dependent upon a favorable result in an election not yet held. At the same time, Beneš and Masaryk were gaining support among the Great Powers for Czechoslovakia's historic right to Teschen, whereas Poland had been rebuffed by the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour.⁴⁷ Shortly thereafter, the Allied statesmen drafted a note to the nationalities of Central Eastern Europe; they were cautioned that if they expected justice in Paris they should refrain from the use of force and place their claims wholly in the hands of the Peace Conference.⁴⁸ Because of

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 368-369; see also Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 773, 777-779; Council of Ten, January 29, ibid., III, 781-84.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.; see also Lloyd George, Memoirs, p. 201-206.

⁴⁸Council of Ten, January 22, P. P. C., 1919, III 670-674; see text of the warning issued to belligerents, Council of Ten, January 24, ibid., III, 715; see also, Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 106.

this statement, the Czechoslovak delegate in Paris cautioned his government in Prague against any independent military action in Teschen, especially since the Czechs were promised that Allied Forces would be dispatched to the area to maintain order until the Czechoslovak and Polish diplomats in Paris could reach a peaceful agreement.⁴⁹ By doing this the original Czech diplomatic strategy could be employed, armed conflict could be averted, and from all indications Czechoslovakia would maintain her historic claim to Teschen with the support of the Great Powers in Paris. But the elections scheduled by the Poles could negate all these results.

In Prague the critical nature of the situation encouraged the Czechoslovak officials to search for a more expeditious solution.⁵⁰ Great indignation was aroused among the Czechs

⁴⁹Both Poles and Czechs had been promised military support by some of the Allied powers. However, there was no concerted agreement by the Council of Ten to dispatch Allied forces to either of the Slavic nations in order to maintain peace in Teschen. See text of Letter, R. C. Foster to A. C. Coolidge, January 27, P. P. C., 1919, XII, 318-322; and Council of Ten, January 22, ibid., III, 670-675; see also, Letter, Paderewski to the Secretary of State, January 19, 1918, Lansing Papers, II, 71-73; Letter, Paderewski to Auchincloss, and Memorandum by Representative of the Polish National Committee (Paderewski), January 25, 1918, ibid., II, 86-89.

⁵⁰Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 106. For an example of the Poles' attitude concerning the action taken by the Czechs and Czech justification for such action see Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 358-359; Paderewski's appeal to the Supreme Council for Assistance, Council of Ten, January 22, P. P. C., 1919, III, 672-674; and Czech and Pole explanation for attempted fait accompli in Teschen, Council of Ten, January 29, ibid., III, 782-784.

when the Polish officials announced the date for elections, especially when Czech officials alleged that the Poles were spreading Bolshevism in the mining area of the districts.⁵¹ Feeling assured that the Great Powers in Paris were committed to her historic claims to Teschen, on January 22, 1919, in spite of the issuance of the Allied warning two days before Czech military officials prepared to advance into the disputed territory.⁵² On January 23 four military officers alleged to be representing the Great Powers proceeded with Czech troops and demanded within two hours the evacuation of Eastern Silesia by Polish troops.⁵³ Czech troops then proceeded to occupy Oderbury (Bohumin) where a skirmish ensued.⁵⁴ According to official sources, when Polish troops were informed of the forthcoming arrival of Czech troops, a systematic hunt of all Czechs of any prominence was begun by the Poles.⁵⁵ About twenty such persons were gathered from Teschen and approximately forty others were abducted from neighboring towns.⁵⁶ All of these with the exception

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Letter, R. C. Kerner to A. C. Coolidge, January 24, ibid., XII, 313-317 (Subject: Report on the Czechoslovak boundary question).

⁵³Ibid., pp. 321; see also, Temperley, History, IV, 357; and Komarnicki, Rebirth, p. 358.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Letter, Lieutenant Frederic R. King to A. C. Coolidge, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, XII, pp. 324-325. (Subject: Report of Mr. Van Suare regarding Teschen (American newspaper correspondent)).

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 324.

of two escapees, were placed on a train and sent eastward-- reportedly to Cracow.⁵⁷ The Czech troops arrived in the main square of Teschen, raised their flag over the town hall and sang their national hymn.⁵⁸ It was reported later that the Poles had retired from Teschen only to organize a counterattack; however, rumors were that Polish troops, unlike the Czech troops occupying Teschen, were composed principally of civilian miners whose morale was very low.⁵⁹ Rumors regarding the number of persons killed in the skirmish suggested that as many as 300 Poles were killed. British and French soliders confirm this.⁶⁰ In addition two Czechoslovak officers, eighteen Czech soldiers and one French soldier are also recorded as having been killed.⁶¹ According to local sources the underlying causes of this so-called resistance may be attributed to the intense propaganda activities of some members of the Polish National Council

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid., 324-325; see also Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 358-359; Perman, Czechoslovakia, pp. 108-109; Temperley, History, IV, 356; Debicki, Foreign Policy, pp. 16-17, 20-21.

⁵⁹Letter, F. R. King to A. C. Coolidge, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, XII, 324 (Subject: Report of Mr. Van regarding Teschen). See also Komarnicki, Rebirth, p. 366, and Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia (Englewood Cliffs, 1966), p. 131.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

at Teschen.⁶² It was reported that such propaganda tactics had taken place for weeks among the miners and in the district generally and that propaganda led directly to Bolshevik outbreaks.⁶³

These men were promising the workmen what they knew could not be fulfilled; namely, a six hour working day for miners at high wages. Also that they would receive foodstuffs at nominal prices, flour for instance at 3k per kilogram. They also told them that the woods on large estates in the neighborhood would be the property of the people if the Polish representatives should be in power here. These statements of the Polish agitators led forty workmen to believe that their interest lay in opposing the Czechoslovak Republic.⁶⁴

Despite the nature of the heated situation in Teschen; and despite the fact that Masaryk and Beneš were given much sympathy at Paris for their claims to Teschen, the precise understanding was that no direct action would be attempted by either side involved in the conflict.⁶⁵ Therefore, when the Czechoslovak attack took place in

⁶²Ibid. Letter, King to Coolidge, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, XII, 325; see also Dmowski's statement regarding "Poles that had invaded Teschen . . .," Council of Ten, January 29, ibid., III, 784. Concerning the outbreak of Bolshevism: see Letter, Captain John Karmazin to A. C. Coolidge, February 3, ibid., XII, 326-327, (Subject: Bolshevism in Bohemia); and Letter, A. C. Coolidge to A.C.N.P., February 5, ibid., XII 328-329.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Letter, King to Coolidge, January 29, ibid., XII, 325.

⁶⁵See Council of Ten, January 22, ibid., III, 733, and text of warning to be issued to belligerent nations Council of Ten, January 24, ibid., III, 715.

Teschen, the Czech delegation in Paris was perplexed, the Great Powers were outraged, and the Prague Government was soon made aware of the jeopardy in which it had placed a favorable settlement of the Teschen question.⁶⁷ The armed conflict initiated by the Czechs did much to damage support for them at Versailles. Heretofore, both Masaryk and Beneš had favorably impressed the influential Allied statesmen with the validity of the Czech claims to Teschen.⁶⁸ However, after the coup de force by the Czechs some of the Great Powers particularly Great Britain became suspicious of Prague's tactics.⁶⁹

While the Czech diplomats in Paris perceived the problems which their nation faced from a European perspective--seeing Czechoslovakia as a part of a larger problem of international settlement--Czech political life itself was not permeated by the same spirit. "The easy success of revolt against Austria, the news of Czech diplomatic achievements which brought international recognition of the young state,

⁶⁶Letter, A. C. Coolidge to A.C.N.P., February 5, ibid., XII, 328-329.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸See Allied Powers individual recognition of sovereignty of Bohemian crown lands, Letter, President Wilson to Secretary of State, September 2, 1918, Lansing Papers, II, 144-145; also Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 783; Council of Ten, January 31, ibid., III, 818-822.

⁶⁹Lloyd George, Memoirs, p. 200-204. See also Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 358-359.

the glorious exploits of the Czechoslovak armies--all of these combined to create a climate of opinion in which the realities of the new states' international position were obscured."⁷⁰

The Eastern European policy of the United States delegation was clearly based on Wilson's Fourteen Point program and the policy of self-determination.⁷¹ This delegation relied upon Wilson's proclamation of November, 1918 to restore and maintain order between Czechs and Poles in Teschen as well as between all other nationalities in now-dead Austria-Hungary.⁷² Wilson had hoped for a smooth transfer of power to the new governments of Eastern Europe until there were governments in Germany and Austria-Hungary which could enter into binding agreements.⁷³ In other words, according to the scope of U. S. foreign policy, all matters pertaining to the armistice were military and not

⁷⁰Perman, op. cit., p. 107, See also Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia, pp. 123-127, 130-131.

⁷¹Letter, the Secretary of State to President Wilson, August 19, 1918, Lansing Papers, II, 139-141; Letter, President Wilson to Secretary of State, August 22, 1918, ibid., II, 141.

⁷²Ibid. See also Lloyd George, Memoirs, pp. 198-200.

⁷³Ibid. See also Letter, Secretary of State to President Wilson, August 19, 1918, Lansing Papers, II, 140-141 and Letter, President Wilson to the Secretary of State, ibid., p. 141.

political questions.⁷⁴ As news of the little wars in Eastern Europe reached Paris, however, three of the American Plenipotentiaries, Secretary of State Robert Lansing, General Tasker Bliss and Ambassador Henry White, urged Wilson to issue a joint statement--an allied warning--to the Poles, Czechoslovaks, Jugo-slavs and Italians against the use of force to obtain territory and that the Peace Conference would not recognize the boundaries acquired by force.⁷⁵

The American Delegation in Paris was organized as the American Commission to Negotiate Peace (ACNP); they included groups of intelligence agents and observers fully alert to the activities occurring in Central Europe.⁷⁶ As the reports from their observances were received by the United States' "Polish experts" in Paris, the American Delegation certainly began to support Poland.⁷⁷ As a matter of fact, Robert H.

⁷⁴Letter, The Special Representative (House) to the Secretary of State, October 31, 1918, ibid., II, 169-170.

⁷⁵See text of agreement Council of Ten, January 24, P. P. C., 1919, III, 715. See also Lloyd George, Memoirs, pp. 198-200.

⁷⁶Minutes of Commissioners Plenipotentiary (A.C.N.P.), February 5, P. P. C., 1919, XI, 16-18; Minutes of the Daily Meetings of Commissioners Plenipotentiary, March 20, ibid., XI, 123. For list of names for Commissions concerned with the Teschen Question see Directories of the Peace Conference, Territorial Questions, ibid., III, 81-83.

⁷⁷Letter, A. C. Coolidge to A. C. N. P., January 27, ibid., XII, 312-313; Letter, R. J. Kerner to A. C. Coolidge, January 24, ibid., XII, 313-317; Letter, A. C. Coolidge to A. C. N. P., January 27, ibid., XII, 317-322; see also Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 112.

Lord, a Harvard professor who was the expert on Austria-Hungary and Poland, states that "the Poles have a good title . . . to the Duchy of Teschen in which the large [r] majority of the population is Polish."⁷⁸ And too, Charles Seymour, a Yale professor and Chief of Austria-Hungary Division of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, held that the Duchy of Teschen "is an old Polish land . . . which still shows a majority of Polish population."⁷⁹

The summarized reports of these American experts suggested that in accordance with the ethnic principle of self-determination, Czechoslovakia should be given only a small portion of the Teschen province, the western district of Frydek; and that the boundary line should be fixed according to ethnological principles.⁸⁰ The American experts on the Teschen Question buttressed this proposal that the Duchy be divided between Czechs and Poles since they considered Czechoslovakia's claim to have been founded upon "a weak basis of historic rights."⁸¹ Finally the American plenipotentiaries supported the Poles more than the Czechs. Paderewski was well-acquainted with Colonel House who had

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Komarnicki, Rebirth, p. 321; see also Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Peace Conference, I, 203-204.

urged Wilson to "adopt a friendly policy toward the Polish State."⁸² On 12 January, 1919 when Paderewski appealed to House for arms and ammunitions, House recommended to Wilson that he reinforce Poland's diplomatic position by giving her formal recognition.⁸³ House argued that Wilson should use his influence to urge the Allied Powers to accede to these wishes. Wilson took House's advice and supported Poland's cause over the vehement objections of the British and French delegations who anticipated that Poland would misuse any military help given her and would ultimately present the Peace Conference with additional territorial faits accomplis.⁸⁴

Throughout the deliberations at the Conference concerning Teschen, France sided with the Czechoslovaks.⁸⁵ The French Government had formally recognized the historic rights of the Czechs in a note addressed to Benes⁸⁶ on June 30, 1918.

⁸²Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 113. Charles Seymour, Intimate Papers of Colonel House, III, 13 and IV, 261. Gives an account of Dmowski's conversation with Colonel House in which he explained the precarious situation of Poland resulting from its location. . . . See also Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia, p. 120; and Raymond Leslie Buell, Poland: Key to Europe (New York, 1939), pp. 16-17, 68-69.

⁸³Ibid; see also Notes on Conversations Council of Ten, January 21, P. P. C., 1919, III, 654; and Conversation, Council of Ten, January 21, ibid., III, 669.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Council of Ten, January 22, ibid., III, 672-673. During these deliberations Polish policy in territorial disputes was thoroughly questioned in light of its (Poland's) appeal to the Supreme Council for military forces, aid and munitions.

In this correspondence, Stephen Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, made a pledge to "support Czechoslovakia's aspirations to become independent within the historic boundaries of your territories."⁸⁶ Furthermore, the French wanted a strong Central Europe to combat the German menace.⁸⁷

Although France remained the strongest supporter of Czechoslovakia, the French delegation was appalled over the occupation of Teschen by Czech troops.⁸⁸ France had intended to settle the Teschen question by quietly occupying the area and later handing Teschen over to Czechoslovakia.⁸⁹

The British Delegation at the Peace Conference also supported the Czechoslovak claim to Teschen intermittently.⁹⁰ Great Britain like France had given de jure recognition to the Czechoslovak State during the latter part of 1918; and Britain had pointed out that the Czechs were entitled to the boundaries of the former Czech kingdom.⁹¹ After the Czech coup de force, however, the British Delegation, in spite of their having previously approved Czech claims to

⁸⁶Pichon to Benes, June 30, 1918. Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 37. See also Letter, Secretary of State to President Wilson, August 19, 1918, Lansing Papers, II, 139-141.

⁸⁷Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 114. Komarnicki, Rebirth, p. 366.

⁸⁸Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 114-120.

⁸⁹Letter, R. C. Foster to A. C. Coolidge, January 27, P. P. C., 1919, XII, 318-321; see also Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 120.

⁹⁰Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 783.

⁹¹Ibid; see also Komarnicki, Rebirth, p. 357.

Teschen, were quite unwilling to defend Czech actions.⁹² Led by Prime Minister David Lloyd George who was partial toward Poles and Poland, the British Delegation, began to vote with the United States.⁹³ With two of the Great Powers voting in favor of Poland's claim to Teschen, it was desperately necessary for the Czechoslovaks to solidify their claim.⁹⁴

When the Polish-Czech dispute in Teschen resulted in armed conflict in early 1919, the Peace Conference momentarily postponed the deliberations concerning Germany so that they could investigate both Polish and Czech claims to the Duchy of Teschen.⁹⁵ Shortly before the occurrence of the skirmish in Silesia the Allied statesmen, greatly concerned with the Polish problem had decided to dispatch

⁹²Lloyd George, Memoirs, p. 200-204.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 201-202; see also Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 108-120.

⁹⁵Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 773, 780-784. The first of these meetings was held with both the Polish and the Czechoslovak governments where the Polish claims were heard. The latter of these meetings was held with both governments too, but at this time the Czechs presented their case and the Polish delegates were allowed to refute.

a mission to this nation.⁹⁶ The purpose of this mission was twofold: "to provide reliable information concerning the situation [there] and at the same time to caution the Polish Government against the policy of claims into which it is allowing itself to be drawn."⁹⁷ This mission was to propose measures to help Poland, but it was also to warn the Polish Government against engaging in a thoughtless policy of aggression calculated to "hasten the realization of territorial aspirations and to put the Powers in face of accomplished facts."⁹⁸ The "little war" in Teschen was considered to be serious because this conflict further complicated the Polish problem which gravely concerned the

⁹⁶Council of Ten, January 22, *ibid.*, III, 675. See also Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 358-365; and Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 101. A footnote on this page reads: "Confusion reigns in the names given the different bodies of the Peace Conference in the official records. Contrary to the general practice of designating as committees, subordinate bodies sitting at the seat of the Conference, the groups that dealt with territorial questions were called Commissions; that term was also applied to groups sent on special missions to conduct investigations or provisionally administer in some area". The Committees dealing with the delimitation of the boundaries of Czechoslovakia and Poland were called respectively the Commissions of Czechoslovak Affairs and the Commission on Polish Affairs. Whenever these two commissions combined their reports to be presented to the Supreme War Council, this report was said to have come from the Joint-Commissions .

⁹⁷See "Draft of Instruction for the Delegate of the Allied Government in Poland," Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 779.

⁹⁸Council of Ten, January 12, *ibid.*, III, 471; see also appendix I a note on the situation in Poland, *ibid.*, III, 477-478.

peace conference delegates.⁹⁹ Poland was torn by internal strife, had no reliable army; was economically bankrupt.¹⁰⁰ Now, she was engaged in warfare on three of her fronts.¹⁰¹ And too, the seemingly militant national policy pursued by Poland caused Allied statesmen to have misgivings about her conduct.¹⁰² The mission to Poland had not left Paris when the news of the Teschen incident reached Versailles. With conditions as they were in Poland, the mission had little hope that they could persuade the Poles that forbearance and not aggression was necessary.¹⁰³ Therefore, it was clear that the Teschen dispute had to be solved at Paris through negotiations, so that the peace of the area could be assured.¹⁰⁴ It was to this end that the Supreme War Council worked as it began deliberations on the Teschen Question on January 29, 1919.

The Polish claims to the Duchy of Teschen Silesia were made by Roman Dmowski, leader of the Polish Party National Democrats, and Erazm Piltz, a Polish diplomat who was to

⁹⁹Council of Ten, January 29, ibid., III, 772-779; see also appendix to the minutes of this meeting, "Draft of Instructions for the Delegates of the Allied Governments in Poland."

¹⁰⁰Letter, F. R. King to A. C. Coolidge, January 29, ibid., XII, 324-325.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.; see also Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 111.

¹⁰³Ibid. see also, Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 779.

¹⁰⁴Lloyd George, Memoirs, pp. 198-204.

become Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in independent Poland.¹⁰⁵ According to the Poles, whose chief spokesman was Dmowski, the province of Teschen was inhabited partly by Czechs and Poles, the latter of the two groups being the great majority.¹⁰⁶ Dmowski asserted that areas where the majority of the inhabitants was Polish should be regarded as Polish and where the majority of the population was Czech the territory should be regarded as Czech.¹⁰⁷ Dmowski further related that an agreement to this effect had been reached by local organizations in November, 1918 and this agreement had been approved by the Polish Government but not by the Czechoslovak Government.¹⁰⁸ Dmowski concluded this portion of his statement by mentioning that the Prague Government had recently sent troops into this area and that if these troops remained undue bloodshed must follow.¹⁰⁹ Dmowski urged that the only settlement was that these troops should be withdrawn to the territory as arranged according to the terms of the November agreement, pending a settlement by the Peace Conference.¹¹⁰ Here, Dmowski had

¹⁰⁵Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia, pp. 119, 127, 129.

¹⁰⁶Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III 777-779.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 778-779.

¹¹⁰Dispatch #24, Frederic R. King to A. C. Coolidge, January 29, ibid., XII, 323-324.

employed the ethnic principle of self-determination in laying Poland's claim to Teschen. In a latter statement, Dmowski suggested that to establish boundaries for Poland the Conference must start with the boundries that existed in 1772 when Poland was first partitioned. According to the Polish statesman this settlement was necessary in view of conditions in Poland.¹¹²

According to the Austrian statistics of 1910 about 55% of the population of the Teschen Duchy was Polish-speaking. The Polish Delegates pointed out the fact that the boundary line of November 5, 1918 gave the Czech side 519 [square] kilometres with 14,000 inhabitants of whom 70% were Czech, 50% Polish and 10% German; the Polish side contained 1,762 [square] kilometres with a population of 293,000 of whom 73% were Polish, 22% German and 5% Czech."¹¹³ Besides indisputable ethnographical reasons for the union of Teschen with the Polish State, the Polish Delegation cited additional reasons of a purely economic nature.¹¹⁴ Of all the Polish

¹¹¹Council of Ten, January 29, ibid., III, 778-779.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³R. L. Buell, Poland: Key to Europe (New York, 1939), pp. 338-340; see also Komarnicki, Rebirth of the Polish Republic, pp. 356-357.

¹¹⁴Polish Delegation at the Peace Conference, Delegation Propaganda: Upper Silesia, Her Economic Union with Other Polish Territories (Paris, 1919). See also, Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 777-778.

territories, Silesia alone (Upper Silesia and Cieszyn Silesia [Teschen]) possessed the coal indispensable to the iron industry.¹¹⁵ The Poles contended that this was the cause of inadequate development of the metallurgic industry in the Polish Territory.¹¹⁶

In 1912 the Congress Kingdom produced 390,000 tons of raw iron in foundaries and imported at the same time 156,000 tons. This production, however, responded only to the very restricted needs of the country. This restriction was due to the political oppressions which paralyzed its economic scope as well as the industrial and technical progress. The demand for iron in the kingdom of Poland was 5-8 times less than in other European Countries not to mention the United States of North America . . . While the consumption of iron [and] coal calculated per head does not exceed more than 0, 19 cubic cwts in the Kingdom of Poland. It is plain to see what would be the economic dependence or even the politics of Poland toward the country which would furnish her with the necessary iron, if Poland, having regained her independence but remaining deprived of Silesia.¹¹⁷

The Poles declared for the production of iron, Polish-Galicia had been absolutely dependent upon production from Austrian Silesia and Moravia, before the Great War.¹¹⁸ Therefore, they concluded that every attempt to develop the metallurgic industry in a Poland deprived of Teschen Silesia would place her, necessarily, on the absolute dependence of the state which had Silesia within its frontiers.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

In addition to these claims made for the whole of Silesia, it was emphasized that the Poles of Teschen had developed a peculiar sense of nationalism long before the outbreak of World War I. These Teschen Poles elected Poles to serve in the Austrian Government.¹²⁰ Further indications of this sense of nationalism lay in the number of social and cultural Polish organizations.¹²¹ All of these points were arguments that the Polish Delegation used to indicate that the Poles in Teschen desired annexation to the Polish State.¹²² A Polish historian writing about the Teschen dispute discussed the ethnographical situation in Teschen:

There was no doubt whatever that the majority of the native population of the Duchy Teschen was Polish in all districts but one, agriculture, mining and industrial. A fair partition on ethnographic and linguistic line was very easy since Czechs lived in a compact mass in one district only adjoining Bohemia . . . This fact is not disputed even by pro-Czech writers.¹²²

While the Polish case rested on economic as well as ethnic principles of self-determination, the Czechoslovak case centered around historic, economic and political considerations. After having heard the Poles claims made that morning of January 29, the Supreme War Council met with the

¹²⁰ Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 362-368.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 356-359. See also Buell, Poland and Czechoslovakia, pp. 338-340.

¹²² Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 356-368.

Czech Delegation in the afternoon. Representing the Czechoslovak State were Edward Beneš, and Karel Kramář.¹²³ Beneš took the lead in establishing the Czech's case for Teschen. His presentation dealt at length on ethnological, statistical and primarily historical and economic factors. At first, Beneš pointed out that the Austrian census (of 1910) left much to be questioned about this data; "For instance, in the case of the town Richvaldt the Austrian statistics gave us the population in 1900: 4,500 Poles against 11 Czechs and in 1910 2,900 Czechs against 3,000 Poles."¹²⁴ This he argued gave a clear idea of the manner in which Austrian statistics were compiled. Nevertheless the Austrian census of 1910 was used throughout the Peace Conference, and that census was based on the "language of intercourse", not on the native tongues of the Teschen inhabitants.¹²⁵ Of the 426,370 inhabitants in the Duchy, 101,138 of them held no citizenship there;¹²⁶ over half of these were Galicians and Bukovinians.¹²⁷ The Czechs argued that the language of

¹²³Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia, pp. 117-119; Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 358-362; Perman, Czechoslovakia, pp. 112-113.

¹²⁴Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 783; see also Council of Ten, September 4, ibid., XIII, 102-106; and ibid., 118-124.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Temperley, History, IV, 354-358; See also Chapter I, p. 4.

¹²⁷R. J. Kerner, Czechoslovakia (Berkeley, 1949), pp. 66-68.

intercourse did not necessarily determine nationality since some Polish inhabitants were not stable elements in the Teschen community.¹²⁸

The historic and economic claims presented were of far greater importance. Benes^v stated that since 1355 the Duchy of Teschen had formed a part of the property of the Crown of Saint Wencelas under feudal law.¹²⁹ In 1858 Habsburg Emperor Francis Joseph, as king of Bohemia, had given the Duchy to Archduke Albert. Then in 1860 the Duchy of Upper and Lower Silesia was separated from Moravia for administrative operations; however, despite the escheating of these lands to Archduke Albert, Francis Joseph at all times acknowledged the individuality of the Bohemian Crown Land.¹³⁰

The economic claims presented by the Czechs at the Peace Conference were ones that had to be given considerable attention.¹³¹ The Czechs maintained that for the Poles the problem concerning Teschen Silesia was only of secondary importance, while for the Czechoslovaks the Teschen problem presented itself as "a vital question on the solution of which depended the very existence of the then young

¹²⁸Temperley, History, IV, 351.

¹²⁹Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 349.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Kerner, Czechoslovakia, pp. 66-68.

republic."¹³² Czechoslovak economic policy was dominated by a desire to create within her territory an economically independent and sovereign state.¹³³ The Czech spokesman pointed out that the most important and richest coal field of the Frystat (Friestat) district formed a part of the mining and industrial complex of Moravska-Ostrava and made it necessary for the Czechs to depend upon Karvin coal and coke.¹³⁴ They insisted that their republic needed this area, and that they would refuse to cede it to Poland.¹³⁵ This mine at Karvin was a part of Moravska-Ostrava called Ostrava-Karvin.¹³⁶ It formed the southwestern part of the Moravian-Silesian-Polish basin and covered approximately 6,920 square kilometres.¹³⁷ The pit coal from this area was essential for the industries in Bohemia and Moravia, and it had given rise to the installation of important Czech enterprises,

¹³²Czechoslovak Delegation at the Peace Conference, Delegation Propaganda: The Problem of Teschen Silesia (Paris, 1919).

¹³³L. Pasvolsky, Economic Nationalism of the Danubian States (New York, 1928), pp. 252-256, 37-38.

¹³⁴Czechoslovak Delegation at the Peace Conference, Propaganda: The Czechoslovaks: Their Struggle and Their Work (Paris, 1919).

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid. Also Joseph Gruber, Czechoslovakia: A Survey of Economic and Social Conditions (New York, 1924), pp. 67-74. See also Map #2, Appendix .

chiefly metallurgic, in the Teschen region as well as in Moravia.¹³⁸ This area was considered the most industrialized portion of the Bohemian Crown Lands and the Czechs maintained that if it should be separated from the Czech industrial region the metallurgic industries would be ruined.¹³⁹

The Czech delegates solidified their arguments by illustrating the fact that the railroad lines, the Oderberg-Jablunkov-Kaschau (Bohomin-Jablankov-Kosici), were absolutely essential to Czechoslovakia.¹⁴⁰ This railway line connected Silesia with northern Slovakia.¹⁴¹ Moreover, it was linked with the railroads of Prague, in Moravia and in Silesia, so that it was the only reliable communications line connecting the three other Czech provinces--Bohemia and Moravia to Slovakia.¹⁴² Since the railroad line traversed the Beshyde Mountains which separate Moravia from Slovakia near Jablunkov (southeast of Teschen) it was considered the only adequate passage leading

¹³⁸ Ibid; see also, Czechoslovak Delegation, Propaganda: The Problem of Teschen Silesia (Paris, 1919), pp. 6-8. Temperley, IV, 354-355; Pasvol'sky, Economic Nationalism, pp. 37-39, 252-255.

¹³⁹ Ibid; see also Council of Ten, September 4, P. P. C., 1919, VIII, 102-106; and Council of Ten, January 29, ibid., III, 782-784.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid; see also Czechoslovak Delegation, Propaganda: The Problem of Teschen Silesia (Paris, 1919) See Map #2

¹⁴² Ibid.

over the mountains and giving access to Slovakia.¹⁴³ The only other pass was in the South of Beshyde Mountains near Vlara; whereas the Jablunkov pass was a double tract railroad the Vlara pass was a mediocre single track railway.¹⁴⁴ The Czechs added that Slovakia had, so far, known such terrible oppression that she would stand now badly in need of help from Bohemia and Moravia. Therefore, the pass of Jablunkov and consequently the Oderburg-Teschen-Jablunkov railroad was considered absolutely indispensable to the Czechoslovaks.¹⁴⁵

The Czechs ended their statements on January 29 by re-emphasizing that the Poles neither required the mines nor the Oderberg-Jablunkov railway.¹⁴⁶ Beneš added that a state bordered on three sides by the Germans who were economically powerful, should not be placed in such a handicapped position.¹⁴⁷ He further contended that it was doubtful if the Polish-speaking population of Teschen truly wanted to be annexed to Poland.¹⁴⁸ If this large minority in Teschen were annexed to the Czechoslovak Republic, however,

¹⁴³ Ibid; see also Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 782-784; and ibid., September 4, VIII, 102-106.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid; see also Council of Ten, April 23, ibid., IV, 609-610.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

they would be given privileges and liberties.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, while the Czechs admitted that the Poles might have had a just claim to Teschen based upon ethnic principles, the Czechs emphasized that their case was more important because of the economic factors involved.¹⁵⁰ It is clear from the manner in which these deliberations were presented that Czechoslovakia, a landlocked state, had aimed not at simple self-sufficiency but at assuring for herself an economic position which would enable her to make maximum use of her resources while preserving her statehood and sovereignty.¹⁵¹

In their initial effort to quickly dispose of the matter, the Allied Statesmen in Paris did not effect a settlement. To the American plenipotentiaries the Czechoslovak State appeared not as a protagonist of peace, stability, and constructive work against Bolshevism, but as an aggressor accused of a breach of the peace.¹⁵² And, although France and Great Britain had previously conceded the legitimacy of

¹⁴⁹Council of Ten, April 23, 1918, ibid., IV, 608-609; also T. S. Woolsey, "Rights of Minorities Under Treaty with Poland," American Journal of International Law, XIV (1920), pp. 392-396.

¹⁵⁰Council of Ten, April 23, 1919, P. P. C., 1919, IV, 609-610; see also Gruber, Czechoslovakia, 67; D. W. Douglas, Transitional Economic Systems: The Polish-Czech Example (London, 1953), pp. 71-80.

¹⁵¹Douglas, Transitional Systems, pp. 71-75; see also, Pasvolsky, Economic Nationalism, pp. 252-255.

¹⁵²Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 113; see also Letter, R. C. Foster to A. C. Coolidge, January 27, 1919, P. P. C., 1919, XII, 318-322; Council of Ten, January 31, 1919, ibid., III, 819.

Czech claims to Teschen, these delegations were also unwilling to defend the recent action taken by the Czechs-- action which helped only to increase distrust of the Czechs by the Great Powers.¹⁵³ Therefore, the Teschen issue was referred to an Allied Mission whose task was to suggest temporary measures for restoring order until a final settlement could be reached by the Paris negotiators.¹⁵⁴ This Mission, which was soon to be dispatched to the area, sought a quick compromise; thus, it incorporated the suggestions of both the Czech and Polish delegations in recommendation that it presented to the Council of Ten.¹⁵⁵ The Mission had drawn a preliminary demarcation line behind which Czech troops were to retire. This line had left about one third of the Duchy in Czech possession including the coal mining district of Karvin, while it divided the railway between the Czechs and Poles.¹⁵⁶ This demarcation line was drawn according to the diplomatic circumstances in Paris; and as a result, it ignored geographic and ethnographic realities and left the maintenance of peace to an Inter-Allied Commission of Teschen.¹⁵⁷ These recommendations were received by the Council of Ten, but it refused to send any Allied troops into the area for the maintenance of

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Council of Ten, January 31, P. P. C., 1919, III, 818-822.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

peace.¹⁵⁸ The Council then ordered the Czechs to withdraw her troops behind the proposed demarcation line; and it forbade the holding of elections in the area pending a final settlement by the Peace Conference.¹⁵⁹ A joint Allied proclamation to this effect (as a Polish-Czech argument) was drafted and was to have been signed first by the Great Powers and then by the Polish and Czech representatives at Paris.¹⁶⁰

The Czechoslovak Delegates were reluctant to sign this agreement because they felt such a tentative arrangement would not satisfy the existing situation in Teschen. Moreover, the Czechoslovaks viewed this draft agreement as an indication that the Allied Powers did not recognize the integrity of the Bohemian Crown Lands, and they believed that this lack of recognition would be an incentive for German and Magyar minorities to further resist the Czechoslovak State.¹⁶¹

Although the draft agreement was prepared for signing January 31, it remained incomplete as such until February 3.¹⁶² Beneš as well as Kramář at first refused to sign the document; and neither would have capitulated but for the interposition of Woodrow Wilson. Wilson was concerned about the situation in Poland and he continuously stressed this

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Council of Ten, February 1, ibid., III, 836-837.

¹⁶² Ibid.; see also Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 117.

point during deliberations.¹⁶³ Wilson was interested specifically in whether or not the Czechs had consented to furnishing a proportion of coal and manufactures to Poland; and whether or not Poland had access by rail to munitions and war materials.¹⁶⁴ It was Wilson's displeasure with the Czechoslovaks disposition that caused Benes capitulation. Threatened with a loss of the support of the United States, Benes[✓] finally agreed to sign.¹⁶⁵

With the appointment of the Commission on Poland, examinations and reports on the situation in the Teschen District would be dispatched directly to the Paris based joint commissions. For a while it appeared as if the Czechoslovaks had entered the territory of Teschen in question and had seized the railroad from Teschen to Jablunkav--contrary to the agreement of November 5, 1918 made by Polish and Czech local authorities. Czech troops were reported to have occupied the mining region and made prisoners of various Polish citizens; they had even arrested certain Polish delegates who were on their way to Paris.¹⁶⁶ When defending their precarious position the Czechs claimed Teschen as an historic right; and in addition, they claimed that their government was forced to occupy this territory to prevent the

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 773.

¹⁶⁵Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 117.

¹⁶⁶Council of Ten, January 31, 1919, ibid., III, 819.

spread of Bolshevism which was rampant in the Polish provinces. On the other hand the commission on Poland had set aside the historic claims and had attempted to fix a provisional line in order to halt the conflict between Czechs and Poles. When neither the Poles nor the Czechs agreed to unconditional withdrawal of their troops, the Czechs expressed a readiness to the withdrawal of both Czech and Polish troops if the area were then occupied by three allied battalions.¹⁶⁷

Since the commission on Poland favored that such a proposal be submitted to the Great Powers for discussion, still other solutions were proposed. The joint commission proposed that the Poles occupy the southern part of Teschen adjoining Galicia and the Czechs occupy the mining region and the railroad north of Teschen. The Czech delegation promptly aired its view that this arrangement would result in the direct contact of the troops of both nations along the rails where disturbances were bound to occur. Finally it was suggested by the French commissioner, Noulons, that if the Allied troops occupied the entire duchy the whole problem would be solved. Still another solution Noulons proposed was that an Inter-Allied Commission be dispatched to Teschen and that it should remain there until the final settlement is reached by the peace conference.¹⁶⁸ This

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 820.

commission would supervise the execution of the agreement and study the statistics and data which would form the basis of the ultimate decision. Finally the Czechs and Poles accepted this proposal which was drawn up as an agreement.¹⁶⁹

On February 3, 1919 an agreement was signed between the Four Great Powers, Czechoslovakia and Poland. This tentative arrangement was to be binding until the Peace Conference could conclude an adequate study the situation in Teschen.¹⁷⁰ The agreement was signed somewhat reluctantly by both Czech and Polish statesmen; as it delimited boundaries for the two states ignoring ethnic, geographic and economic factors since a commission to maintain peace was being dispatched to the Duchy.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 773; see also Letter, R. C. Foster to A. C. Coolidge, January 27, ibid., XII, 318-21, and Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 117.

¹⁷¹Council of Four, March 24, P. P. C., 1919, IV, 471-472; see also Annexures A and B, ibid., IV, 472-475.

CHAPTER III

THE ALLIED COMMISSIONS AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS SURROUNDING THE TESCHEN DISPUTE

In early February of 1919 the Supreme War Council dispatched an Inter-Allied Commission to the Teschen Duchy; it was charged with an awesome responsibility.¹ As an agent of the Great Powers, it was to supervise the execution of the February 3 agreement between Poland and Czechoslovakia;² and, in addition to this, it was "to guard against any conflict between Czechs and Poles in the area."³ Still further instructions were given the commissioners to inquire as to how the Peace Conference could best form a decision definitely fixing the respective frontiers of the Czechs and Poles in contested zones.⁴ Representing the United States on this commission was Marcus A. Coolidge, a

¹For names of Commissions and commissioners see: Directories of the Peace Conference, Territorial Questions United States Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference, 1919, III, 81-84 (Hereafter cited as P.P.C., 1919); see also, Minutes of Commissioners Plenipotentiaries, March 20, ibid., XI, 16, 23, 141.

²Council of Ten, February 1, ibid., III, 836-837.

³Perman, The Shaping of The Czechoslovak State (Leiden, 1962), p. 118. (See footnote 100).

⁴Council of Four, March 24, P.P.C., 1919, IV, 471-472; Annexure B, Proposal for Rendering Effective the Work of the Teschen Commission, ibid., 773.

New England businessman;⁵ Great Britain and Italy were represented respectively by Lieutenant Colonels Coulson and Tissi; and France was represented by a consular officer, Grenard.⁶

As the Duchy of Teschen formed a part of both the Polish and the Czechoslovak borders two other commissions became involved with the Teschen Question: the Commission on Polish Affairs and the Commission on Czechoslovak Affairs.⁷ The result of three commissions studying various aspects of one particular area in dispute and attempting to establish a compromise boundary led to much indecision; each of these commissions recommended different boundary lines.⁸ As early as February 5, 1919--two days after the signing of the Allied Czech-Polish agreement--there were reports from the Inter-Allied Commission at Teschen stating that the terms of the agreement were inadequate to secure the peace of the area.⁹

⁵Ibid.

⁶Directories of the Peace Conference, ibid., III, 119-120; see also Council of Ten, February 1, ibid., III, 840; Council of Ten, February 3, ibid., III, 856-857.

⁷Council of Foreign Ministers, April 23, ibid., IV, 607-608.

⁸Séance, Procés-Verbaux de la Commission, Procés-Verbaux Séance du 31 Mars, 1919. Conférence De La Paix, 1919-20. Recueil Des Actes De La Conference, Partie IV, Commissions de La Conference. (Commissions Des Affaires Polonaise et Tchecoslovaques: Reunies . . .) (Paris, 1929), 5-7.

⁹Letter, A. C. Coolidge to American Commission to Negotiate Peace, February 5, P. P. C., 1919, XII, 328-329.

One of the commissioners asserted further that to maintain peace within the Duchy it would be necessary for the Allied statesmen in Paris to issue a decisive verdict settling the territorial dispute.¹⁰ But the Great Powers in Paris were more concerned with the question of a peace with Germany, and therefore deliberations concerning the Teschen question did not appear on the agenda until the latter part of March.¹¹

The Czechoslovak Commission presented its report to the Peace Conference several days before the March 31st report of the Commission on Polish Affairs.¹² The reports of these commissions were combined and thereafter the two commissions were referred to as the Joint Commissions.¹³ The Joint Commissions recommended that a settlement of the Teschen question be made shortly. Allied statesmen, being somewhat discouraged as to the comparatively petty nature of

¹⁰Perman, Czechoslovak, p. 230.

¹¹Council of Ten, March 11, P. P. C., 1919, IV, 318-320; Council of Foreign Ministers, April 1, ibid., 544-555; note also U. S. (Lansing's) hesitation to consider Teschen settlement as urgent; see, Council of Foreign Ministers, April 23, ibid., p. 610.

¹²Séance, Procès-Verbaux de la Commission, Procès-Verbaux Séance du 31 Mars, 1919, Conférence de la Paix, 1919-20. Recueil des Actes de la Conférence, Partie IV Commissions de la Conférence (Commissions des Affaires Polonaises et Tchéco-slovaques: Réunies . . .), (Paris, 1929), 5-8.

¹³Ibid; see also Council of Foreign Ministers, April 23, P. P. C., 1919, IV, 608-609.

the newly formed Slavic states' squabble on the one hand, and having been baffled by the different proposed boundary lines from the combined commissions on the other--voted to move away from the issue until the three commissions could come to some concerted agreement.¹⁴ When the question of Teschen Silesia was introduced again in early April, a compromise between the two proposed boundary lines from the Joint Commissions seemed imminent as the proposed boundaries differed in minor details only.¹⁵ More delay in coming to an agreement was caused when the viewpoint of the Italian commissioner on the Inter-Allied Commission at Teschen was brought to light. Tissi had maintained that further consideration was due on this question before a settlement could be made primarily because of the peculiar physiognomy of Teschen's character.¹⁶ The commissioner informed the Joint Commission that according to his observations while situated in the Duchy that the ethnic composition of Teschen Silesia was neither Czech nor Polish.¹⁷ Therefore,

¹⁴Council of Foreign Ministers, April 1, ibid., 1919, V, 543-544.

¹⁵Ibid; see also Perman, Czechoslovak, 230; Séance, Procès-Verbaux De La Commission, Procès-Verbaux Séance Du 31 Mars, 1919, Conférence de la Paix, 1919-20, Recueil des Actes de la Conférence 1919-20. (Commissions des Affaires Polonaises et Tchéco-slovaques . . .), (Paris, 1929).

¹⁶Ibid; see also Council of Foreign Ministers, April 23, P. P. C., 1919, IV, 609-612.

¹⁷Ibid.; see also Perman, Czechoslovak, 240-242, 234.

the annexation of such an area to either Poland or Czechoslovakia would not be harmonious with the Wilsonian principles of self-determination.¹⁸ The colonel then recommended that Teschen be given its independence; and the majority of the Inter-Allied Commission agreed to this solution.¹⁹ The French Delegation in Paris as well as its representatives on the commission at Teschen were very much opposed to this suggestion.²⁰ They contended that the region of Teschen was an industrial area and did not have enough agriculture to maintain a viable existence.²¹ Besides, the political sovereignty of such a small area would be illusory anyway. German imperialists would seize both political and economic control and manipulate them to the disadvantage of both Poland and Czechoslovakia.²² When these views were aired before the Council of Foreign Ministers in Paris, the Italian Delegation again reasserted the point of ethnic and economic considerations by pointing to the Polish character of the area and by emphasizing Poland's economic interest there.²³ Furthermore, since the Italian Delegation insisted that its minority opinion be included in the recommendations for settlement, the Supreme War Council received again a recommendation proposing two

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

different boundary lines from the Joint Commissions.²⁴ And again, the result of this action was further delay in the settlement of the dispute.²⁵ Moreover, through the effort of United States' Secretary of State Lansing (who sometimes acted on behalf of Wilson), it was proposed that the delegates in Paris from the two Slavic nations should discuss their dispute and reach an amicable solution.²⁶ Lansing did not consider the Teschen dispute an urgent one; and again, he had hoped that "Poland and Bohemia should attempt to reach a friendly settlement between themselves . . ."²⁷ Lansing had two reasons for suggesting this meeting: first, it would undermine French domination of Central European policy; and, second, it would let Beneš and Paderewski work out a favorable compromise which above all, would not consume time and lengthy debates on the Peace Conference's agenda.²⁸ About a week later, however, Beneš reported to Lansing that Paderewski was uncompromising in his attitude. He persisted in claiming for Poland all Polish-populated areas of the Duchy insinuating, according to Beneš, that Poland's

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.; see also Minutes of Commissioners Plenipotentiary, April 16, P. P. C., 1919, XI, 152-153; ibid., (April 24), p. 163.

prestige was at stake.²⁹ Beneš implied further that the Poles had rejected the Czech suggestion that the Vistula River be the boundary between the two Slavic states.³⁰ Under these circumstances Beneš again referred the matter to the Peace Conference for settlement.³¹

Lansing received Beneš's statement and although he was baffled by the failure of statesmen to reach a diplomatic compromise, Lansing continued to pursue the same course of action which led to similar results.³² Lansing then convinced the Council of Ministers that a settlement between the Poles and Czechs was pending and that a mediator could be assigned to settle any outstanding disputes.³³ Because the Council wanted to dispense with Central European entanglements quickly, Lansing's proposal was accepted; the boundary proposals received from the Joint Commissions were not accepted.³⁴ Once again the Teschen Question was to become embedded in that political strategy which characterized the post-war diplomacy.

²⁹Komarnicki, *Rebirth of the Polish Republic*, (London, 1957), pp. 365-366; Perman, *Czechoslovak*, 253.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Perman, *Czechoslovak*, pp. 238-240. (In a footnote Perman adds "Beneš had offered to cede the district of Beilsko . . . Paderewski had rejected this offer)."

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴*Ibid.*

Meanwhile, at Prague and Warsaw as well as in the Duchy of Teschen the delay in reaching a decisive diplomatic settlement appears to have resulted in several negative repercussions. The Teschen dispute did not effectively suit the plans of President Masaryk. The keypoint of his idea for a post-war European reorganization was to incorporate the smaller central states in a barrier which would yield an anti-German force extending from the Baltic to the Mediterranean.³⁵ According to this Masaryk-Beneš blueprint the Slavic nations--Poland, Czecho-slovakia, Jugoslavia--would have formed a bond of political-economic relations based upon their peculiar interests in preventing Teutonic domination of the Balkans and the East.³⁶ Masaryk had pursued this notion actively before the close of the war; while he was in the United States, he had successfully organized the Democratic Mid-European Union.³⁷ This organization also proposed to weld Czechoslovakia, Poland, Jugoslavia, Roumania and Greece into such a bloc that, in concert, they would exercise an influential position in peace negotiations.³⁸ Quite in harmony with that policy,

³⁵Ibid., p. 99.

³⁶Leo Pasvolsky, Economic Nationalism of the Danubian States (New York, 1928), Chapter XIV; see also, Dorothy W. Douglas, Transitional Economic Systems: The Polish-Czech Example (London, 1953), Chapters II, IV.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

Beneš had sought to secure Allied consent to claim the lands of historic Czechoslovakia. As it has been pointed out, Czechoslovakia had succeeded in her earlier attempts to secure such recognition. Yet, as time progressed and the Teschen coup de force occurred, this "secured recognition" jeopardized itself accordingly.

In Warsaw the diplomatic tactics imposed by the statesmen seemed to have worked well in Poland's favor for a period of time. Poland had acquired the general sympathy of the United States through successive diplomatic channels before the close of the Great War.³⁹ Much consideration had been given the fact that the United States itself had a large Polish minority.⁴⁰ And too, Paderewski and Colonel House were personal friends. It seems to have been the more personal alliances between the Poles and some U. S. delegates coupled with the fact that Poland was faced with upheaval on three of her four fronts that caused the United States to firmly support Poland.⁴¹

The Warsaw Government continuously maintained its ethnic right to claim Teschen and conceived the notion rather early that given time the inhabitants of Teschen themselves

³⁹Komarnicki, Rebirth, Chapter III; Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia, (Englewood, 1966) p. 120; Bernadotte E. Schmitt, editor, Poland (Berkeley, 1947), pp. 73-74, 77; see also Edward M. House and Charles Seymour, editors, What Really Happened at Paris (New York, 1921), Chapter IV; and Minutes of Commissioners Plenipotentiary, April 24, P. P. C., 1919, XI, 163.

⁴⁰Ibid. ⁴¹Ibid.; see also Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 113.

would make their will known.⁴² The Warsaw strategists persisted in saying that the Polish Government had taken no active part in the troop occupation of Teschen in December, 1918.⁴³ Warsaw maintained that the troop occupation as well as the proposed elections of representatives to the Warsaw Diet, which were to have been held in January, had been conceived by the local Teschen authorities.⁴⁴ Therefore, when Paderewski was asked by Lansing to reach a friendly negotiated settlement, Warsaw's strategy again paid off as she persisted in demanding strict ethnographic boundaries.⁴⁵

In the Duchy of Teschen Silesia, the situation had assumed an explosive nature.⁴⁶ The Inter-Allied Commission dispatched reports to the Paris-based Joint Commissions emphasizing the fact that as the executive body in Teschen, it had in fact no authority to execute its administrative program.⁴⁷ Since the Council of Ten had refused to send any Allied troops into the area, the administrative power of the

⁴²Council of Heads of Delegations, September 5, P. P. C., 1919, VIII, 122; Komarnicki, Rebirth, p. 358.

⁴³Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 784; see similar statement by Dmowski and Paderewski, Council of Delegations, September 5, ibid., VIII, 118-119, 122.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Meetings of Commissioners Plenipotentiary, July 8, ibid., XI, 287; ibid., July 23, 337; ibid., August 13, 381; see also Minutes of Commissioners and Technical Advisors (A.C.N.P.), July 8, ibid., 287; ibid., August 6, 369-370.

⁴⁷Ibid., XI, 337; see also Perman, Czechoslovak, p. 115.

commission was seriously hampered.⁴⁸ Members of the Teschen Commission had also been reporting to their various Paris colleagues that violations of the February 3 agreement were a common occurrence.⁴⁹ Other reports were received in Paris that the program of food distribution and general rehabilitation was being hampered because of the shortage of coal.⁵⁰ This resulted from an abrupt drop in the output of the Teschen mines since political upheaval had beset the area.⁵¹

Still other factors of political consequence hampered a satisfactory settlement of the territorial dispute. In Warsaw as in Prague there were strong nationalistic factions to be appeased; and accordingly the sentiments of such factions had to be considered by the politicians and diplomats of each Slavic state.⁵² In Czechoslovakia, Prime Minister Kramář held the most important political office. Being a devout advocate of nationalism and Panslavism, he was much less inclined to seek a peaceful settlement of

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 336-338.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Meeting of Commissioners and Technical Advisors, A.C.N.P., September 3, P. P. C., 1919, 414-415; see also, Council of Four, June 9, ibid., VI, 254-258; Council of Five, July 12, ibid., VII, 116-117.

⁵²Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia, pp. 117-119, 123-132; see Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 355-358; and, Perman, Czechoslovak, pp. 250-255.

territorial disputes through negotiations.⁵³ As a matter of fact, when appearing before the Supreme War Council Kramář had counter-balanced Polish claims to Teschen by emphasizing the indebtedness of the Great Powers to Czechoslovakia.⁵⁴ He argued that Czechoslovakia had occupied the Duchy with proper justification since the Poles had sought to acquire Teschen by force; and too, he Kramář had been "informed by France and Great Britain that the Czechoslovaks were entitled to occupy the historic boundaries of the old Czech Kingdom."⁵⁵ Kramář was supported in his views by the majority of Czechoslovak cabinet members who were radical nationalists.⁵⁶ Generally speaking, Czech public opinion was characterized, at the same time, by an exuberant nationalistic spirit.⁵⁷

In Poland the internal political situation was somewhat similar to that of its southern neighbor.⁵⁸ Poland's Chief of State, Pilsudski, who viewed Russia and Bolshevism as the principal enemies of an independent Poland, was more

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Council of Ten, January 29, P. P. C., 1919, III, 783; Council of Five, September 5, ibid., XI, 105.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.; Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia, pp. 117-119; Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 107.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia, pp. 117-119, 123-132.

inclined toward a government based upon socialist principles.⁵⁹ Pilsudski, however, was soon to find himself in disagreement with Roman Dmowski, leader of the National Democrats and the Paris delegation.⁶⁰ Dmowski, to some extent, shared the Pan-Slavic views of Kramář: believing that for all Slavs, Russian leadership was needed-although Tsarist oppression in Russian Poland made this stand more difficult.⁶¹ Nevertheless, in earlier attempts, Dmowski had tried to lead his National Democratic party in a way that would strengthen chances of a Polish-Russian understanding.⁶² This was also the policy that he had proposed to Kramář when the Slavic Congress met at Prague in 1908.⁶³ On the other hand, Pilsudski could not envision such possibilities with the Tsarist regime.⁶⁴ As Masaryk and Beneš had, Pilsudski, too had viewed the peculiar situation of his native land from the vantage point that other nations had offered him during his pre-war travels.⁶⁵ He had developed the notion that Polish socialism had its beginnings among the emigres of

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 119; Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 40, 49-51.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Heymann, Poland and Czechoslovakia, p. 119.

⁶⁵Ibid.

France, England and Switzerland.⁶⁶ Therefore, he hoped to pattern the new Polish republic in light of this constitutional ideal.

The question of Teschen Silesia did not reappear on the agenda of the Peace Conference between April and July of 1919. Nevertheless events transpired in Teschen as well as in Paris which were to influence the progress of successful settlement. By early summer, middle Europe had become the scene of still another bitter entanglement between Czechs, Slovaks and Magyars.⁶⁷ Again, the Great Powers in Paris were displeased that the peace could not be kept in such areas; some reflection of this attitude was witnessed in the hesitancy of the Council to decide in favor of nations engaged in such conflicts.⁶⁸ At any rate, by now it was generally agreed that a settlement of the Teschen issue required more time for solution since neither the Commission, the Council nor the Czechs and Poles could reach an agreement satisfactory to both nations.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Council of Four, June 9, P. P. C., 1919, VI, 254-258.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Council of Five, July 12, ibid., VII, 116-117. Also; Meetings of Commissioners Plenipotentiary, July 28, ibid., XI, 369.

⁶⁹Minutes of Steering Committee (A.C.N.P.), July 3, ibid., XI, 456; Council of Five, July 12, ibid., VII, 116-117.

The Allied chief commissioner for Polish Affairs appeared before the Supreme Council on July 12. He informed the council that although the area in dispute had been discussed at length there was as yet no solution.⁷⁰ Benes and Paderewski had not come to an amicable agreement, and the population affected had been displeased, reportedly, with the Commission's decision to compensate Czechoslovakia by giving her Orawa.⁷¹ The United States delegation affirmed the validity of the stalemate in negotiations by stating that a recent delegation from the Orawa area had come to Paris in protest.⁷² This delegation had been received by Woodrow Wilson perhaps because it claimed to represent 50,000 persons.⁷³ Thus the President strongly favored a reanalysis of the Teschen Question in light of the new minor reservations.⁷⁴ The British and French delegates were in agreement with Wilson's view on this matter.⁷⁵ And, although it was mentioned that conflict in the area was continuing it was agreed that the commissions should reexamine the situation to find a new proposal.⁷⁶ Finally, the Council re-adopted the Lansing proposal.⁷⁷ This proposal stated that Paderewski and Benes should negotiate

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

the disputed matter, and it added that in light of the report expected from Joint Commissions that the Poles and Czechs be granted ten days to conclude their negotiations.⁷⁸

On August 6 some discussion of Teschen Silesia took place in a meeting of American plenipotentiaries. It was decided here that the Polish and Czech statesmen were unable to reach an agreement acceptable to both parties.⁷⁹ They both wanted the Allied Powers to decide some settlement.⁸⁰ These commissioners noted further that since April a great deal had occurred in Teschen and this fact alone required study.⁸¹ The conclusions of the American commissioners thus became representative of the report presented to the Council.⁸² It stated that "as far as political considerations were concerned, the two commissions had felt that it was not their function to be guided by them [Teschen Commission] in tracing the boundary since considerations were outside the scope of their activities and were under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Supreme Council."⁸³ The recommended boundary lines divided the industrial area and broke up

⁷⁸Ibid; see also, Council of Five, August 7, ibid, VII, 612.

⁷⁹Ibid; see also Minutes Commissioners and Technical Advisors, A. C. N. P., August 6, ibid, XI, 369-370.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid; also Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 244.

⁸³Perman, Czechoslovakia, p.244.

the railway line; and, it pointed out that

While from the ethnographic point of view the Polish claims to the 3 districts . . . are fully justified from the standpoint of economics and communications, the granting of the coal basin of Karwina and of the railroad Oderberg [Bohumin] Jablunkan [Jablunkov] would offer most serious impediments for the Czechoslovaks. On the one hand they would become dependent on Poland in production of coal and coke and on the other they would be forced to construct expensive railway connections between the mining district of Mahresch-Ostrau and Slovakia.⁸⁴

The Commissions' report touched off much undesired reaction in the Duchy of Teschen. According to reports, Polish miners had gone on strike some time before because they thought that the coal which they were mining would not be going to Poland.⁸⁵ More recently, the Czechs had done likewise; their reason for having done so was that they would not work to produce coal which would be sent to Poland.⁸⁶ The result of these occurrences in Teschen had a great impact on other central European states.⁸⁷ Because the year was a critical one for central Europe, the control and "guaranteed equitable distribution of coal during such

⁸⁴Minutes Commissioners Plenipotentiary, August 20, P. P. C., 1919, XI, 392; see also Minutes Commissioners and Technical Advisors, A. C. N. P., September 3, ibid., 412-413.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Letter, A. W. DuBois to the Secretary of State, September 21, ibid., XII, 574-575. Minutes, Commissioners and Technical Experts A. C. N. P., July 23, ibid., XI, 336-337; Minutes Commissioners Plenipotentiary, July 25, ibid., 349-350.

period" was necessary to assure th survival of many of the smaller central European states.⁸⁸

On September 4 and 5, after having failed to conclude a negotiated settlement, Czech and Polish statesmen re-appeared before the Great Powers. Beneš[✓] was heard first. He explained the point at issue with the aid of maps and insisted that the problem should be viewed from four angles: ethnographic, historic, economic and political.⁸⁹ The Czech statesman stated that there had been a systematic attempt in Teschen to weaken ethnographic ties favorable to Czechoslovakia.⁹⁰ This, he stated, could be seen in the fact that German and Polish elements were generally grouped together since they were always able to agree in opposition to the Czechs.⁹¹ He added that Austrian authorities had assisted in the Polanizing of the historic Czech area.⁹² Above all, Beneš[✓] urged that the economic argument as he presented it be recognized. Since Czechoslovakia was an industrial country, she was dependent upon a continuous supply of coal; on the other hand, statistics showed that Poland imported very little coal from Teschen.⁹³ Furthermore, the most important railway line maintaining communications between Slovakia and the disputed districts ran through

⁸⁸ Council of Five, September 4, ibid., VII, 102-106.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

Teschen. This railroad, he asserted, was "absolutely necessary" for the transport of the products of Czechoslovakia; and if the supply of coal upon which she depended were taken from her, she would have to rely upon Poland for the essential elements of her existence.⁹⁴ Finally Beneš concluded with a statement concerning the political situation in Czechoslovakia. He pointed out that the Czech nationalistic spirit had been greatly aroused by the incident at Teschen.⁹⁵ More recently, due to the unstable conditions surrounding Czech border disputes, the people were beginning to lose faith in the Entente as well as in Beneš as a statesman.⁹⁶ Beneš pointed out that he had offered to make several concessions in the matter; they were unacceptable to the Polish statesmen.⁹⁷ As a result he now feared that the policy which he had pursued was a difficult one since it exposed him to great protest and indignation.⁹⁸ In closing, he stated that whereas Teschen was an area essential to the economic development of his nation it would always be of secondary importance to Poland.⁹⁹

The Polish delegation was heard by the Supreme Council on September 5. Dmowski took the lead in presenting Polish

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid., (September 5,) pp. 118-124.

claims. At first he commented that he did not wish to appear before the Great Powers as a belligerent but rather as a keeper of the peace.¹⁰⁰ He went on to reassure the diplomats that his Slavic nation and its sister to the south would ever strive to maintain friendly relations.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, under these terms it was only right that the Poles in Teschen belong to Poland.¹⁰² He argued that as a statesman he wished not to base his case on statistical data, but more precisely on the national sentiments of the populace effected.¹⁰³ "His thesis was that the country Teschen was not so much ethically Polish as it was sentimentally and culturally Polish."¹⁰⁴ He went on to maintain that the "Austrian government had been more anti-Polish in Teschen than anti-Czech because their strongest adversaries in the area were Poles."¹⁰⁵ Along economic lines he declared that Poland had no coal of the quality of that derived from the Karnin basin because that could be converted to coke.¹⁰⁶ Dmowski insisted that the Oderberg-Kaschau line was the principle communications linkage between Berlin and Budapest.¹⁰⁷ Thus it was not a necessity for Bohemia but for Poland, especially when Upper Silesia was annexed to the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Polish Republic.¹⁰⁸ Dmowski concluded his case with an intensive statement shrouded with romantic nationalism. He reiterated that it was essential that the two neighboring nations maintain good relations because it would be their duty to be the guardians of the peace.

To subject a minority population of either state to the other would bring about neither peace nor good relations.¹⁰⁹ Dmowski asked that the application of the national principle be applied here, and Teschen be annexed to the Polish Republic.¹¹⁰

Having heard the cases from both the Polish and Czechoslovak statesmen, the Great Powers were still unable to reach a satisfactory decision acceptable to both parties.¹¹¹ Paderewski, who had personally maintained close relations with various Allied delegations, offered to bear half the cost of constructing a railway for the Czechoslovak state if it would peacefully cede Teschen.¹¹² He played upon the fact, perhaps to change the image had by the United States, British, and Italian Delegations, that it was Czechoslovakia and not Poland who in every instance had made concessions for a peaceful settlement. Paderewski's point was well

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Council of Five, September 10, ibid., VIII, 175-178; September 16, ibid., pp. 184-85.

¹¹¹Council of Five, (September 5,), ibid., 123.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 178.

received by the Council which again referred the matter to the Joint Commissions.¹¹³ This was done primarily because the French delegation refused to accept the boundaries recommended by the commission. Clemenceau bluntly refused to accept a line which would deprive the Czechoslovak state of both the coal mines and the railroads.¹¹⁴ Instead he proposed that the compromise line drawn by Benes be accepted. The British delegation, however, was adamantly opposed to this suggestion.¹¹⁵ Thus Clemenceau proposed that the entire matter be referred back to the commissions, which, he surmised, would surely draft another proposal.¹¹⁶

The chief commissioner for the Joint Polish and Czechoslovak Commissions appeared before the Council of the Heads of Delegations on September 11, 1919. In accordance with the directions of the Council this joint body had met and discussed the matter of Teschen.¹¹⁷ "As a result they were obliged to recognize the impossibility of defining a frontier line between Czechoslovakia and Poland acceptable to all Delegations."¹¹⁸

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Council of Five, September 11, ibid., VIII, 184-185; (see annex C for text of Joint Report Presented to Supreme Council by the Commission on Polish and the Commission on Czecho-Slovak Affairs on the Question of Teschen).

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid.; see texts of Majority and Minority reports, ibid., pp. 194-196.

While the majority of the Commission (American, British, Italian and Japanese Delegations) declared that they still adhered to the conclusions of the majority Report from the joint commissions, the French Delegation proposed a "fresh line which the majority found themselves unable to accept."¹¹⁹ The report stated further that if the majority report proposed by the Commissions were accepted, then the task of determining the economic and railway concessions which Poland should concede to Czechoslovakia should be entrusted to the Peace Conference and further guaranteed by a treaty.¹²⁰ The proposal concluded that if this solution proposed by the majority of the Commissions was still unacceptable to the Supreme Council, then the "majority considers that the only manner of arriving at an alternative solution of the question is by a plebiscite."¹²¹ Jules Cambon, Chairman of the Joint Commissions, added that neither Benes^Y nor Dmowski could be brought to accept the boundary lines drawn by the Commission.¹²²

It was the British delegate who questioned the feasibility of a plebiscite in Teschen Silesia.¹²³ Balfour said that he feared that the result of a plebiscite in Teschen would be to deprive the Czechs not of 40% of the coal, but of

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 195.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 184.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Ibid.

100%.¹²⁴ He emphasized that since the territory was Polish and the Commissions attributed it to Czechoslovakia because of the railway connecting Bohemia with Slovakia, that surely this rail line would become Polish property in the event of a plebiscite.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, it was finally agreed that a plebiscite should be held in the Duchy of Teschen and in the districts of Spisz and Orava.¹²⁶ The detailed organization of this plebiscite was referred to the Joint Commission for report and examination.¹²⁷

The report of the Joint Commissions on Czechoslovak and Polish affairs concerning the organization of the plebiscite in the Teschen-Spisz-Orava districts was submitted for approval by the Council on September 22 of 1919.¹²⁸ In addition to this report Cambon read a letter that had been received from Beneš. The letter requested that the arrangements for the plebiscite include special provisions concerning the right of option of the population in the territory where the plebiscites were to be conducted.¹²⁹ Under the right of option the population of Teschen would have the right to opt either for Poland or for Czechoslovakia.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 186.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 197.

¹²⁷Council of Five, September 22, ibid., VIII, 300.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 311 (see text appendix C).

¹²⁹Ibid., pp. 300, 305.

Cambon, however, expressed the viewpoint of the Joint Commission relative to Beneš's request.¹³⁰ This view was that the question raised by Beneš ought not be dealt with in the draft report submitted for the approval of the Council.¹³¹ The Commissions held that it was for the Allied and Associated Powers to enter into such agreements with the Slavic states.¹³² Finally Cambon requested that an Inter-Allied Mission be dispatched to occupy the area where the plebiscite was to take place.¹³³ The latter request was debated at length; after which it was concluded

. . . that members of the Inter-Allied Commission charged with organizing the plebiscites should not be chosen from among the members of the Inter-Allied Commission now at Teschen;

. . . that members of the Inter-Allied Commission be nominated as soon as possible, with the reservation that the American representatives would only participate unofficially until the Treaty was ratified by the United States' Senate.¹³⁴

On September 27, 1919 signatures were affixed, by the Allied and Associated Powers, to a treaty relative to the organization of a plebiscite in Teschen, Spisz and Orava.¹³⁵ With the conclusion of this agreement the major work of this Council concerning the Teschen Question was completed.¹³⁶ Yet the dispute over Teschen was not settled.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 300.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., pp. 300-301

¹³³ Ibid., p. 305.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Hans Roos, A History of Modern Poland: From the Formation to the Present Day (New York, 1966), pp. 86-89.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Although much of the work involved in the settlement of territorial dispute was conducted by various missions in these disputed zones, perhaps even more of a chore was the work assigned to the joint commissions. On the one hand the Interallied Teschen commission made recommendations to the joint commissions in Paris; on the other hand, the joint commission was composed of both pro-Czechoslovak as well as pro-Polish forces. While American commissioners were more sympathetic to the Pole's case, France was more favorably disposed to the case made by the Czechs. Therefore, it appears that much of the delay to reach a settlement in Teschen was in part due to the failure of the Joint Commissions to present a conclusive report before the Supreme Council. Finally in early autumn, 1919 after three boundary proposals had been found unacceptable and after negotiations between Paderewski and Benes had failed the Joint Commissions recommended that a plebiscite be held to settle the dispute.

The idea of holding a plebiscite in the area was not a new one. It had been suggested as early as April, 1919 by the Italian delegation. At that time, however, both the Czechs and the Poles had wanted a decision handed down by the Supreme Council; both states believing its case to be stronger than the other. By September, however, the Czech diplomats were willing to agree to plebiscite. The rising popularity of radical Czech groups within Teschen seemed to assure a Czech victory. On the other hand, the Poles seemed to have been assured of victory also.

When Benes^y and Paderewski agreed to accept a settlement by plebiscite a new commission was formed. This mission was to supercede all other allied missions in Teschen. More precisely, this mission was to finally conclude the settlement for peace in Teschen.

SETTLEMENT OF THE TESCHEN DISPUTE

CHAPTER IV

During the winter of 1919 the Paris Peace Conference concluded its work; the Conference of Ambassadors then became the body which concerned itself with unfinished business.¹ At the Conference of Ambassadors each power was represented by its Ambassador in France.² Thus diplomacy necessarily reflected the nationalistic aspirations of a country's foreign policy.³ Recent developments in Danubian Europe indicated that the Masaryk-Benes plan was, at best, impractical.⁴ Moreover the French policy to establish a central European political bloc of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia had failed.. Instead, with the outbreak of the Czechoslovak-Hungarian war the foreign policy of Poland and Hungary became actuated by the mutual desire for a common Polish-Hungarian frontier obtainable at the expense of the Czecho-Slovak State.⁵

¹D. Perman, The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State, (Leiden, 1962), pp. 256, 260.

²Ibid., pp. 255-259.

³H.M.V. Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference (London, 1921), pp.262-263.

⁴Council of Five, September 10, United States Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference, 1919, VIII, 177. (Hereafter cited as P.P.C., 1919).

⁵Perman, Czechoslovakia, p256.

The intentions became evident in June 1919 when Hungarian Forces in eastern Slovakia penetrated all the way to the Galician frontier. Polish forces then moved swiftly into the mountains district of Spisz in northern Slovakia aiding the Hungarian strategy of cutting Slovakia in two and hampering Czech defense of Slovakia and Carpatho-Ruthenia.

As the delegates to the peace conference were discharged from their duties, and as new representatives were named, the balance of power shifted. Whereas Poland had been favored by the Great Powers at Versailles; Czechoslovakia was apparently more favored by the Conference at Spa.⁶ Political diplomacy in Europe had changed also; Germany now had a share in the decision-making. Both the Poles and the Czechs were unsure about how the Germans would vote concerning their claims to Teschen. And too, now both Czechoslovakia and Poland had misgivings as to the result of a plebiscite since the German population carried what amounted to a block vote.⁷

At the Paris Peace Conference during the deliberations on Teschen the American Delegation had played an important

⁶Ibid., 260-275; also Titus Komarnicki, Rebirth of the Polish Republic (London, 1957), p. 355.

⁷Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 266; Komarnicki, Rebirth, Chapter III; see also, Notes of the Heads of Delegations, September 22, P. P. C., 1919, VIII, 305.

role in decision-making.⁸ After the United States Senate rejected the Versailles Treaty, however, the country exerted less influence in post war European politics.⁹ Important decisions were made at meetings of the Allied Prime Ministers which were held at independent international conferences. Thus the United States, while represented on the Conference of Ambassadors by Hugh Wallace, was not represented by its Secretary of State at the Spa Conferences when the Teschen dispute was finally settled.¹⁰

It was in early November 1919 when the Inter-Allied Commission of Teschen began concluding its mission in the Duchy. Its assignment was to be superceded by that assignment given the Inter-Allied Plebiscite Commission at Teschen. The new mission was charged with the responsibility of organization of a plebiscite in the area. It was to proceed to the Czech and Polish Governments "in the shortest

⁸The United States had dispatched commissions to Central and Eastern Europe during the interim period of the Peace Conference. These commissioners corresponded with its central body in Paris, American Commission to Negotiate Peace (A.C.N.P.). See Instructions for Commissions, March 25, ibid., XII, 745-747.

⁹Notes of a Meeting of Heads of Delegations, September 22, ibid., VIII, 205; see also, The Secretary of State to the Minister in Czechoslovakia (Crane), December 31, 1919, United States Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference, 1920, (3 Vols, 1942-47) I, 36-37.

¹⁰Letter, The Ambassador in France (Wallace) to the Secretary of State, June 12, P. P. C., 1920, I, 40-41. See also Perman, Czechoslovakia, p. 260.

time possible . . . , the maximum period allowed being three months from the notification of the present decision."¹¹ This notification had been issued October 1, 1919 and was to expire December 31, 1919. For practical reasons it was desirable that the Plebiscite Commission for Upper Silesia and the Teschen Plebiscite Mission be dispatched simultaneously, but the departure of the former body could not take place before the Treaty with Germany went into force. Thus the Mission to Teschen was delayed until February, 1920 and a settlement of the disputed territory remained pending.¹²

In November, 1919 the Inter-Allied Commission at Teschen, which had been dispatched to that area the preceding spring, prepared to conclude its portion of peace making; its work was to be continued by the newly formed Plebiscite Commission.¹³ It had been agreed by the Allied statesmen in Paris that on the new commission there would be no commissioners who had served on the preceding commission at Teschen. Thus the Inter-Allied Commission at Teschen and the Plebiscite Commission were knew of the reports and

¹¹Council of Five, November 14, 1919, P. P. C., 1919, IX, 167. (Note Appendices A-HD-92 which include two "Reports to Supreme Council," one concerning the date of the plebiscite at Teschen, Spisz and Orava; the other a proposed letter to the Polish and Czechoslovak government, ibid., pp. 169-174.)

¹²Council of Five, September 11, P. P. C., 1919, VIII, 184-185, 194-198; see also ibid., pp. 511-512, 305-315.

¹³Ibid.

observations concerning Teschen made by the precise mission only through diplomatic channels or through the governments of nations which had representatives on the two Commissions.¹⁴ The newly formed Commission at Teschen was composed of diplomats representing the Great Powers. Because of the American Senate's failure to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, American representatives withdrew from all Commissions, and the United States was not represented on this commission. This factor alone was to have a considerable influence in clarifying the terms of peace. Many decisions required United States support in more than just matters of a purely conciliatory nature; many of the terms of the peace became ambiguous.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the situation in Teschen Silesia had developed into a dispute of far greater proportions than it had previously appeared to be. In little less than one year after the first Czech-Polish clash in the Duchy, the Great Powers in Paris had found it necessary to consider dispatching Allied troops to the area.¹⁶ And, in early 1920,

¹⁴Council of Five, November 14, 1919, ibid., IX, 172-173 (Annexures A and B).

¹⁵See for an example, Telegram, the Commission to Negotiate Peace (A.C.N.P.) to the Secretary of State, December 4, ibid., XI, 688; see also, Telegram, Secretary of State to the A.C.N.P., December 5, ibid., XI, 689-670; and ibid., December 6.

¹⁶Notes, International Council of Premiers, January 20, 1920, P. P. C., 1920, p. 919.

one year after the beginning of the skirmish, two Allied battalions of men were sent to Teschen primarily to provide for the peaceful conduct of elections. In Teschen, however, serious strikes and riots occurred. Both Poles and Czechs carried out intensive propaganda activities which further complicated the work of the Plebiscite Commission.¹⁷ The situation had grown to such an explosive nature that additional troops were needed to control disputes in the mines.¹⁸ In part, the critical problem in the Teschen area was the result of the old Inter-Allied Commission's having established regulations which it had been unable to enforce. And too, the Duchy of Teschen was one of the more densely populated districts in Middle Europe. Nonetheless, much of this difficulty had been anticipated by Polish and Czech statesmen in Paris when negotiations for the organization of the plebiscite had been conducted.¹⁹ It had been anticipated further that there would be violations of the Treaty also not from Czechs and Poles, but from the Germans. Finally, it was the role played by the German element in the Duchy of Teschen Silesia which could have changed the character of plebiscite.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Memorandum, Castle, Division of Western European Affairs, Department of State, May 25, 1920, ibid., 1920, I, 38-39.

¹⁹Ibid.

Soon both local Czechs and Poles no longer wanted a plebiscite in the area: each side persisted in claiming that the terms of the plebiscite favored the other side.²⁰ The conditions under which the elections were to be conducted were objectionable. The work of the Plebiscite Commission at Teschen was crippled for it received little cooperation from the ethnic groups. By April of 1920 the Plebiscite Commission at Teschen had informed the Conference of Ambassadors that with its present forces, it was unable to cope with the situation, and it recommended that the plebiscite be postponed.²¹ This action seriously concerned the Conference. Europe was undergoing explosive conditions generally, and the situation at Teschen made matters worse. There were hardly enough Allied forces available to keep the peace in areas of dispute. The shortage of military forces became more apparent when the Plebiscite Commission requested the Conference to send troops "to maintain order or to prevent

²⁰Perman, Czechoslovakia, pp. 267-268; a footnote reads: "The first indication of that attitude can be formed in a conversation of Paderewski with Polk on October 2, 1919, a month after the decision to hold the plebiscite was reached by the Conference, as recorded in Polk's diary, Polk Papers." See also Telegram, Ambassador in France to Secretary of State, June 5, 1920, P. P. C., 1920, I, 40.

²¹Memoranda, Castle, Division of Western European Affairs, Department of State, May 25, 1920, ibid., I, 38; see also Telegram, Minister in Czechoslovakia (Crane) to the Secretary of State, June 15, 1920, ibid., pp. 41.

civil war from breaking out between Poland and Czechoslovakia."²² Therefore, seven months after it was officially decided that a territorial settlement would be based upon the result of plebiscites in Teschen, no positive steps toward concluding such settlement had been realized.²³

The role of the United States in the settlement of the Teschen Question is particularly interesting here. Since the American Commissioners in Europe had been relieved of most of their responsibilities in late 1919, the United States had maintained no officials in Teschen Silesia. In the latter part of that same year, however, the United States Secretary of State had informed its Minister in Czechoslovakia as well as its Minister in Poland that if these governments should care to express a definite wish for the appointment of an American on the Commission that the United States would then consider the suggestion.²⁴ By the end of April it looked as though the late appointment of an

²²Perman, Czechoslovakia, 267, Perman footnote cites the International Plebiscite Commission to the Conference, May 28, 1920, E. S. H. Bulletin No. 541; see also, Telegram, The Ambassador in France to the Secretary of State, July 19, 1920, P. P. C., 1920, I, 49-50.

²³See Telegram, The Secretary of State to the Minister in Czechoslovakia, December 31, 1919, ibid., I, 49-50.

²⁴Memorandum, Castle, Division of Western European Affairs, Department of State, May 25, 1920, ibid., I, 38. on the subject of _____ the appointment of an American Representative on the Teschen Plebiscite Commission.

American representative on a commission which had already been functioning for some months would be unwise. It was pointed out that if such a commissioner were appointed, he would be forced to make decisions on insufficient knowledge, and that other members of the Commission would be only too glad to make the new American member shoulder the blame for unpopular decisions.²⁵ Furthermore, in accordance with previous understandings, the American member would become Chairman of the Commission, indeed he would be compelled to assume that responsibility, but in reality he would be in a weaker position than his colleagues because he would have no troops behind him. And finally in the preceding months the situation in Teschen had become acute: the Commission there had found it necessary to declare martial law. The State Department had thus concluded that the United States would inevitably be blamed by Poland or Czechoslovakia or both for the outcome of any settlement.²⁶ Nevertheless, the United States was asked to arbitrate between the Czech and Polish Governments since the Slavic nations were unwilling to abide by the result of the Teschen plebiscite.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

Feelings against the abandonment of the plebiscite in Teschen was said to have displayed by all Czech parties.²⁷ According to one source, it was actually the Poles who no longer wanted a plebiscite.²⁸ Local Polish officials were said to have systematically obstructed all preparations for voting. The Polish Government was unsure about what the results of popular voting would be, and this was especially true since both the German and Silesian populations of Teschen seemed inclined to favor the Czechs. Numerous non-partisan mass meetings had been held protesting arbitration. The local Czech and German press supported this position and agreed that imposed arbitration was "a moral violation of the treaty . . .". The Czechs particularly charged the Allies with bad faith and favoritism to Poland, since Czechoslovakia had, with reluctance, agreed to the plebiscite in the first instance.²⁹ The Czechs charged that by not maintaining order in the plebiscite area, recent tactics used by Poland were ignored, and this militated against the agreement for the plebiscite. The Czechs also accused the Poles of trying to avoid a plebiscite because "they Poles

²⁷Telegram, Minister in Czechoslovakia to the Secretary of State, June 12, 1920, ibid., I, 41-42.

²⁸Perman, Czechoslovakia, 266-269.

²⁹Telegram, Minister in Czechoslovakia to the Secretary of State, June 15, 1920, P. P. C., 1920, I, 41-42.

feel that they would lose owing chiefly to the Czech's superior economic conditions."³⁰

Yet through diplomatic channels both Polish and Czech statesmen were preparing to affirm the arbitration of the territorial question.³¹ This move seems to have been further necessitated by the tactical engagements of both Czechs and Poles in the Teschen area. Recent reports indicated that munitions being shipped by rail to Poland were being held in Czechoslovakia.³² Then the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Polish Parliament passed a resolution in favor of breaking off relations with the Czechoslovaks.³³ And, the Polish press continually reported that the Teschen question should be settled by the force of arms.³⁴ Meanwhile, Beneš met with unexpectedly strong opposition when he returned to Prague and submitted the idea of arbitration as a suggestion to the Czech National Assembly. Whereas on the other hand, the suggestion of arbitration was gladly accepted by Poland,³⁵ the Polish

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Telegram, Ambassador in France to Secretary of State, June 15, 1920, ibid., I, 42.

³² Telegram, Secretary of State to the Minister in Czechoslovakia, June 18, 1920, ibid., I, 42.

³³ Telegram, Minister in Czechoslovakia to the Secretary of State, July 3, 1920, ibid., I, 43.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Telegram, Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Czechoslovakia, July 9, 1920, ibid., I, 43-44.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, had negotiated with Beneš in Paris where he had affirmed Polish consent to arbitration. At that time, Beneš had expressed the view that he would have to "consult with his commission . . . whose consent he confidently expected to obtain."³⁶

To bring about a settlement in July 1920, the intervention of the United States was necessary because of hesitation of the Czech Republic about accepting the proposal for arbitration which had been already accepted by Poland.³⁷ On July 9 the United States State Department dispatched a note to its Minister in Czechoslovakia concerning the attitude of the young Slavic nation. Beneš' hesitation to agree to arbitration could not be understood in light of the fact that it was he who had urged that the "entire matter" be arbitrated. Beneš was to be diplomatically informed that the United States was hard put to understand his attitude in a time so critical in the political life of Poland. United States diplomacy seems to have regarded the support of Poland as vital to the welfare of Czechoslovakia.

It seemed as if the decision would remain pending. "It appears impracticable to proceed either to a plebiscite . . .

³⁶Telegram, Ambassador in France to the Secretary of State, June 15, 1920, ibid., I, 42.

³⁷Telegram, The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Czechoslovakia, July 9, 1920, ibid., I, 43-44.

or to arbitration as had been recently proposed." read a telegram to the United States State Department.³⁸ Nevertheless it was reported that the "issue is . . . too grave to permit of any further prolongation of a dispute which reacts upon the general situation, affects injuriously the interests of Europe and endangers the peace of the world."³⁹ On the basis of this consideration the Commission at Teschen recommended that the Ambassadors Conference "take upon itself the responsibility of making a definite settlement"⁴⁰ Furthermore, such a decision appeared satisfactory to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of both Czechoslovakia and Poland, Beneš and Paderewski were both present at Spa and both notified the Allied Governments on July 10 that they were ready to accept a decision made by the Great Powers.⁴¹

The Representatives of the Four Allied Powers at the Conference of Ambassadors assembled in Paris and elaborated a speedy decision based upon their unanimous agreement. It was decided that the basis of the agreement "must not be

³⁸Telegram, Ambassador in France to the Secretary of State, July 12, 1920, ibid., I, 44-45.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Telegram, Minister in Czechoslovakia to the Secretary of State, July 16, 1920, ibid., I, 47-48.

communicated either to Poles or to the Czechoslovaks until the Conference of Ambassadors has made a definite pronouncement."

Time had not aided in the improvement of relations in the Duchy of Teschen. The general attitude of railroad workers was described as poor, and munitions were still withheld from Poland.⁴² Proper distribution for Silesian coal had not yet been arranged. All parties, including the Germans were not opposed to abandoning the plebiscite. And too, due to the political overtones of the dispute there was continued increase in national Czech sentiment.⁴³

The United States Government had consistently held the attitude that questions regarding territorial disputes should be settled by arbitration, by impartial judges or by fairly conducted plebiscites, and not by the Principal powers imposing boundaries upon weaker powers. Therefore, she suggested that the previous boundary demarcation established July 19 be accepted temporarily, and that an impartial commission composed of neither Czechs nor Poles should

⁴²Telegram, Minister in Czechoslovakia to the Secretary of State, July 17, 1920, ibid., I, 48-49.

⁴³Ibid; see also, Telegram, Minister in Czechoslovakia to the Secretary of State, July 17, 1920, ibid., I, 48-49.

provide for the rectifications. The proposal concluded that the decision of this commission should be reached not later than September 15, 1920.⁴⁴

A drafting committee submitted to the Conference at Spa an agreement which called for the fixing of the frontier line between Czechoslovakia and Poland and also contained clauses relative to the protection of minorities and the exportation of coal to Poland from the region to be seceded to Czechoslovakia.⁴⁵ Upon the insistence of the United States, the Commission which was to fix the territorial boundaries would be designated by either the Great Powers or the League of Nations. And, although the United States' attitude was heeded in the drafting of the agreement, most of the principles of self-determination were unheeded. For the first time the representatives of the Great Powers in Paris and the Conference of Ambassadors were in concerted agreement. Besides the British Consulate as well as other Allied Foreign Offices feared that the delay caused by the consideration of the American alternate plan would encourage the spread of Bolshevism further into Poland.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Telegram, The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France, July 21, 1920, ibid., I, 50-52.

⁴⁵Telegram, Ambassador in France to the Secretary of State, July 21, 1920, ibid., I, 52.

⁴⁶Telegram, Secretary of State to the British Ambassador (Geddes), July 23, 1920, ibid., I, 53-55.

In mid-summer 1920, a settlement of the Teschen Question was finally accomplished. Czechoslovakia seems to have been favored by the settlement. The Olsa Line proposed earlier by Benes^v was adopted. Paderewski, dissatisfied with this boundary, appealed to the United States through his friend, Colonel House. Nevertheless the United States was in no position to veto the action taken by the Conference.⁴⁷

It should be understood here that the settlement of the Teschen Question of 1919 which was concluded on July 28, 1920 did not truly settle the Teschen dispute.⁴⁸ Neither the Poles in Poland nor the Czechs in Czechoslovakia were satisfied with the terms of the agreement. Because of their dissatisfaction, especially the dissatisfaction expressed by Poland, the Teschen dispute became a source of discord between these two Slavic nations.⁴⁹ For the most part of 1919 the Czechoslovaks had to cope not only with an unfavorable

⁴⁷The United States was not represented at the Conference of Ambassadors, Spa; see Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 355-360.

⁴⁸J. A. Lukacs, The Great Powers and Eastern Europe (New York, 1953), pp. 157-181, 194; see also T. Korbelt, Poland Between East and West: Problems Relating to the Oder-Neisse Line and the Czech Frontier Regions (London, 1956), pp. 35-49.

⁴⁹Bernadotte E. Schmidt, Poland (Berkeley, 1947), pp. 164, 401-412; see also Roman Debicki, Foreign Policy of Poland: From the Rebirth of the Polish Republic to World War II (New York, 1962), pp. 16-9 and Lukacs, The Great Powers and Eastern Europe, Chapter III; see, 157-181, 742-748.

position in Paris but also with war being conducted on two of her fronts: on the northern border with Poland and on the southern border with Hungary. Also, many of the Great Powers at the Paris Conference questioned Prague's tactics in light of two border disputes (Hungary and Poland) in which she appeared the aggressor.⁵⁰ By 1920, however, many changes had taken place. The Conference of Ambassadors was more receptive to the Czech state than the Polish one. On the other hand the situation in Poland had changed. Whereas Czechoslovakia had been conducting wars on two fronts in 1919, Poland was under seige in 1920; and there were Bolshevik uprisings in Lithuania.⁵¹ Therefore, as Czechoslovakia had appealed to the Peace Conference for military aid in 1919, Poland appealed to the Conference of Ambassadors at Spa for military assistance in 1920. It was due to these sets of circumstances that on July 28, 1920, the Inter Allied Conference's adoption of the Osla Line was accepted by both the Poles and the Czechoslovaks with some dismay.⁵²

⁵⁰Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 368-372; see also, Perman, Czechoslovakia, pp. 242-243, 260-275.

⁵¹Council of Four, January 29, 1919, P. P. C., 1919, III, 772-778, 780-784.

⁵²Ibid.; see also Roos, op. cit., 86-89; Debicki, op. cit., 16-21; Buell, op. cit., 77; and Perman, op. cit., 272.

In accepting the decision reached by the Spa Conference, Paderewski made the following statement:

There is little probability that the noble aim of the Supreme Council to put an end to the conflict and establish normal and friendly solutions between the Republic of Poland the the Republic of Czechoslovakia might be attained in this matter. The decision reached by the Council of Ambassadors opened a gulf between the two nations and nothing could fill it. The Polish Government signed a formal pledge which must be carried out. It is with overwhelming sorrow that I put my signature to a document which deprives us of such worthy, such precious so dear to our hearts a part of our nation. Before doing this, I have to declare, Mr. Chairman, that the Polish Government sincerely wishes to abide by its signature, but it would be impossible for it to convince the Polish nation that justice has been done.⁵³

The Czechoslovaks, while appearing to be the victors in the final settlement actually did not think of themselves as such. The following statement from a pro-Czechoslovak writer summarizes their attitude.

In Czechoslovakia the decision was greeted with a storm of popular indignation. But Benes succeeded in riding out the gale and winning acceptance of the settlement. He considered the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors a diplomatic victory, but he was compelled to acknowledge his failure to achieve the primary objective of his efforts--that of turning Poland into an ally of Czechoslovakia. . . . The developments of 1920 revealed further the breakdown of the initial calculations of Masaryk and Benes, although the tedious negotiations . . . and the settlement of the Teschen dispute changed little or nothing in the frontier line drawn at the very outset of the conference.⁵⁴

⁵³Komarnicki, Rebirth, pp. 355.

⁵⁴Perman, Czechoslovakia, pp. 272-273.

While the agreement of July 28, 1920 settled the Teschen Question, it did not settle the dispute between Poland and Czechoslovakia. Masaryk and Beneš' plan for an Eastern European bloc against Germany in the West and Russia in the East was shattered when Poland signed the agreement. The Poles, in turn, forgot either the terms of the compromise or the conditions under which they agreed to these terms. This breach in relations between these two Slavic nations was never healed diplomatically in the intermediate post-war era. It was, in part, this breach in relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia that twenty years later again led to disruption of Central Eastern Europe.

Although the decision to hold a plebiscite in Teschen was arrived at rather hastily it was not a new idea for settlement. Both Beneš and Paderewski reluctantly agreed to hold the plebiscite when neither could accept the boundaries proposed by the Joint Commissions. Beneš who faced political troubles at home, was particularly opposed to plebiscite. But, he had consented when he feared that doing otherwise would have cost him and his country considerably more.

The Poles, who did not wish to appear as antagonists of the peace, consented to plebiscite so that they could impress the conciliatory nature of their attitude upon the Czechs as well as the Supreme War Council. By early spring 1920, however, the Poles no longer wanted plebiscite.

Whereas Czechoslovakia had been at war with Hungary when Benes^v had reluctantly agreed to plebiscite in 1919; Poland was engaged in war with Russia on the eve of the proposed plebiscite in 1920. The nature of circumstances necessarily caused Poland to mitigate against these elections. Moreover, the large German element in Teschen appeared to have favored annexation to the Czech state at this time.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The armed conflict which flared up in Teschen Silesia January 1919 illustrates the complexity of the territorial questions faced by both the Slavic states on the one hand and the peace conference on the other. Because Poland in particular and Czechoslovakia in general were dissatisfied with the settlement, relations between these nations became embroiled to the detriment of both states in the post war era.¹ Borderline disputes prolonged tension between Poland and Czechoslovakia for several years until Warsaw protocol of May 6, 1924 finally settled the matter.²

According to Poland the Teschen problem was one of the first examples of political success achieved by forcible fait accompli. The Principle Allied powers whose resolutions were decisive at the peace conference each held a different view of the principle of self-determination.³ In the distant past the Poles and Czechs had much in common including occasional rulers. Their paths separated quite early, however, and

¹Roman Debicki, Foreign Policy of Poland 1919-1939: From the Rebirth of the Polish Republic to World War II. (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), pp. 18-19.

²Samuel Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia In European History, (Princeton, 1943) p. 353.

³Debicki, Foreign Policy, pp. 18-19.

different historical experiences have produced dissimilarities in the two Slavic states."⁴ While the Poles presented their case before the Supreme Council and based it primarily on ethnic considerations; the Czechs advanced economic reasons and demanded the part of the province inhabited mostly by Poles. Thus the application of self-determination which was at best difficult to apply was even more difficult as this region of Eastern Europe is characterized by a lack of natural frontiers separating the many national groups. Furthermore there is an intermingling of nationalities with many ethnic islands that it is almost impossible to establish boundary lines on purely ethnic principle.⁵ The final settlement seems to have been more favorable to the Czech State. She received the Karwin coal basin (one half of the reserves there), the main railroad to Jablunkau Pass but not the city of Teschen.⁶ On the other hand, the Polish Republic lost one hundred forty thousand Poles; in Spitz and Orava the Poles lost another forty thousand Poles. Nevertheless the Poles did gain most of Teschen proper and its agricultural hinterland.⁷

⁴Samuel Sharp, Poland White Eagle and a Red Field, (Cambridge, 1953) p. 126.

⁵Debicki, Foreign Policy, p. 18.

⁶Jerome Kerner, editor Czechoslovakia, p. 68.

⁷Sharp, Poland, p. 127.

At the peace conference the American delegation had relied on ethnic data methodically gathered in the disputed territory. And, although it regarded Wilson's principles of self-determination as binding; the delegation did not favor plebiscites as a means of determining the will of the people.⁸ On the other hand, the British delegation seemed to have favored plebiscites.⁹ This delegation was under the magnanimous influence of David Lloyd George who is said to have admitted in parliament that he had "never heard of Teschen."¹⁰ Lloyd George challenged the conclusions of the Commission on Polish Affairs and argued that the Germans would not sign the treaty if Poland were given Silesia, Teschen, and Danzig. He was even more apprehensive about the attitude of British Parliament and especially Labour Party members.

Traditionally, however, the balance of power policy of Great Britain inclined toward policies that would become a complement and a natural ally of France in Eastern Europe. Britain wanted neither to create a Germany too weak nor a France too strong. And, accordingly Lloyd George fought

⁸Debicki, Foreign Policy, pp. 18-20.

⁹Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁰David Lloyd George Memoirs of the Peace Conference, (New Haven, 1939),

against Wilson and Clemenceau by his insistence that original drafts prepared by territorial commissions be modified step by step.¹²

France had given strong support to Poland. This was not the case on the question of Teschen, however. France definitely opposed Polish claims based on clear-cut ethnographical lines in the Duchy. A French note of December 19, 1919 expressly stated that the Czech state should have "at least until . . . decision of the Peace Conference . . . the boundaries of the historic province. Therefore at the onset of the peace conference, in diplomatic terms, the area was attributed to Czechoslovakia; whereas, militarily it was under Polish domination; and politically it was in upheaval."¹³

Polish foreign Policy was based on the principle of "balance" also. As in the case of Great Britain this principle was applied somewhat similarly. There were two objectives in mind: obtain outside assistance in case of an attack by either Russia or Germany, and keep Russia and Germany apart. The Czech state based its foreign policy

¹²Ibid., See also, Debicki, Foreign Policy, p. 19.

¹³D. Perman, The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State, (Leiden, Netherlands, 1962) pp. 101-05; see also Letter, Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs (Benes) to the Secretary of State, December, 20, 1918, United States Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference, 1919, II, 383-384.

around the concept of alliance. Benes and Masaryk envisioned a barrier of small states from the Baltic to the Mediterranean: Poland too was to be included in this pact. Nevertheless it is pointed out by some authors that both Masaryk and Benes should have realized that because of the nature of the geography, ethnography, and economic organization, there would have had to have been some ideological or quasi-political equivalent of the Habsburg Empire. In August of 1919 when the Habsburg Archduke Joseph seized power in Hungary, Benes had urgently sought the support of the Supreme Council which in turn warned Hungary that another Habsburg would not be tolerated. With an additional threat of Anschluss in Austria, Czechoslovakia and two of her southern neighbors, Roumania and Jugoslavia formed the "Little Entente." Thus a union with Poland did not materialize and Polish-Czechoslovak friendship disappeared in the quarrel over the mines of Teschen.¹⁴

Poland realized the importance of coming to terms with the Little Entente and in a speech in the Polish Parliament of July 25, 1923, Foreign Minister Seyda proposed that the Little Entente be organized into a four power pact mutually guaranteeing the frontiers of the four states concerned. In April, 1926 an emissary went to Prague and again proposed an alliance with the Czechs. According to Polish

¹⁴Ibid.

sources the Czechs declined on the grounds that Poland might soon go to war with Germany over Vilna and with Russia in the Eastern frontier.¹⁵

The Czechs had also made an effort to effect rapprochement between Poland and the Little Entente. As early as November, 1921, Foreign Minister Skirmunt of Poland and Foreign Minister Benes of Czechoslovakia signed a treaty of friendship at Prague. The treaty provided for benevolent neutrality in event of an attack on either by a third side; it permitted free passage of war materials and it prohibited propaganda against the other. Poland was to disinterest herself in the Slovakian question while Czechoslovakia was to do the same with respect to Eastern Galicia.¹⁶

An alliance between Poland and Czechoslovakia would have greatly strengthened Prague's strategic position with respect to Eastern Germany. To meet the menace of non-League states, notably Germany and Russia, Poland adopted a policy of alliances. More westernized than the Poles but more remote from Russia and more experienced to German pressure, Czechoslovakia had been the more inclined in her development of a pan-Slavic attitude. It is in great measure this lack of unity among Slavic states of Central Europe that in 1938

¹⁵Raymond Buell, Poland: Key To Europe, (New York, 1939), p. 322.

¹⁶Ibid., p.322.

contributed to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and later the disruption of World War II.¹⁷

¹⁷Ibid.

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