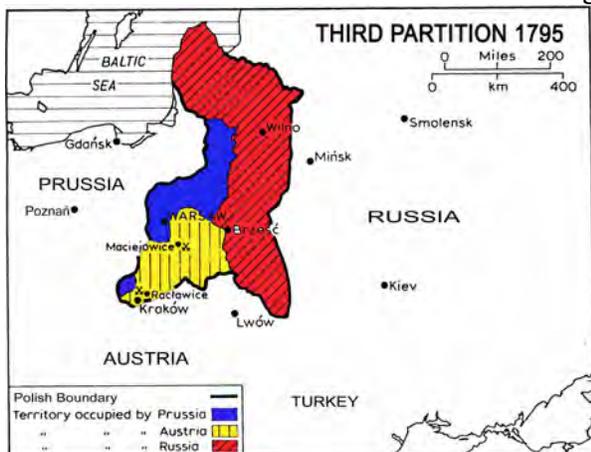


History of Poland Part 11 - The Partitions 1864-1918

by Paul Lipinski

[Ed. Note: Member George Wilk pointed out that the first part of The Partitions article contained an error. The part of Poland taken by Austria in the third Partition in 1795 (shown in the map below) remained under Austrian rule until 1815. Then it along



with part of Prussia came under Russian rule. The map titled Partitioned Poland 1795-1918, should be titled Partitioned Poland 1815-1918. See map below.]

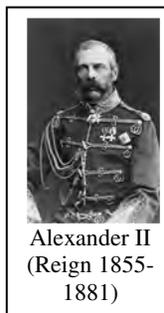


1863-64 - January Rising: final abolition of serfdom (1864) in Russian Partition

In the Polish Kingdom the peasant problem remained unresolved. Initially hope was pinned on Tsar Alexander II in the belief that he would stop reprisals. However, the scope of concessions he made was insignificant. The Tsar expressed his unconcern with his well-known saying: "Point de reveries Messieurs"

("no daydreaming, gentlemen.") Another wave of religious and national demonstrations swept the Kingdom and conspirators were preparing an uprising. It broke out in January, 1863, and was waged in the Kingdom, Lithuania, Byelorussia, and Volhynia for a year and a half. It was a guerrilla war.

A clandestine National Government evolved and the decrees issued under its seal were respected voluntarily. This foundation of an underground state in Europe was something entirely unique in the 19th century. The government, amazingly, collected taxes, organized the supplies of weapons and published newspapers. More importantly, one of its first decisions was to enfranchise the peasants. However, it badly miscalculated how much enrollment would be elicited from the peasantry. The only participants in the uprising were the gentry, priests, rural clerks, burghers and intelligentsia. It is estimated that some 200,000 men went through the ranks of the guerrilla units during eighteen months of struggle, with some 30,000 guerrillas fighting at one time.

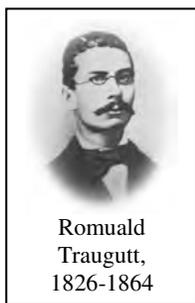


Alexander II
(Reign 1855-1881)

This January Uprising of 1863 against Tsarist Imperial Russia was probably the most desperate. It began as a spontaneous protest of young Poles against the draft into the tsarist army. As there was no regular Polish army of any sort, the group of hot headed young people was soon joined by various politicians and high ranking Polish officers from the tsarist army. The insurrectionists were forced to resort to guerrilla warfare tactics and clandestine structures. Throughout the campaign, not one major fortress city in Russian-occupied Poland was captured and, while the occupying armies numbering in the hundreds of thousands were harried, they were never driven out of the country. The uprising did, however, succeed in blunting the effect of the Tsar's abolition of serfdom in the Russian partition, which had been designed to

win Polish peasants away from supporting the rest of the Polish nation. Severe reprisals against the Poles, such as public executions or deportations to Siberia, led many Poles to abandon armed struggle and turn instead to the idea of "organic work" - the economic and cultural self-improvement.

The Russian Army, numbering 340,000 soldiers at its peak, thwarted the uprising. The



Romuald Traugutt, 1826-1864

last leader of the uprising Romuald Traugutt was labeled "dictator" by the Russians and was arrested. He was hanged, together with four of his aides, on August 5, 1864, amid the prayers of the despairing people of Warsaw. A similar

fate befell other leaders and guerrillas. The uprising collapsed, reprisals followed and the state of war lingered on until the outbreak of World War I. The Tsar scrapped the remnants of the administrative autonomy of the Kingdom. Then began the Russianization of the administration, the judiciary and education. The rights of the Church were curtailed. The suffering of people and their moral crisis were further deepened by the loss of hope for winning independence.

After 1867, in the Austrian partition (Galicia), the Poles obtained a wider-ranging autonomy that included the right to conduct their government and run the education system in the Polish language. This was part of the general transformation of the Austrian Empire into the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where Hungary finally received virtual independence. Many Polish intellectuals and artists left France and settled in Galicia. The role of cultural capital of Poland was passed back to Kraków. Until 1918 it was the only place in partitioned Poland where Polish cultural life flourished in all its aspects.

In contrast to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Russia and Prussia (which was soon to become the leading region of a unified Germany) banned the use of Polish in public

affairs and everywhere in the education system. The teaching of the Polish language, literature, and history had to be carried out on a clandestine basis. The administration of the country in both areas, on practically every level, was almost completely in the hands of non-Poles.

Economic demand from an enormous Russian market and the influx of capital into the Kingdom from foreign investors interested in that market and in cheap labor, led to a quick development of industry. Beginning in the 20th century, Warsaw's population numbered 1,000,000, while Łódź, center of the textile industry, had a population of about 500,000. The economy of Prussian partitioned Poland was also developing favorably, whereas the economy of the Austrian-occupied Poland remained backward. By 1910, Kingdom Poland, Galicia and the Grand Duchy of Poland were inhabited by about 22.5 million people, with Poles making up about 75% of the population.

Romanticism and Positivism

Even in the face of the loss of the statehood and the defeat of successive uprisings, an enormous role in maintaining Polish identity was played by culture. That culture created two patterns in the 19th century that keep on influencing Poles and Poland even today: Romanticism and Positivism.

The literature of Romanticism put forth the image of a heroic fighter for freedom who alone opposed violence with the power of his spirit. The romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz wrote, "Reach where your vision does not reach, break up what mind cannot break". Juliusz Slowacki, the other literary giant of the time, wrote about heroes as "like stones thrown by God on a rampart." Frederic Chopin used Polish folk and national motifs in his music.

After the November Uprising (1830-1831), Paris had become the center of Polish romantic art and literature. Some of the exiles emigrated farther. Ignacy Domeyko, a

graduate of the University of Wilno, became one of the founders of modern science in Chile. Also, in Siberia where many Poles had been deported, they made great contributions to ethnographic, geographic and biological studies.

Positivism is a philosophy developed in the middle of the 19th century by Auguste Comte. Comte was widely regarded as the first true sociologist. Positivism stated that the only authentic knowledge is scientific knowledge. Additionally, such knowledge can only come from the positive affirmation of theories through application of strict scientific method.

After the disastrous January 1863 Uprising, Positivism in Poland defined progressive thought in literature and other walks of life until the turn of the 20th century.

In the aftermath of the Uprising, many Poles abandoned their hopes of regaining Poland's independence from Russia, Germany and Austro-Hungary by force of arms. Together with those hopes they reluctantly and only partially set aside the style of the Romantic period. Polish "Positivism", drawing its name from Auguste Comte's philosophy and much of its ideology from the works of British scholars and scientists, advocated the exercise of reason before emotion. It argued that independence, if it is to be regained, must be regained gradually, by "building from the foundations" (creating a material infrastructure and educating the public) and through "organic work" that would enable Polish society to function as a fully integrated social organism (a concept borrowed from Herbert Spencer).

The leading Polish journalist, short-story writer and novelist Bolesław Prus, advised his compatriots that Poland's place in the world would be determined by the contributions that she made to its scientific, technological, cultural and economic achievements.

Specific societal questions addressed by the Polish Positivists included the establishment

of women's rights, the assimilation of Poland's Jewish minority, and the defense of the Polish population in the German-ruled part of Poland against Kulturkampf and displacement by German settlers.

Positivism promoted well-organized work, education and economic development. In raising national issues, it invoked the historical costume in novels by Henryk Sienkiewicz, who won the Nobel Prize in 1905 for his body of work in literature that included the novel *Quo Vadis*, in paintings by Jan Matejko, and in operas by Stanisław Moniuszko. The greatest Polish novel of the 19th century, *Lalka* [The Doll] by Bolesław Prus, depicted the tragic conflict between the two attitudes - the main character, a former insurgent, then a rich businessman, is killed by his love of a mediocre aristocratic lady.

Beginning in the 20th century there began a revival of romantic feeling and trends in poetry, drama (Stanisław Wyspiański) and painting.

The emigration of artists and scientists continued throughout the entire period of the Partitions. Maria Skłodowska immigrated to



Paris, France in 1891. In France, she married Pierre Curie and found opportunities for her pioneering work in physics and chemistry. She, together with her husband, was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1905 and

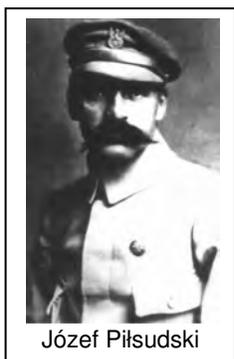
individually in 1910. She was a pioneer in radioactivity, the first two-time Nobel laureate (the only one in two different sciences), and the first female professor at the Sorbonne. In the United States the talents of Helena Modrzejewska and Ignacy Paderewski came to full bloom.

After the uprising period there was an intensification of Russianization pressure in the Russian partition. Likewise in the Prussian partition there was Germanization along with a cultural struggle [Kulturkampf] against the Church. These pressures resulted in a growth of national awareness and religious moods, but preparations for new uprisings were given up. In the Prussian partition, Poles could use the institutions of the law-abiding state for their defense. They could claim their rights at courts of law, set up scientific societies and economic-financial organizations. Galicia, the Austrian partition, particularly after it was granted home rule, became the center of Polish culture. There were two universities there, in Kraków and Lwów, as well as the Polish Academy of Letters and numerous associations.

Modern political parties, peasant, worker, and national, also developed at the turn of the 20th century. Workers problems grew in conjunction with the growing industrial development in towns and cities. This found expression in the revolution of 1905, which involved Russia and the Kingdom.

1905-07 - Revolution in Russian Partition

In the decade before the Great War, tensions were rising throughout Eastern Europe. 1904-05 saw Russia plunged into the first military conflict since the Congress of Berlin (1878).



Józef Piłsudski

Józef Piłsudski was very much the product of his szlachta origins and his landed milieu in Lithuania. He was proud, rebellious and deeply rooted by sentiment and ideology in the values of the Commonwealth. At an early age he took to active subversion. In 1904 he set

up terrorist commandos known as Bojówki to carry out acts of sabotage and diversion. The outbreak of the Russo Japanese war (also 1904) was a bugle-call to him. The humiliating defeats suffered by Russia

delighted the Poles. However, it also made them anxious, as thousands of young Polish conscripts were being killed in the East. Piłsudski went to Tokyo with a series of proposals. He suggested the creation of a Polish Legion out of Russian prisoners of Polish origin and offered the Japanese a guerilla war in Poland to tie down Russian



Roman Dmowski

troops. In return, he wanted the Japanese to demand the establishment of an independent Poland at the peace negotiations. The Japanese were wary of getting involved. Their wariness increased

when Roman Dmowski arrived in Tokyo and argued against Piłsudski's plans.

On October 13, 1904 the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) organized a massive demonstration in Warsaw. When the police shot at the crowd, Piłsudski's armed squads returned the fire. The fighting squads of the PPS then launched a campaign of attacks on Tsarist officials. While hostilities escalated in the Kingdom, within Russia rebellion against the dictatorial tsarist rule began. In 1905, bloody clashes took place on the streets of St. Petersburg. The PPS proclaimed a general strike which lasted for two months and involved some 400,000 workers all over the Kingdom. The strike continued in spite of severe reprisals by Tsarist troops. In May 1905 the Russian fleet was disastrously defeated at Tsushima. Unrest spread through the forces. Additionally, the crew of the battleship Potyomkin mutinied on the Black Sea. In June barricades went up in Łódź and the workers resisted the troops and police for three days. In October the Tsar issued a manifesto promising the Kingdom a constitution. However, during the demonstration held to celebrate this manifesto, troops opened fire on the crowds, and on November 11 a state of siege was declared. In December revolution broke out in

Moscow and on December 22 the PPS called for an uprising of all the workers in the Kingdom.

Events in Poland were dominated by a struggle for control between the Socialists and the National Democrats of Roman Dmowski. In June 1905 unrest began in Łódź, when the PPS called for action and the National Democrat controlled Workers' Union opposed it. There were clashes between the two and even bloodshed. When the Imperial Manifesto turned the Russian Empire into a constitutional monarchy and announced elections to the Russian parliament (the Duma) the National Democrats were keen to take advantage, while the PPS boycotted the elections on the grounds that they endorsed Russian government in Poland.

Dmowski opted for a form of loyalist bargaining, demanding greater participation in the government of the Empire. In the first elections to the Duma, the National Democrats gained 34 seats. With others elected in the Western Gubernias, there were 55 Polish members. He assumed that this would carry some weight, but he was mistaken. In the first twelve months of the new Constitution, 2,010 people were killed by the army and police, and over a period of three years the Governor of Warsaw signed over 1,000 "political" death-sentences. Dmowski's attempts at bargaining with the government came to nothing, while opponents in Poland denounced him for selling out. Nevertheless, he continued building up the Polish lobby in Russia's government, and as European diplomacy lurched from crisis to crisis, this policy seemed to make sense. Given the choice between Germany or Russia in "The Polish Question (1908)" he argued that Germany was the greater threat to Poland and that Poland must side with Russia in any conflict between the two. He pointed out that Poland was the key to dominion in East Central Europe, and that there would be room for bargaining when the Powers went to war. While, Józef Piłsudski and the independence

group called for co-operation with Austria and Prussia.

The PPS found itself in trouble after the events of 1905. It had failed to bring about armed insurrection and was left protesting out in the cold. It was split with dissension and in 1907 actually separated into two different camps. Piłsudski managed to keep control of the larger, and his thinking prevailed. This too was becoming dominated by the approaching war, and his scheme was diametrically opposed to Dmowski's. As Piłsudski asserted in a lecture delivered in Paris in 1914, "only the sword now carries any weight in the balance for the destiny of a nation." He had established a paramilitary training-school in Kraków, and by the summer of 1906, 750 people in five-man squads were operating all over the Kingdom. During the twelve months of that year they killed and wounded nearly 1,000 Tsarist officials and officers, and carried out raids on prisons, tax-offices and mail-trains. The most spectacular was the hold-up at Bezdany (now Bezdony near Vilnius) in September 1908 of the heavily guarded train carrying the Kingdom's taxes to Russia. In 1908 the Bójówki were replaced by the Union for Active Struggle, an apolitical "Polish Army" founded by three members of the PPS: Kazimierz Sosnkowski, Marian Kukieł and Władysław Sikorski. With the unofficial approval of the Austrian authorities, "sporting" clubs began all over Galicia, followed by a Riflemen's Union. In 1912 Piłsudski reorganized these on military patterns, and by June 1914, he had nearly 12,000 men ready to take the field. When Europe went to war, he took up arms in the Polish cause. He saw Russia as the greatest enemy. He also viewed the Central Powers as the cloak under which to begin his operations.

1941-1917 - World War I

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, industrialization and the rise of workers' movements swept across Europe. By 1914, half the industrial output of Russia came from the area of the former Congress Kingdom.

The 1905 revolution in Russia shook tsarist autocracy to the core. The fighting was particularly bloody in Polish territories and the result was limited liberalization of the region. But Europe was on the brink of war and as conflict loomed, Poles split into two main political camps. The group led by Roman Dmowski advocated support for Russia because, as he put it, a Russian victory would mean incorporation of all Poles into the Russian state. Dmowski believed that Russia would inevitably liberalize and that would mean an increase in Polish influence. The opposing group, led by Józef Piłsudski, wanted to rely on liberties granted by Austria as a means to gaining independence for the whole nation. Piłsudski's "Polish Riflemen's League," eventually became the core of his renowned First Brigade and fought for the Austro-Hungarian Empire in World War I.

Although the two men were diametrically opposed in their political thinking, their goals were for Polish independence. In a remarkable feat of national solidarity, Poles and Polish nationals living in North America and western Europe raised an army of almost 100,000 men, the so-called "Blue Army" led by general Józef Haller .

1917 - Restoration of Kingdom of Poland by Germany and

President Wilson's Fourteen Points

In 1917 two separate events decisively changed the character of the war and set it on a course toward the rebirth of Poland. The United States entered the conflict on the Allied side. Meanwhile a process of revolutionary upheaval in Russia weakened her and then removed the Russians from the Eastern Front. This resulted in the Bolsheviks coming to power in that country. After the last Russian advance into Galicia failed in mid-1917, the Germans went on the offensive again. The army of revolutionary Russia ceased to be a factor, and Russia was forced to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in which she ceded all formerly Polish lands to the Central Powers. After peace in the East was

assured, Germany and Austria-Hungary started a policy of creating a "Mitteleuropa" ("Central Europe") and on November 5, 1917, proclaimed a puppet Kingdom of Poland.

Restoration of an independent Poland was relatively low on the Allies' agenda and surfaced only after the United States of America entered the war and Russia collapsed into chaos. The defection of Russia from the Allied coalition gave free rein to the calls of Woodrow Wilson, the American president, to transform the war into a crusade to spread democracy and liberate the Poles and other peoples from the suzerainty of the Central Powers. Fortunately, US President Woodrow Wilson, a personal friend of famous Polish composer and pianist Ignacy Paderewski, strongly advocated the necessity of restoring an independent Poland with "access to the sea." The thirteenth of his Fourteen Points adopted the resurrection of Poland as one of the main aims of World War I. Polish opinion crystallized in support of the Allied cause. With Russia tending to its own problems, the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Western Allies defeat of Germany, the stage was set for Polish independence.

1918 – Independent Poland

Poland regained its independence on November 11, 1918, the day World War I ended. This was 123 years (1795-1918) after the last partition wiped Poland from the maps of Europe. Much of the credit goes to Józef Piłsudski who persuaded the Germans to disarm and leave Poland without further bloodshed. Piłsudski's "war for the frontiers" against the Ukrainian militia in the south-east also ended peacefully. His attempt to pull Eastern Ukraine from the new Bolshevik state, however, was a serious miscalculation that almost cost Poland its newly acquired independence. Bolshevik armies advanced within striking distance of Warsaw and it was only through skillful military intervention that Piłsudski managed to drive them back in August of 1920. This campaign, known as the "Miracle on the Vistula," saved the fledgling

Polish state and brought to the foreground the future Commander in Chief of the Polish

government. Undaunted, the Poles tackled the challenges of reunification and Poland thrived



Map from www.aforgottenodyssey.com/maps/

in spite of the worldwide depression of the 1930s. By 1939, Poland enjoyed a steady population growth, expanding industrial sector and blossoming academic and cultural life. Unfortunately, the Polish military doctrine, following the guidelines established by Marshall Piłsudski, did not keep up with the threat of a modern total war. The country's military, although numerous and well trained, lacked the adequate equipment necessary to defend itself in view of the emerging threats. Attempts at developing modern armored combat vehicles and military aircraft came too late to be of significance before the outbreak of World War II.

Army, General Władysław Sikorski. The frontiers of the Second Republic (sometimes called the Versailles Poland), were formed along historical and cultural lines. There were, however, two major exceptions: Upper Silesia, whose population was still predominantly Polish, was left outside the country's borders while Gdansk was transformed into the so-called Free City of Danzig (Gdansk), within which Poland exercised only restricted authority.

Reborn Poland faced enormous difficulties. Four years of war had created massive devastation and more than a hundred years under Partitions had woven regional differences into the fabric of Polish society. The new country also lacked the basic mechanisms such as a unified currency, an army and organized administrative services that are necessary to run an independent

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