

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MI
Poland/USSR

Proposed Eastern Boundaries of Poland
 1918-1922

(See map of these lines, 1:2,000,000 on photostatic base in my file. A. R. H.)

February 9, 1918 - Treaty between the Central Powers and the Ukraine, Brest-Litovsk. Article 2 delimited the western and part of the northern boundary of the Ukrainian People's Republic, giving the Chelm area west of the Bug River to the Ukraine. Provided for mixed commission to demarcate the line, "according to the ethnographical conditions and after taking the wishes of the inhabitants into consideration". (1), (2), (5).

March 4, 1918 - A protocol to Article 2 of the Ukrainian treaty provided that the boundary commission was not bound to trace the line delimited in the article, but could place it to the east of the points specified. The commission was to be composed of representatives of the Central Powers and the Ukraine and Poland. This and alleged secret clauses to the original treaty were apparently intended as concessions to Polish opinion, for Austro-Hungarian officials hoped to incorporate Russian Poland. (1), (2), (5).

March 3, 1918 - Treaty between the Central Powers and Russia, Brest-Litovsk. Article 3 and Appendix 1 delimit the western boundary of Russia from islands of Dago and Worms off Estonian coast to Prushany (pruzana) on the new Ukrainian boundary. (3), (4), (5).

October 8, 1918 - Dmowski, President of Polish National Committee presented President Wilson with memorandum outlining Polish territorial claims. These were based on frontiers of 1772. (6).

January 29, 1919 - Dmowski presented Polish claims to Council of Five in Paris. On the east these were considerably short of the 1772 boundaries. Suggested that Lithuania be united to Poland. (7).

January 21, 1919 - Tentative Report of Intelligence Section, U.S. Delegation to the Peace Conference. Amplifying Wilson's Point 13, it recommended a Polish state with indisputably Polish populations, a union of Poland and Lithuania if possible, and East Galicia to be given to Poland if it was not united with the Ukraine. With Lithuania and East Galicia united to Poland, the projected eastern boundary would have been close to the Treaty of Riga (1921) boundary. (8), (9).

April 22, 1919 - Report No. 2 of the Commission on Polish Affairs of the Peace Conference dealt with the eastern boundary.

The line

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The line delimited, from the frontier of East Prussia to a point on the Bug River opposite Chelm, was intended to mark the area within which the majority of the inhabitants were Poles, and which was indisputably Polish. The Commission recommended that districts in which there was doubt as to the ethnographic character or wishes of the population should not be assigned to Poland at that time, but that an enquiry should be conducted on the spot, if possible, and a definite settlement reached as soon as this was done and when a Russian government had been established with which the Great Powers could deal. (10) The position of the line locally had been determined by a desire to give Poland a frontier as well marked by natural features and as defensible as possible in the east European plain. The Svisloch (Swislocz) and Bug Rivers and the edge of the forest east of Bielsk were followed. Several railroad junctions east of Bielsk were considered in allocating territory to Poland. (11).

June 16, 1919 - Report No. 3 of Commission on Polish Affairs dealt with East Galicia. The Commission considered several solutions to the East Galicia question:

- (a) Independence
- (b) Provisional autonomy for a term of years:
 - (1) under a League of Nations high commissioner.
 - (2) under mandate to a great power or to some neighboring power.
- (c) Attachment to Poland either directly or under an agreement for local autonomy.
- (d) Immediate plebiscite under control of League of Nations.

Since the western boundary of East Galicia would depend somewhat upon what disposition was made of the area, two alternate lines were suggested, one including Lemberg (Lwow) and the Drohobycz oil fields in East Galicia and the other excluding them. The eastern, southern, and northern boundaries of East Galicia were to remain the same as in 1914. (12).

June 25, 1919 - Council of Ministers of the Peace Conference resolved to allow Polish military occupation of East Galicia, subject to later agreement as to its ultimate sovereignty. (13).

August 29, 1919 - The sub-commission of the Polish commission considering the eastern boundary of Poland declared that its proposed line was subject to negotiation between Poland and Russia under League auspices. (14).

September

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September 1, 1919 - Report No. 6 of the Commission on Polish Affairs completed the recommendation for a provisional eastern frontier. It delimited the line from the point on the Bug River opposite Chelm, up the Bug to the former boundary between Austria-Hungary and Russia, thus filling in the gap left by Reports 2 and 3. The Chelm area had a high percentage of Ukrainian population, but had been part of Congress Poland until 1912, and the legal system and cultural characteristics tied it more closely to Poland than to the Ukraine. The Commission recommended that its completed line be declared the eastern limit of indisputable Polish sovereignty, without prejudging the final disposition of Ukrainian and White Russian areas east of the line. (15).

November 20, 1919 - Draft statute for East Galicia prepared giving Poland a mandate under the League of Nations for 25 years. This was accepted by the Supreme Council the next day. The western of the two alternate boundary proposals was accepted. (16).

December 8, 1919 - Note from Supreme Council to Poland delimiting the provisional eastern boundary. The text described the lines proposed on April 22 and September 1, but the accompanying map showed in addition the line for East Galicia adopted November 21. (17).

December 22, 1919 - Heads of Delegations of the Peace Conference suspended 25 year limit on Polish mandate for East Galicia. The effect was to leave East Galician affairs entirely up to the Poles. (18).

July 10-11, 1920 - Allied representatives, meeting at Spa, attempted to mediate Polish-Russian war. Polish Prime Minister Grabski agreed to sign armistice and have Polish army retire to line fixed by Supreme Council December 8, 1919. Vilna was to be handed to Lithuania. In East Galicia the Polish and Russian armies would stand on the line they had reached at the time of the armistice. Lord Curzon, British Foreign Secretary, then wired the Soviet government asking it to agree to these terms. In the despatch he described the line of December 8, 1919, including the line adopted by the Supreme Council for East Galicia in November, 1919, but the armistice terms for East Galicia were to be as described above. In this way, the line of December 8, came to be called the Curzon line, but it is uncertain whether or not the term should apply to the proposed boundary in East Galicia. (19), (20).

August

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August, 1920 - Russia did not accept these terms, but offered the Poles counter proposals instead. According to United States diplomatic sources, these included modification of the Curzon line giving Poland more favorable terms in the Chelm area but including Bielowostock in Russia and provisions for a Russian corridor or rights of transit to German territory. (21).

October 12, 1920 - Preliminary treaty of peace signed by Poland and the Soviet governments, Riga, after Russians had been driven far to east of Curzon line. Article 1 defined the boundary. (22).

March 18, 1921 - Final treaty between Poland and the Soviets, Riga. Article 2 defined the boundary from frontier between Russia and Latvia to the confluence of the River Zbrucz with the Dniester, giving more territory to Poland than had been provided for in the preliminary treaty of October 12, 1920. (23).

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- (1) Texts of the Ukraine "Peace". With Maps.
(Washington, 1918) U. S. Department of State,
House Inquiry Series, No. 29.
- (2) John W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Forgotten Peace, Brest-Litovsk, March, 1918. (New York, 1939) pp. 235, 255, 392-402. The map in this volume is poor.
- (3) Texts of the Russian "Peace". With Maps. (Washington 1918) U. S. Department of State, House Inquiry Handbooks. No. 28.
- (4) Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit., pp. 403-408.
- (5) Proceedings of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Conference, 21 November 1917-3 March, 1918. (Washington, 1918) U. S. Department of State, House Inquiry Handbooks, No. 4.
- (6) A map in Ge, 310 feb 1918, copy 1. The Proposed Frontiers of Poland, dated Washington, October 8, 1918, appears to be from a Polish source, perhaps Dmowski.
- (7) American Commission to Negotiate the Peace, Paris, 1918-1919, ~~N~~ 7/388-186.311/3, pp. 2-3 for text. Map in front of 186.311/2. (These documents hereafter cited as Peace Conference.)
- (8) Peace Conference, 185.112/1
- (9) Hunter Miller, My Diary at the Peace Conference, ~~N~~ 4, pp. 224-226, map No. 6, opposite P. 226.
- (10) Peace Conference, ~~N~~ 7/140-181.213202/3.
- (11) Peace Conference, ~~N~~ 7/141-181.2132101/3-7.
- (12) Peace Conference, ~~N~~ 7/140-181.213202/4. Includes map showing the two lines.
- (13) Peace Conference, ~~N~~ 7/140-181.213202/6.
- (14) Peace Conference, ~~N~~ 7/141-181.2132101/49.
- (15) Peace Conference, ~~N~~ 7/140-181.213202/10.
- (16) Peace Conference, ~~N~~ 7/140-181.213202/8 for map of line finally adopted.

See also N. 140-181.213202/13 and -180.03501/98

(17)

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- (17) Peace Conference, ~~N~~^V 391-186.3111/509. Includes map.
- (18) Peace Conference, ~~N~~^V 97-180.03501/115, p. 1.
- (19) Peace Conference, ~~N~~^V 278-184.612/838.
- (20) London Times, July 15, 1920, p. 9.
- (21) DCR - 760 C.61/164-Riga (Young) August 10, 1920.
- (22) Preliminary treaty of Peace and Armistice Conditions,
Riga, October 12, 1920. LTS. 4 (1921) pp. 9-40.
- (23) Treaty of Peace, Riga, March 18, 1921. LTS 6 (1921)
pp. 52-157.